

Cardio Combat: Shredded-Size Secrets

HIT Your Pecs!

IRON MAN

Figure Olympia Star

Nicole Wilkins

**Workout Tips,
Diet Tricks and
Smokin' Hot Pics**

**ULTIMATE
ABS**

**Score a Cut Core
With These Moves**

**BLOOD-VOLUME
ARM ASSAULT**
Get Gargantuan Guns!

NOVEMBER 2011

\$5.99



Please display until 11/3/11

PLUS:

- Coach Bill Starr's Combo-to-Grow Exercises
- Power Surge Interview With Josh Bryant
- Steve Kuclo, New NPC USA Champion



Pretty Woman

Figure Champ Nicole Wilkins Is Easy on the Eyes, Harsh on Opponents

by Lonnie Teper • Photography by Michael Neveux

Hair and Makeup by Alexandra Almand

Don't let her angelic appearance fool ya. This sexy siren may purr like a kitten offstage, but Nicole Wilkins has plenty of bark in her bite when it comes game day. Just ask the many opponents she's chewed up over the years.

For starters, the blond bombshell is the only competitor ever to win both the fitness and figure overall titles at the NPC Team Universe—and she did it in the same year, 2007. She's also the owner of six IFBB pro figure crowns, including the '09 Figure Olympia and back-to-back Figure International championships in '10 and '11.

In late August this month's cover model was focused on another duel with '10 Olympia winner Erin Stern and company—at this year's Figure O on September 16 and 17 in Las Vegas.

First, though, let's play 20 questions.

LT: Erin edged you at last year's Olympia, but you got retribution at the Figure International with your second consecutive victory—a unanimous one, at that. In the process a

tremendous rivalry has been engaged.

NW: I knew last year at the Olympia I was off. Erin looked amazing and deserved the win that night. I wanted to make sure I made the

improvements I needed in order for that not to happen again. I wanted to keep the Figure International title for a second year.

LT: On the subject of the Figure I, didn't you first compete at the big Columbus, Ohio, weekend back in 2002—in the amateur gymnastics division?

NW: Yes! That weekend my gymnastics coach and a couple of teammates went to watch Laura Mak compete in the Fitness International finals at the Arnold Classic; my coach had worked with Laura in the past. When I saw those women onstage, I knew that's what I wanted to do.

LT: As a toddler you were far from a girly girl, eh?

NW: I have a girly side but was never into dresses, dolls or makeup until I was older. I was definitely more active—climbing trees, finding frogs and snakes and camping with the family.

LT: You began a long career in gymnastics at the age of eight, but a couple of injuries along the way got you off the mat and into the weight room. That led to track and field competition

Snapshot

Hometown: Royal Oak, Michigan

Current residence: Sterling Heights, Michigan

Age: 27

Height: 5' 5 1/2"

Weight: Contest, 126; off-season, 138

Status: In a relationship

Contest highlights: '11 and '10 IFBB Figure International, 1st; '09 IFBB Figure Olympia, 1st; '07 NPC Team Universe, fitness and figure, 1st in class, and overall

Education: B.A. in wellness, health promotion and injury prevention, Oakland University, Rochester, Michigan

Pretty Woman

"I feel as long as I do my best and put forth 100 percent in every workout, every day, I will get to where I want to be."

In high school. As a sprinter and pole-vaulter, correct?

NW: I was a club gymnast from the age of eight until I graduated from high school. Practice was always after school for four hours, so I never had an opportunity to compete in a high school sport. I knew my senior year I wasn't interested in furthering my gymnastics career, so I decided to go out for the track team. I pole-vaulted 9' 5" and did the 200- and 400-meter dashes and was on the 800- and 1,600-meter relay teams.

LT: You had quite an auspicious debut when you moved into fitness competition in 2003.

NW: My first show was in 2003, the Western Michigan, where I did fitness only. My best friend helped me choreograph my routine in her backyard—she was an NBA Pistons dancer—and my boyfriend at the time helped me with my diet. I was hooked immediately and did four more shows

Pretty
Woman





Pretty Woman

in state the next year, never placing below fifth.

LT: Despite what many folks may think, you didn't dominate every show you entered in your formative years of competition.

NW: I mentioned never placing below fifth in state shows, but the next year, 2004, I entered the Junior Nationals for my first national experience. I was in the second-to-last callout and tied for 16th place! Man, was that a mental blow! I decided to take a step back and make the necessary improvements before hitting the national stage again.

