

So You Wanna Be a Fitness Model?



By Will Brink @ www.BrinkZone.com

©2003 Will Brink/Brink Consulting

People that follow my stuff know I generally write about nutrition, supplements, training, and other topics that are more science based than subjective topics, such as what is covered in this article. I decided to shuck my science geek persona, and write on a topic I know will be helpful to thousands of would be and wanna be fitness models. As well a known "hard core" science based no BS writer, why I am writing what some will perceive as a "fluff" article? Over the years I have gotten hundreds, perhaps thousands, of gals

that ask me via email, letters, or in person "how do I become a fitness model Will? You have been in the business a long time, surly you of all people should know." I get this from newbies and I get this from women that have been at it a while but have been unable to "break in" effectively. The fact is, I have been in the fitness, health, and bodybuilding biz a long time, and though I am known as a science and nutrition based "guru" type, I have trained many a fitness athlete, and judged fitness and figure/bikini shows for the NPC, Fitness America, Fitness USA, and other federations as well as given marketing and business advice to all sorts of athletes, including fitness models. So, it's not as far fetched as it might seem that I am going to use this space to cover a non scientific topic, which is, how one goes about being a fitness model. This article will be useful to both experienced and novice types looking to "break in" to the biz. If you are already a professional and successful fitness model, I am sure you may still glean some useful information from this article.

First the bad news, there is no one way to become a successful fitness model. There is no single path or magic secret. There are however some key things a person can do to greatly improve their chances of "making it" in the fitness biz as a model, and perhaps using that success as a launching pad to greater things, such as movies, TV, etc. Several of the top fitness models (Trish Stratus and Vicki Pratt come to mind but there are many others) have gone onto careers in entertainment of all kinds. Bottom line, though there is no magic

secret to being successful as a fitness model, this article will be about as close to a blueprint for success as you will find.

"Do I need to compete?"

This is a question I get asked all the time and it's not an easy one to answer. In fact, the answer is (drum roll) yes and no. The person has to decide why they are competing in the first place to answer that question. For example, do you need to compete if your goal is to be a successful fitness model? The answer is no. Many of today's well-known fitness models have never competed, or they competed in a few small shows and it was clearly not part of their success as fitness models. However, competing does have its potential uses. One of them is exposure. At the upper level shows, there will often be editors, publishers, photographers, supplement company owners, and other business people. So, competing can improve your exposure. Also, competing can make sense if you are trying to build a business that is related to your competing or will benefit from you winning a show. For example, say you have a private training gym you are trying to build. Sure, having the title of say Ms Fitness America, or winning the NPC Nationals and being an IFBB pro, will help your reputation and the notoriety of your business. There are many scenarios were it would help to have won a show for a business or other endeavors.

On the other hand, it must be realized that winning a show does not in any way guarantee success in the business end (and it really is a business) of being a fitness model. The phone won't ring off the hook with big offers for contracts. Also, it's very important to realize that it's common that the 4th or 6th or 8th place finisher in a fitness or figure show will get more press than the winner. Why? Though the winner might have what it took to win that show, it's often other gals the editor, publishers, supplement companies etc, feel is more marketable. I have seen it many times where the winner was shocked to find she didn't get nearly the attention she expected and other girls who placed lower have gotten attention in the form of photos shoots, magazine coverage, etc. Something to keep in mind when you ask yourself the important question "do I need to compete and if so, why am I competing?" Answer that question, and you will know the answer to the heading of this section. Winning a title of some sort can be a stepping stone, but it is not in itself any guarantee of success in the fitness industry. It's like a college degree; it's what you do with it.

Now. If you compete for the fun of it, then by all means go for it, but the above is focusing on competing as it relates to the business aspect of being a fitness model.

Right body, wrong federation?

Ok, so after reading the above you have decided you are going to compete, or will compete again. If you don't plan to compete, you can skip this section. The biggest mistake I see here is so many gals have the right body for the wrong federation. Each federation has its own judging criteria and a competitor will do poorly simply because they didn't bother to research which show would be best suited for them. I will give you a perfect real world example of this. Recently I judged a show whose criteria for the figure round was the women should be more on the curvy softer side with some tone, vs. being more muscular and athletic with less bodyfat that other federations might allow. At this show one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen came out. She was very proportional, great muscle tone, lean, and athletically shaped with narrow hips and waist and wider shoulders. How did she do at this show? She didn't even place in the top ten! Why? Because she was not what we were instructed to look for and didn't fit the criteria. After the show I informed her that she looked great, but this may not be the federation for her. I told her she had much more of an NPC type body, where a little more muscle, athletic build, and less bodyfat is rewarded. The following week I was judging an NPC fitness, figure, and bodybuilding show and there she was. How did she do? She won the entire show with all judges voting her number one unanimously. Conversely, if your body type tends to be more rounded and toned, but with a little more bodyfat, wider (but not fat!) hips, you may be better off competing in say the Fitness America Pageants. If

