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The fitness lives of models: Why things have changed for the better

By Stuart Marsh | 18 hours ago



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Think of the fitness routine of any major model and your mind is more likely to wander to cigarettes and starvation than goji berries and high intensity cardio workouts – but the world of today’s model is one driven by #fitspo.

According to Ricardo Riskalla, owner of [RawFit Personal Training](#) and the head trainer at [IMG Models Australia](#), the fitness demands on catwalk models are greater than ever before.

“What I can say is that old era of models smoking cigarettes to lose weight has gone a long time ago,” Riskalla tells *Coach*.

“The competition amongst models is so big now and they all know that their face, body, skin and hair is everything.”

“If they want to have a good career they must treat themselves with respect and look after their health like no one else.”

Models are genetically blessed, but they work damn hard in the gym

Obviously the magic secret behind being objectively “good looking” is being born with the right genes for perfectly angular cheekbones, defined features and a propensity for height.

But just because models are ahead of most of us on the beauty curve, doesn’t mean they don’t have to work for those drop-dead gorgeous physiques you see on the catwalk.

“My clients are models also in the sense of being ambassadors for good health,” explains Riskalla.

“When one eats well, exercises and sleeps well, the result is beauty. Beauty is a very fine line between being natural, having correct body proportions and health – and when I say health I truly mean it.”

Okay, so we know that in order to truly maximise what your mumma’ gave you is to treat your body like a temple.

But just how much time do you have to spend exercising to do that? Plenty, says Riskalla – but it’s also wise to give yourself time to recover.

“Most models train five days a week with two days off to relax and to recover,” advises Riskalla.

“The recovery day is to forget about exercise and do something different like watch a movie, see a friend and enjoy life. Enjoying life is part of beauty.”

Part of this is having the right ‘shape’ and ‘attitude’ for fashion

Unlike your average gymgoer who wants ultra-toned legs or the kind of biceps that could crush watermelons, models have quite a specific body shape that tends to pick up more contracts than any others – and it’s all about being in proportion.

“Models require certain measurements for catwalks (and outfits), so male and female clients not only need to have great genetics but they also require a unique way of training that combines high repetitions and special sequences,” says Riskalla.

“It is very easy to mess up with someone’s body in terms of proportions. Most people when going to the gym over-exercise some body parts, and whether they want to or not, that is not good visually.”

“When I work with my clients I measure their body parts every few days just to make sure that I am getting it right. Think about training models like working on a Ferrari.”

Diet is everything

The life of a professional model is full of temptations – from glamorous mid-week parties full of alcohol and cigarettes (not to mention more ‘recreational’ substance) – but today’s model must star strict to their diet to pick up the most work.

Riskalla says that most models these days don’t follow any complicated routines, but rather stick to whole foods with a focus on consuming as many antioxidants as possible to keep their skin in the best shape possible.

“Models put emphasis in highly nutritious foods, with a high level of antioxidants,” advises Riskalla.

“Not to mention that they also drink a lot of water and avoid junk food and anything that is detrimental for anyone’s health.”

“The most common mistake that people do when trying to look like a model is to cut out food groups completely, exercise like a maniac and the result will be a disaster – not to mention it will make you likely very anxious.”

Being comfortable in your own skin is a real thing

Yes, we all know that it’s relatively easy to be comfortable in your own skin when that skin is really, really, ridiculously good looking – but Riskalla says that many models can gain huge amounts of confidence in the knowledge that their fitness can get them through a show.

“A model’s body plays a huge role into getting a multimillion dollar contract. Being fit is a part of that,” says Riskalla.

“Looking good is not only a visual thing but you can sense when someone is confident in their own skin, in their own body and soul. Most of that comes from self-confidence which is a very powerful and neglected aspect of health.”

In order to gain this inner #queen, Riskalla recommends daily meditation and mindfulness to make sure that your attitude to approaching life is on-point.

“I highly recommend and train my clients to meditate, to slow down their breathing so they can understand life with a calm mind,” explains Riskalla.

“Confidence and charisma comes from self-knowledge and calmness. That’s the feeling when someone enters the room and the whole room stops.”

“Beauty is all about that.”

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