LT: When did you next compete?

NW: I ended up taking a year and a half off—partly due to an ovarian cyst rupture and surgery and a herniated disk in my low back—but also to just



train and have fun in the gym. And to grow a bit. In August 2006 I hired Kim Oddo, my current trainer, to keep an eye on me. I knew I was overanalyzing myself and needed help. I won the Motor City Classic Fitness and Figure Overall title and then took fifth at the '06 Fitness Nationals a month later.

LT: You had some tough luck at the '07 NPC Junior Nationals, no "butts" about it. But there were much happier landings a few weeks later.

NW: [Laughs] Yes, that was my next show. I ended up placing second in fitness—I didn't compete in figure. I finished second because I fell *hard* on my butt during the landing of a back tuck in my routine. A month later Kim had me cross over and do both figure and fitness at the Team Universe Championships. I won the overall titles and a pro card in both divisions.

LT: Then it was off to Spain for the IFBB World Amateur Championships.

NW: What an awesome experience! A trip to Santa Susanna, Spain, to represent the USA! I didn't do very well—in Europe they tend to judge on the leaner physiques,

Nicole's Pretty Woman Diet

Meal 1: 1/2 cup oat bran, 5 egg whites

Meal 2: 4 ounces seared ahi, 15 almonds, 1 cup vegetables

Meal 3: 5 ounces chicken, 4 ounces sweet potato, 1 cup vegetables

Meal 4: 5 ounces seared ahi, 1/4 cup brown rice, 1 cup vegetables

Meal 5: 5 ounces cod, large salad with balsamic vinegar, 1 ounce avocado

Meal 6: 4 egg whites or 1.5 scoops Met-Rx Ultramyosyn Whey Protein Powder

“Winning the Figure International this year was so important, not only because I lost the Olympia title last year but because if I win the Olympia in 2011, I will be the first person to hold both major titles in the same calendar year.”

but I loved every minute of it.

LT: Six years after competing in gymnastics at the Arnold Sports Festival, you stepped on the Columbus, Ohio, stage as a professional. You only placed 11th in the '08 Figure International, but I imagine you were still stoked.

NW: Yes, it was my pro debut. I was absolutely ecstatic to be on that stage after saying six years earlier, while in the audience, “I’m going to be up there one day.” That year I ended up placing second at the Pittsburgh Pro Figure and third at the New York Pro Fitness Championships, qualifying for the Olympia in both categories—a feat only accomplished by one other person. I decided to do figure at the '08 Figure Olympia, since I could only choose one, and ended up placing ninth.

LT: Your first victory on the pro level came soon after. Then, of course, you earned the Figure Olympia crown to cap a spectacular year.

NW: Yes, 2009 was a *huge* year. I won my first pro show at the Europa Orlando and then won the New York Pro Figure. I went on to win the Figure Olympia. I was 25 years old, the youngest ever to win that title.

LT: Despite your success in the industry, do you still have self-doubts at times?

NW: I think we all have our good and bad days. I like to think of myself as a positive and optimistic person and know that with bad days come good times. I feel as long as I do my best and put forth 100 percent in every workout, every day, I will get to where I want to be. I have a lot of goals and aspirations and

am far from being done yet.

LT: I know your biggest ambition is to win the Figure Olympia and the Figure International in the same year, which would put you in the record books again.

NW: That's true—winning the Figure International this year was so important, not only because I lost the Olympia title last year but because if I win the Olympia in 2011, I will be the first person to hold both major titles in the same calendar year. Wow—to wrap my head around that one would be a giant dream come true, for sure.

LT: As we're only seven weeks

out from the Olympia Weekend, you are in full-blown precontest mode. What does a typical workout week look like for you at this

Pretty Woman



"Each morning I get up at 6:30 a.m. and do 45 minutes to one hour of cardio. I weight train in the afternoon and then do another 45 minutes to an hour of cardio at night."