you are going to compete, (1) find out exactly what the judging criteria is for that federation and (2) go see those shows as a spectator for several different federations and see which one your physique, style, etc will fit into best. (3) You have to decide if you truly have the athletic abilities to compete in a fitness competition (which requires a routine) or a figure/bikini competition. I often see women who would do well in a figure show but really don't have the athletic abilities to do the routines required to be competitive with other athletes in the show. Some shows will allow you to do both competitions and some won't.

Networking 101: dos and don'ts...

In so many respects, this is the area that will make or break you in any business, and yet, people in the fitness industry do an amazingly poor job at it. If you don't network and market yourself properly, you can pretty much forget about having any real success as a fitness model, or a success in virtually any business. For the sake of space, we will stick to fitness. When I first started out, I was a self marketing machine. I could be found at every show I thought might be an opportunity, walking the aisles of trade shows, bodybuilding, shows, fitness show, and others. I gave out a zillion cards and I took a million home with me, and followed up on each and every one. I went to as many industry related meetings, outings, parties, etc. as I could get

into. I now have the reputation and experience in the industry that I don't have to go to such a show unless I feel like it, or have meetings, but they were quite helpful in the beginning. I am always amazed at the number of fitness models who contact me who have never even been to the Arnold Classic Fitness Weekend, or the Mr. Olympia, or the trade shows like the NNFA Expo West and others. If you want to make it in the fitness business you sure as hell had better treat it like a business.

I have seen many a pretty girl who wants to be a fitness model who thinks if they stand there looking pretty long enough, someone is going to offer to put their face on the cover of a magazine. News flash, there are millions of beautiful women out there and to be noticed, you have to hustle to get that business like everyone else by networking your butt off, or having a good agent (if you can afford such a thing) who is doing it for you.

Pick a few major industry shows to attend (some of which were mentioned above) and go to them every year. Have a plan of attack of exactly how you plan to market yourself and network. Many fitness models, bodybuilders, etc see a show as one big party. If that's you, then have fun at the party, but don't think you are really marketing yourself as a serious business person or athlete.

Another thing that always amazes me is the number of fitness models who either have no business cards, or have some cards they printed up on their bubble jet printer at home! They ask me to help

them or what ever and I say "give me your card" and they look at me like "I am so pretty I should not need a card you fool." This attitude turns off editors, photographers, writers, and industry people faster than if they found out you were really a transvestite. Don't do it. For every pretty girl out there who thinks the world owes them a favor, there are 100 who are ready to act like professionals. Ever wonder why some fitness model you know is doing better than you are even though you know you are prettier than her? That may be why...never ever go to a show to network without good cards, bios, and professionally done head and body shots you can give to said editors, publishers, photographers, industry types, etc. Don't stand around looking pretty assuming they will find you, find them first and introduce yourself. And of course it should go without saying you should be in good condition and have something of a tan to look your best.

You want to go to the shows and party? Fine, but do it in private after the work is done and don't make a fool out of yourself at some industry sponsored get together. Hell, I was virtually poured into a cab at last years Arnold Classic after going to a sushi place with some well know industry types and companies owners (you know who you are!) but at least no one saw me! We had our own little private get together after the show to let loose.

Let me give you one final real world example of how NOT to market yourself. Last year I was on retainer as a consultant to a mid

sized supplement company. The owner of the company asked me if I knew a couple of fitness model types that could work his booth for a trade show. In fact, he requested "unknowns, some new faces people had not seen yet but had real potential to grow with the company." I went and found him two such gals I thought fit the bill. He offered to pay their flights, room, and food plus a thousand dollars each for the days work. The two girls were told to be at the booth 9am sharp. The night before at the hotel, I saw the two girls getting in a cab at 11pm or so dressed to kill, clearly on their way out to party. The next day they showed up at the booth an hour and a half late and hung over! What was the result of this? (1) it embarrassed me to no end as I had recommended them to the company owner (2) they would never get work from that company again (3) they would never get any work from me again and (4) they would not get a reference from either of us for other jobs. I see this type of thing all the time in the fitness biz, and it's not limited to fitness models. Amazingly, a few weeks after the show they emailed me and the company owner wanting to know when their next job would be! Amazing...

