



BALANCE + **BODY** BUILDING

WORDS
THERESA IVANCIK



Time is not about having the time, it's about making the time.

When you hear the word bodybuilding, what's the first thing that comes to mind? For me it was training, strict diet, tanned muscular physiques posing on stage in posing suits. What I did not know was everything that goes on behind the scenes and beyond the stage as a competitor.

Like many others, most have no idea of the challenges a competitor endures to stand on a stage for a minimal 5-8 minutes. I would like to share valuable information I've learned over the years, and things to think about before you make the decision to compete. You are not only balancing your precious time with this sport, but also a checkbook.

We all know that in the world of bodybuilding a lot of "time" is consumed every day in preparation for a bodybuilding competition. How does one balance time for daily life, jobs, husbands, wives, girlfriends, boyfriends, family,

kids, friends, events, fur babies, and even unexpected issues that may occur?

Time is not about having the time, it's about making the time, because lost time is never found again. We all have the same 24 hours in a day, are you using your time wisely?

To use your time wisely, we start to create this thing called "balance" in our lives. Balance is not something you can find, it's something you create. Balance can also be very tricky for someone trying to wear many hats in their life. In today's world we are all extremely busy, but we must make time for ourselves and do something we enjoy.

Unfortunately, that always ends up being that one thing added to the list that usually comes last, even if we have gotten better at adjusting our time, balancing our lives, and making everything work daily.



Let's start

by discussing what's involved with competitive bodybuilding first, to give you a better understanding of "how" to balance life and bodybuilding.

These are some of the requirements your daily routine might consist of during your preparation:

1. Early wake up
2. Taking fasted progress pics first thing in the morning
3. Followed by fasted cardio
4. Daily stretching, ab work and posing
5. Taking expensive daily supplements
6. Packing all your meals for the day
7. Eating every three hours
8. Drinking/ monitoring your water intake as needed
9. Monitoring your salt intake daily
10. Training time in the gym
11. Practice your posing routine if needed for your division
12. Getting massages or making chiropractic appointments
13. Prepping/cooking food for the following day or week
14. Cleaning all your Tupperware and gym clothes
15. Possible night cardio
16. Followed by 8-9 hours of sleep for good recovery

The above is a breakdown of what is most likely required to be done every day, and, yes, day in and day out. Bodybuilding is a lifestyle and it's mostly based on consistency. It is a sport that most often is referred to as "Groundhog Day" – as your body likes to keep its circadian rhythms to aid in better results.

This means that each day you must do the following at the same time; Wake up, do cardio, take your supplements, eat, train, go to bed. This is just to name a few!



Now that we've covered the daily routine that is required for competitive bodybuilding, **we need to factor in some major expenses that you will incur if you're planning on competing.**

This is where I like to be open and honest, even with my clients who are first starting out, so they understand the expenses up front.

I feel this also helps keep family and friends and spouses on the same page. With this type of balance, also comes some budgeting.

In the list below we are going to cover topics not required daily for balance, but things to also factor in expense-wise if you're planning on competing.

Hiring a coach and or posing coach

- A coach can range from \$800 - \$5000 depending on the length of time per show or year.
- A posing/routine coach can range from \$150 - \$450 per package purchased.

Purchase your NPC or IFBB Membership Card

- NPC card - \$135
- IFBB card - \$275

Registration fees. If you're an NPC athlete, registration fees are paid per class you compete in.

- Range per amateur show - \$100 - \$120 for each class you enter.
- Range per national level - \$300 for each class you enter.

Food and Supplements. Ranges from \$600 - \$1000 and up, per month, depending on division.

Flight and hotel cost

Depending on where you're travelling, most tickets are \$300-\$450 per flight. Hotel room, depending on the nights you stay, can range from \$150 - \$200. Luggage, if not included, usually \$30 a bag - \$60 per round trip.

Parking. From \$6.75 per day, multiplied by the number of days you are away.

Competition Tan

Range from \$150 - \$175

Hair and makeup

Range from \$175 - \$275

Posing suit. A posing suit or two, in addition to shoes and jewelry depending on division.

- Females can range from - \$300 - \$1000 or more, depending on what you order.
- Males can range from - \$80 - \$200 depending on how many suits you need.

