

POST-COMP BLUES

PREPARING FOR A FIGURE COMPETITION CREATES MANY CONFLICTING EMOTIONS. ON ONE HAND, YOU FEEL EXCITED ABOUT TAKING ON THE CHALLENGE AND ARE DETERMINED AND MOTIVATED TO REACH THE FINISH LINE. YOU WANT TO STAND UP ON STAGE KNOWING YOU GAVE IT 100%. ON THE OTHER HAND, SOMETIMES YOU FEEL GRUMPY, TIRED OR FRUSTRATED WHEN WEEKLY RESULTS ARE NOT ACHIEVED.

By Loretta Mostofi



People who compete can relate to having their life consumed with comp preparation. They have to prepare and measure their meals, weight train, have daily cardio sessions (sometimes twice a day), practise their posing, work, maintain a social life, be a mum, wife, friend, girlfriend, daughter... the list goes on.

It takes a certain personality to compete. People would read the above and wonder where the enjoyment is, but competitors thrive on having the control, discipline and motivation to live our competing dream. We are driven by the weekly results and our determination to not give up. When things get tough we have the internal strength to not be defeated.

But what happens at the end of the journey, when we have climbed the top of the mountain? There only appears to be one way forward - and that way is down.

I like to compare this to having a baby. We are so excited for nine months watching the baby grow in our belly, preparing the nursery, attending prenatal classes and anticipating the birth. When it is all over and you are holding your baby in your arms, who prepares you for the sleepless nights, the lactating problems, the struggle to get anything done in the day? No one! This, in turn, leads to many women suffering post-natal depression.

Competing, to me, is very similar. People compete for many reasons; to prove something to themselves, to transform the body or to lose weight. This last reason is the one I have an issue with. There are many girls out there who want to compete to get that bikini body they have always wanted. What many fail to realise is that the body you have on stage is temporary. It is not maintainable and for health reasons should not be. Let's face it, figure competing is an extreme sport. The way we manipulate our diet and exercise in the final stages to get that sculpted body is a sport and should be acknowledged as that.

I have read so many cases of girls who finish competing and promptly regress. They set themselves up for depression as they have managed to undo five months of

hard work in as little as seven days.

This is where post-comp blues begins. We loathe ourselves for letting go and feel like we have failed. Sometimes we withdraw from social events, paranoid that people are talking about how the weight came back on so fast. Some become obsessed with food and exercise, with many developing eating disorders.

This is where there is not enough information about what happens post-competition. We must understand that what we did to get up on stage is an enormous achievement. We put our mind and body through a lot of stress to create a comp-worthy physique but it is unrealistic to maintain that body forever. It is not healthy for our hormones, internal organs, mood and mental state to continue living on such a low percentage of body fat.

Post-comp is a time to embrace and celebrate what you have achieved on a personal level. Win or lose, we are all champions. Regardless of who walks away with the trophy, knowing that you trained and followed a nutritional plan to the best of your ability is success in itself.

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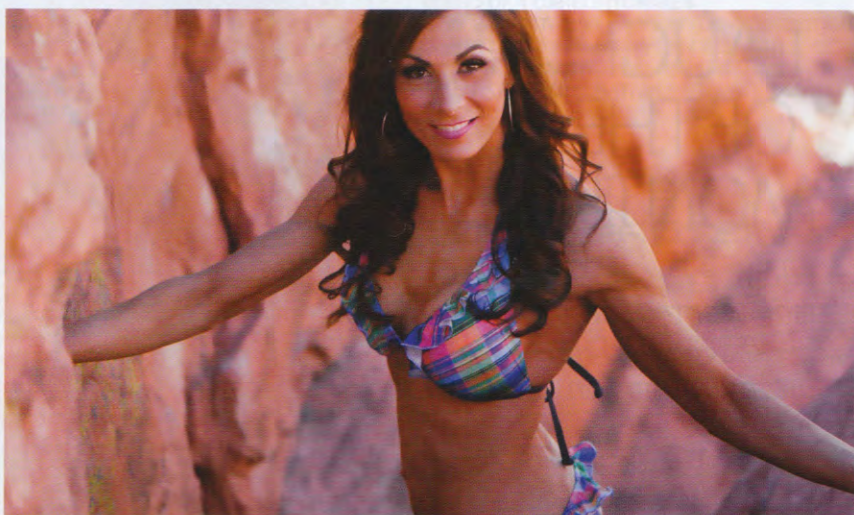


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Post-comp is a time to be kind to yourself and your body. Don't beat yourself up because you put some weight on - it is inevitable and necessary.

Post-comp is about finding balance and refocusing on what your next step is. If you wish to compete again, you need to understand that you must carry more weight in the off-season to put on more muscle mass for the next comp. Maybe you achieved what you wanted by doing one competition and want to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Set yourself some rules on your nutrition and exercise; allowing yourself treats and knowing that you deserve nourishment and rest.

If you train hard and eat well the majority of the time, you will still have plenty of room to enjoy those indulgences that life has to offer! It's all about balance! ☉