

The Importance of Rest

A vital part of a good training regimen is knowing how to listen to your body and take time off when needed

WHEN WAS THE LAST time you took a day off — I mean a *full* day — and didn't feel guilty? We all know rest days are crucial, but how many of us actually understand the importance of listening to our bodies? It may be hard to believe, but sometimes *not* training can help you feel and perform better.

As a professional athlete, it can be tough to take a break. There are always goals to

reach, training techniques to try and competitions to prepare for. But it's necessary; I learned that the hard way.

My senior year of high school, I ran track every day after school and then immediately went to gymnastics for three hours. Halfway through track season, my shins began to hurt. I thought it was shin splints, so I just taped them. After about a month, it hurt to walk. I went to the doctor and found out I had a stress fracture in my

tibia that was three-quarters of the way through the bone! (That's what I get for my high pain tolerance.) I was ordered not to run or play sports for weeks. I was so disappointed! Maybe if I had taken a day off sooner, the injury wouldn't have been as severe and I wouldn't have been forced to take so much time off. Now I'm much better about recognizing when things don't feel right or when I need a day off.

Of course, the number of rest days you take as well as what you do on those days is relative to your activity level. When I prepare for a figure competition I train seven days a week (some days I do only cardio), but if I need a break I might go for a walk or take a yoga class. For a marathon runner, a rest day may

be a 30-minute jog. For a recreational athlete, a rest day — or days — could entail reading a book at the beach.

I recommend at least one rest day a week. If you have a hard time resting completely, go for a leisurely bike ride. Remember, staying in shape is a lifestyle, and you must be consistent. If that means taking a day or two off a week so you don't burn out, then that's what you should do. You may be shocked at how refreshed and energized you feel when you return to the gym.



FIVE BENEFITS OF REST

- 1/ More energy throughout the day.** Adequate rest helps you avoid midafternoon energy slumps; your workouts will be more efficient and you'll reach your goals faster.
- 2/ You'll sleep better.** Being overtired and over-training can prevent you from sleeping well.
- 3/ You'll be healthier.** Getting a good night's sleep can enhance your immune system and help you avoid getting sick.
- 4/ Boosts brain function.** When you're tired, it's hard to concentrate, solve problems and be efficient at work or home.
- 5/ You'll be happier.** When you're exhausted, you're more likely to be irritable. Don't be moody; get some rest!

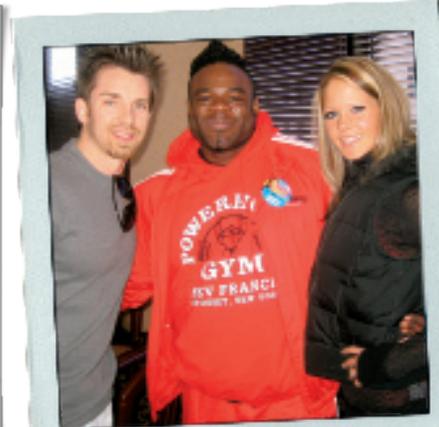
FROM TOP: KAREN MAZE, MIKE MADER

FIGURE INTERNATIONAL SCRAPBOOK

On March 5 I won my first Figure International title! I became the first competitor to ever hold the Figure Olympia and International titles at the same time. Here are some photos from that weekend:



Meeting Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone. Yes, I got to meet Rocky — I love Rocky!



With my husband Alan and Arnold Classic winner Kai Greene



With my mom and dad

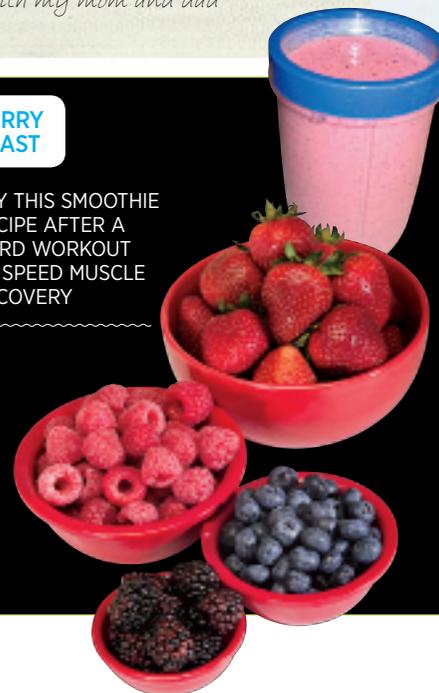


Hanging out with some of the girls after the show

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KEVIN HORTON; COURTESY NICOLE WILKINS LEE (3); SMOOTHIE: COURTESY NICOLE WILKINS LEE; BERRIES: JUPITER IMAGES (4)

BERRY BLAST

TRY THIS SMOOTHIE RECIPE AFTER A HARD WORKOUT TO SPEED MUSCLE RECOVERY



- > 1/4 cup fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- > 1 cup water
- > 1 cup frozen mixed berries
- > 1 scoop whey protein (I like chocolate)
- > 1 Tbsp. ground flaxseeds
- > 1 Tbsp. honey
- > Ice

Blend together in the Magic Bullet (the best invention ever) and enjoy!

NUTRITION FACTS:
284 calories, 29 g protein, 33 g carbs, 4 g fat

Upcoming Events

Here are two events I'm really excited to be part of this summer. For more, visit my website nicolewilkinslee.com.

2010 Natural Michigan Bodybuilding & Nicole Wilkins Lee Fitness, Figure & Bikini Classic

Since I began my career in 2003, I've dreamed of having my own show. I'm ecstatic to announce that this year I'm teaming up with Rick Romeo of Professional Fitness Group to promote the Natural Michigan Bodybuilding & Nicole Wilkins Lee Fitness, Figure & Bikini Classic. The women's contests are national qualifiers. The evening before the show, I'll give a free seminar that provides an inside look at my experiences and helps answer competition questions. I look forward to seeing you there!

WHEN: July 17, 2010

WHERE: Detroit

ENTRY DEADLINE: July 4, 2010

INFO: (248) 909-6272 or rick@rickromeo.com

Camp With the Stars

On Aug. 1 (the Sunday after the NPC USAs in Las Vegas), M&F HERS is offering an amazing opportunity for competitors and aspiring competitors — or those who just want to learn more about health and fitness — to pick the brains of some of the best in the biz at the first-ever MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS Superstar Camp. I'll be part of a star-studded staff that includes my trainer Kim Oddo, Fitness Olympia winner Adela Garcia, bikini pro Amanda Latona and figure pro Heather Mae French. The panel will also include elite NPC judges and HERS expert staff. The camp will answer all your training, nutrition, modeling, makeup and competition questions. Best of all, it's free!

WHAT: MUSCLE & FITNESS HERS Superstar Camp

WHEN: Aug. 1, 2010

WHERE: Flamingo Gold's, Las Vegas

INFO: muscleandfitnesshers.com