Nails

Range from \$60 - \$80

Request time off

- For days you'll be away for the competition
- Cost of a babysitter or board your fur babies
- Expenses per day, depending on the number of days

Finding enough time can be very difficult, even when you're not preparing for a competition. If you are focusing on health and fitness, it's now a lifestyle. You need to find balance to do all the things you enjoy doing and divide your time appropriately.



This sport teaches you a lot about time management.



First and foremost, it's important to have a strong support system. Take the time to fully explain the journey you are about to embark on so that your family, friends, partners, coworkers can better understand your goals and what it is you're doing. Don't let them figure things out on their own or assume you are being distant; **it's best you explain the process to them. Explain that this is temporary and necessary for competition** and will be for a certain number of weeks of strict diet and exercise along with a lot of time needed to focus on the competition.

Helping them understand the diet requirements will definitely be helpful, especially when holidays or family events come around. Please note you will be eating out of a Tupperware container at most events and family gatherings, and this will require a lot of self-control and self-discipline. Try to explain your exercise/posing and meal routine and that you may be hungry the majority of the time, which can cause you to be tired, moody, and even irritable. Most important, explain the expenses, and what is required and how it won't affect the household. Please remember that family comes first when it comes to expenses and love, and it's very important to have strong communication.

From time to time, arguments may occur as your time is constantly swallowed up on an endless list of daily priorities required to do well at your sport. One thing that can't be stressed enough is to plan ahead and start to use and learn time management. You can still do everything you want; go on trips, events, and even vacations, but you'll need to adjust your time. Being a huge planner myself, **most of my day is structured due to competitive bodybuilding.** This can change, and you'll need to adjust to the change.

This sport teaches you a lot about time management. You learn to book appointments and events around your training and if you need to get up earlier one day, you do so to get it all in. This lifestyle also teaches you how to multitask, meaning you will now use your time wisely and possibly get numerous things done at once. One thing I noticed that truly helped me is the good old-fashioned posted notes and a calendar. It's helpful to make a goal list for the day, the week, and the month, so you don't get overwhelmed trying to do everything all in one day.



PHOTO CREDIT: BEN VIATORI

Save time.

Getting things done by importance on your list is something most will struggle with on a daily basis. If you plan and budget your time, this will lower your stress and anxiety, which will keep cortisol from attacking the body. The last thing you want to do while in a competition prep is stress.

Stress will attack the body and cause many other side effects that will hinder your competition preparation. It's best to do what you can when you can. If you miss a meal or training session (it happens, but we try not to) don't be hard on yourself because it will only make it worse.

Get up every day, ready to conquer the day, but be prepared for things to possibly change. Don't let the little things that are out of your control upset you. Make the adjustments as needed and continue following your to do list

with the things being top priority for that day and keep moving forward.

Always save some time for yourself as well, to recharge and prepare for the days ahead. Do not procrastinate on the important items, this will set you up for failure and put you behind. Remember to smile daily and be proud of what you're accomplishing, goals you are achieving, and people you are inspiring.

It's important to make sure you are giving equal time to your spouse and your loved ones. Do not become selfish and obsessed and block out the people that love and support you the most. They are interested and care about what you're doing, but please make sure to be there for them as well.

Some people do call bodybuilding a very selfish sport as it does consume a lot of your individual time if you let it. Plan your time, learn some multi-tasking skills, and budget your finances well.

Do not stress, do what you can, and create your balance. At the end of the day, this is a very expensive hobby, this is not a career as most will call it. We do not make the type of income of other professional athletes in other sports. In this hobby/sport of bodybuilding, we pay to play. You will invest a lot of time and money that you'll never get back; always keep that in mind. It's up to you to decide how long you choose competitive bodybuilding as a lifestyle and how far you want to proceed in this sport.

What you just read could be your routine for the next 10+ years. **Doing this routine every day, year after year can get tedious, be sure to create your balance.** Make room for fun and relax from the daily grind or you will find yourself getting burned out. The daily routine will feel more like a chore which will cause boredom and depression. This is why it's important to add a different type of balance especially in the off season. You can still get the work done but get the opportunity to breathe and let loose a little bit.

In the off season be sure to go out with friends, socialize, treat yourself to foods you don't usually eat, and enjoy things outside of the bodybuilding world. If you do this, you will be more excited and focused to start your next show preparation. Balance in life is the key to everything. Stay true to yourself, your family, your sport and always remember where you came from.