Who loves you baby?

If there is one universal truth, it's that the camera either loves you or it does not. Any professional photographers will tell you this. For some

unknown reason, some people are very photogenic and some are not. Truth be known, there are some well known fitness models (who shall remain nameless as they would probably smack me the next time they saw me) who are not all that attractive in person. It's just that the camera loves them and they are very photogenic, but not terribly pretty in person. Conversely, I have seen the reverse many times; a girl who is much better looking in person than in photographs. Such is the fate of the person who wants to be a model of any kind, including a fitness model. If you find you are not very photogenic, keep working with different photographers until you find one that really captures you well and pay that photographer handsomely! Now, to be bluntly honest, there are also some wanna be fitness models who are not "unphotogenic", they're just "fugly"! There are some people out there who have no business trying to be fitness models. It does not make them bad people, it just means they need to snap out of their delusions and find a profession they are better suited for, like radio personality....

"How do I get in the magazines?"

This section sort of incorporates everything I have covered above, and adds in a few additional strategies. For example, as I mentioned before, competing in fitness shows and or figure/bikini shows can increase your exposure, thus getting the attention of some magazine

publisher or photographer. Networking correctly at the various trade shows may also have the same effect, and of course having a good portfolio done by a photographer that really captures your look, a good web site, etc., will all increase your potential for getting into the magazines, or getting ad work, and so on. However, all of these strategies are still somewhat passive versus active in my opinion. It's still the fitness model waiting to be "discovered." As far as I am concerned, waiting is for bus stops and pregnancy tests. Success waits for no man...or woman as the case may be. So, after all the above advice is taken into consideration as having an added effect to getting you magazine coverage, what else can be done? For one thing, you should read and be familiar with all the magazines you want to be in so you know who is who and what the style of the different magazines are. I can tell you right now, if I say the Editor-in-Chief of a good sized fitness or bodybuilding publication and says "hi, I am the Bob Smith what's your name?" and the fitness model has no idea who Bob Smith is, Bob will not take kindly to that. Why should he? You should know who the major players are in the publications you want to be seen in. He is doing you the favor, not the other way around. You should know who the major players are and actively seek them out, don't wait for them to "discover" you.

If you look at the masthead inside any magazine, it will tell you who the publisher is, who the Editor-in-Chief is and so forth. The mailing address for that magazine, and often the web site and email,

can also be found. What is to stop you from looking up those names and mailing them your pictures and resume directly? Nothing, that's what. If you see a photo spread you think is really well done, what is to stop you from finding out who the photographer is and contacting them directly and sending them your pics? Nothing, that's what. My point being, you want a get a break in the business, make the break, don't sit there thinking it's looking for you, because it's not. Be proactive, not reactive! Luck is the residue of design. Be successful by design. As my older brother used to say to me as a kid when I told him I was too scared to ask out a pretty girl "what's the worst that can happen Will? All she can say is no." That's the worst that can happen to you also.

Beware of web idiots, schlubs, morons, perverts, scum bags, and sleazoids!

This part is sort of self-explanatory but worth mentioning. As with all industries that deal in entertainment based media (e.g., television, theater, modeling, etc.), the fitness industry attracts its fair share of web idiots, schlubs, morons, perverts, scum bags, and sleazoids, to name just a few. There is also the class of person known as the schmoe, but we will leave that for another place and time. Point is you want to meet the right people while not getting involved with that

group of worthless types who will only drag you down, delay you, or just flat out screw you up and over. For example, a guy comes up and says he wants to "shoot you" for the magazines, but what do you really know of this guy? He has a camera and some business cards, so that makes him a photographer right? Wrong! If someone want to shoot you and they are not a well-known name (and you should know who the well known photographers are because you researched that already!), find out who they are. Do they have references you can call? Girls you can contact he has shot before and were happy with the work? What magazines has he published in? Does he do it professionally or as a hobby? That type of thing.

Another thing I see is the big web scam. I'm amazed how many girls get scammed by these web idiots. Lesson here is you get what you pay for, so when some person wants to build you a web site for free, you are getting what you pay for. Yes, there is good money to be made on the `net, and the net can be great for marketing yourself and making contacts, but most of it's a scam. You are better off paying a good web designer and web master who has experience with other fitness model types and has references you can talk to. I can't tell you the number of girls who have been screwed over by some internet thing that went to hell, like the "fan" who volunteers to build a free web site and either runs off with any money made from the site or puts their picks on porn sites and any number of other things that made them regret like hell ever agreeing to the site in the first place.