Nicole's Olympia-Bound Training

Day 1: Shoulders

Dumbbell presses	3 x 10
One-arm cable laterals	3 x 10-15
Barbell upright rows	3 x 15
Plate front raises	3 x 15
Pec deck rear-delt flies	3 x 10-15

Day 2: Chest, arms

Tri-set

Incline dumbbell presses	3 x 15
Alternate dumbbell curls	3 x 15
EZ-curl-bar skull crushers	3 x 15

Tri-set

Standing cable flyes	3 x 15
Straight-bar cable curls	3 x 15
Rope pushdowns	3 x 15

Tri-set

Pushups	3 x max
EZ-curl-bar spider curls	3 x 15
Bench dips (feet on balance ball)	3 x 15

Day 3: Legs

Box jumps	3 x 1 minute*
Stepups	3 x 15
One-leg leg presses	3 x 15
Switch split jumps	3 x 20*
Leg extensions	3 x 20
Prone leg curls	3 x 15
Stiff-legged deadlifts	3 x 15

*30 seconds' rest between sets

Day 4: Back

Wide-grip pullups	3 x 10
Close-grip cable rows	3 x 15
Hammer Strength high pulldowns	3 x 15
Reverse-grip barbell rows	3 x 15
Straight-bar cable pullovers	3 x 15

Day 5: Shoulders (light circuit)

Giant set

Seated military presses	4 x 20
Barbell upright rows	4 x 20
Lateral raises	4 x 20
Bent-over laterals	4 x 20

point?

NW: Each morning I get up at 6:30 a.m. and do 45 minutes to one hour of cardio. I weight train in the afternoon and then do another 45 minutes to an hour of cardio at night. My split is Monday: shoulders; Tuesday: track workout; Wednesday: arms and chest; Thursday: back and shoulders again; Friday: yoga; Saturday: hamstrings and glutes; Sunday: yoga again.

LT: Does it change much from the off-season?

NW: The only thing that changes is the amount of cardio I do. My lifts are just as intense, and I will change up the split every few months or so.

LT: Outside of the knee injuries suffered during your gymnastics days, have there been any other setbacks in your career?

NW: In 2005 I had a herniated and bulging disk in my lower back. That's the worst pain I think I've ever had. I've also had many ankle injuries. I go to the chiropractor every week and get a massage every other week, and I am pretty adamant about stretching. Over the years I have become a lot better at listening to my body and knowing when to stop.

LT: I know you incorporate many different styles of training, includ-

Willkins' Supplement Schedule

Met-Rx Super Joint Guard (glucosamine)

Met-Rx Triple Omega 3-6-9

Met-Rx Hardcore L-Glutamine

Met-Rx BCAA 2200

Met-Rx Xtreme Amped Up Energy

Met-Rx CLA Energy

Met-Rx Super Greens Powder

**Met-Rx Super Reds Powder
Vitamin C**



A full-page photograph of Nicole Wilkins, a blonde woman with long hair, wearing a dark bikini top and a blue and black patterned bikini bottom. She is holding a pole vault pole and looking back over her shoulder at the camera with a smile. The background is a vibrant, abstract pattern of green and blue circles.

Pretty Woman

"Over the years I have become a lot better at listening to my body and knowing when to stop."

ing Crossfit. What's that like?

NW: Yes, I'm a firm believer in metabolic training, changing things up, cross training, etc. I hardly ever do the same workout from week to week. I incorporate Crossfit once a week, yoga two times, track one to two times and then your basic HIIT cardio and weight training. I just started Crossfit this past January. I don't do a ton of powerlifting, but basically, it's intense circuit training, incorporating strength, endurance, coordination, agility and balance. It is very team oriented and a lot of fun.

LT: You signed with Met-Rx last year; I assume you use plenty of their products in your nutritional game plan.

NW: Yes, I signed with Met-Rx last August. I love the company and its products. I use their whey protein powder, Joint Guard, HMB, CLA, BCAAs and other products.

LT: You're far from being the stereotypical ditz blonde. You have an undergraduate degree from Michigan's Oakland University and thought at one time of being a physical therapist.

NW: Correct. I knew I wanted to do something in the health field. I had gone from wanting to be a physical education teacher, then a physical therapist and finally decided on a career in health and wellness. I currently own an online and one-on-one personal-training business called NW Fitness Group Inc.

LT: You're still a puppy at 27. What do you want to do when you grow up?

NW: I plan on competing for another four years or so. I do eventually want to get married and have a family, but in the meantime I will continue to build my online business, promote my show, the NPC Nicole Wilkins and Natural Michigan Championships, sell my DVD, "In Pursuit of a Dream," and have fun competing and working for Met-Rx!

Editor's note: To contact Nicole Wilkins for guest appearances, information on her online personal-training business, purchase "In Pursuit of a Dream" or learn how to break 9 feet in the pole vault, write to her at www.NicoleWilkins.com. **IM**