

FLEX_5 TIPS

BY MICHAEL BERG



Whitney Jones credits CBD oil with aiding in her recovery from injuries.

The Fearless Way Forward

Here's how **Whitney Jones** overcame neck surgery and a serious knee injury to win the 2018 Fitness International and Fitness Olympia titles.

■ **FITNESS IS A DYNAMIC SPORT** to watch, but it can take a toll. Whitney Jones knows—the 41-year-old lost all feeling in her right arm after a neck injury in 2017, leading to a two-level cervical fusion procedure. Then, just four weeks ahead of her triumphant return at the 2018 Arnold Classic, she ruptured her ACL and tore her MCL.

But Jones decided to compete anyway, winning the Fitness International title at the 2018 Arnold Classic. Here, she shares five approaches she used to stick the landing on her fitness comeback.

1 FOCUS ON YOUR STRENGTHS. “Going into the 2018 Arnold, I still lacked strength in my right arm, and my right leg couldn’t support weight for more than a second. What I did have was a good left arm and leg and the energy I typically bring to the stage. So within 24 hours of my ACL and MCL tear, I was brainstorming what was essentially a one-legged routine, taking everything I was still capable of doing and capitalizing on it.”

2 WIN THE MENTAL GAME. “I kept my leg injury quiet before the Arnold, because I didn’t want people focused on it. I used smoke and mirrors to hide it and still pull off the performance. If you truly believe that you can do something, your body will follow.”

3 FORGET THE TROPHY. “I go into contests knowing I’ve done everything I could. I have to hit the stage feeling like I’ve already won and not let the judges validate that for me.”

4 ADJUST YOUR CALORIES. “Usually, I’m active for hours a day. After an injury, though, you’re doing a lot less. I reduced my calories by about 30%, focusing on nutrient-dense foods to help the healing process.”

5 EXPAND YOUR RECOVERY REPERTOIRE. “I added a few new tactics to my recovery process. [I implemented] ice baths every other day for my knee, and I started using CBD oil products, which I think has helped dramatically in reducing pain and inflammation.”

IAN SPANIER