Clearly, I can't go down the list of all the possible pitfalls of the web idiots, schlubs, morons, perverts, scum bags, and sleazoids out there to be found in the entertainment business, but you get the idea. Be careful!

Conclusion.

Well that pretty much concludes my down and dirty guide to the basics of "making it" as a fitness model. Of course there are tons of business related issues I could cover and tricks I could give, but the above is the best advice you are going to find in a small space and will do more for you-if properly followed-than you may realize. Now, if you want to know my opinions on the best ways to lose fat by diet, training, and exercise, so you can look your best as a fitness model, you may want to read my ebook [Diet Supplements Revealed](#). If you are looking to add lean mass with a minimum of bodyfat via diet, training, and supplements, then consider reading my ebook [Anabolic Nutrition](#). You can see full details of where to find these ebooks below.

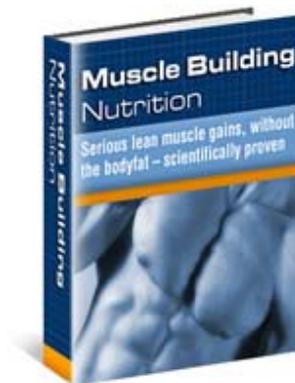
Good luck and see you in the magazines!

William D. Brink

Don't forget to check out Will's two superb ebooks



Diet Supplements Revealed - Learn which diet and weight loss supplements burn fat fast and which are no more than hype... And discover a scientifically proven, totally personalized fat loss diet all within the next 10 minutes, by sports nutrition and supplements expert Will Brink.



Muscle Building Nutrition Guide and Bodybuilding Supplements Review - Build serious lean muscle in record time with a proven muscle building nutrition plan and discover exactly which bodybuilding supplements work and which are no more than pure marketing hype, by sports nutrition and supplements expert Will Brink.

Feedback on Will's ebooks...



"I commend Will Brink on his efforts to debunk sports nutrition supplements. Will's **Muscle Building Nutrition** is a must read!"

- **Lee Labrada**, Founder of Labrada Nutrition, www.labrada.com, Former world champion professional bodybuilder, IFBB Mr. Universe, top 4 placed in the Mr.Olympia for seven consecutive years.



"Combine Will's nutrition and supplement information in Will's superb **Muscle Building Nutrition** with my training tips and advice, and success is virtually guaranteed."

- **Charles Poliquin**, www.charlespoliquin.net
Charles is recognized as one of the World's most successful strength coaches, coached Olympic medalists in 12 different sports.



"Will has been a major influence in my bodybuilding nutrition plan since I started to take this sport seriously. As an IFBB professional bodybuilder, I can't afford to waste time on worthless over hyped information. Will has always delivered quality information I can count on and **he is one of only a handful of people whose opinion on nutrition the pro's genuinely respect.**

- **Jamo Nezzar**,
<http://www.musclejam.com>
Pro Bodybuilder and Fitness Consultant

“I dropped from 52% body fat to 15% body fat using the diet supplements, principles and information in Will Brink's Diet Supplements Revealed”



"Here are my before and after pictures. The "after" was taken on my 48th birthday (today) after a workout. I've made more progress in 3 months following the principles in your information than the entire (almost) 3 years of dieting and exercise. I never would've thought a guy my age could've done this!"

- Many Thanks. Pat S.

“Not a quick fix but a steady and healthy reduction in bodyweight exactly as outlined in Will's Diet Supplements Revealed”



"I have lost over 100 pounds of fat in the past few years, while gaining muscle. I didn't do it as a crash, or quick fix diet, but as a steady healthy reduction in bodyweight as outlined in your great e-book "Diet Supplements Revealed". Your direction and knowledge of diet and supplements has been more than invaluable to my success."

- Thank you Will. Amy Fox.



Lee Apperson & Debbie Kruck

“...I learnt so much from Will about losing fat with the correct diet and supplements, I wouldn't be this lean and healthy without him. His knowledge is unparalleled. I strongly suggest you read what Will has to say - It's a must for any man or woman trying to lose body fat and shape up.”

- **Lee Apperson**, Trainer/Model



Dear Will,

“...Just a quick note to say thank you for the diet information. I've lost 18 pounds of fat in just over 8 weeks. I'm now 38 years old and 6% bodyfat. I would never have got this far without you.”

Thank You again.

- **Mike Serino**



**Actress and Model:
Laurie de Nuccio**

“...Will is a down-to-earth health visionary whose wisdom transcends the present-day medical mindset. The information was very empowering.”

- **Laurie de Nuccio**