

PERFECTLY PREPARED DELTS

> Tired of your steady diet of presses and laterals? Two-time Arnold Classic Figure champ **CANDICE LEWIS-CARTER** dishes up a five-move delt routine to break your shoulder rut.

BY MICHAEL BERG /// PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN SPANIER

As important as great shoulders are to a beautiful physique, the workouts that craft them can be pretty mundane. Just like the monotony of a leaning-out diet—“Chicken breast, rice, and vegetables, again?”—advice on training delts has always revolved around seated presses and lateral raises, ad nauseam.

If you're sick of it all, Candice Lewis-Carter has an exciting new recipe for you. The 2017–18 Arnold Classic Figure champ and all-time winningest figure pro—who recently announced that she was stepping away from competition to start a family—has her own delt routine that doesn't rely on any of those traditional moves. Here, she serves up a five-course delt developer that she's used to perfect her showcase body part. Ready to give it a try?

with *M&F* about her decision and what comes next.

Did you know you were retiring before competing at the 2018 Figure Olympia?

I knew beforehand—I kept it between my husband and closest friends and family. It's why I was so emotional backstage. To get so close to the mountaintop and end up losing by one point was disappointing, but at the same time, I've always been taught to count my blessings and take everything in stride.

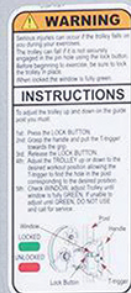
CANDICE GETS CANDID

After the 2018 Figure Olympia, Candice Lewis-Carter let the world in on a secret—the 34-year-old, 13-time champ in the IFBB Professional League was stepping away from competition to try to

start a family with her husband, Wahhab Carter. Four years ago, she received a stunning diagnosis: polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), a disease that can cause fertility issues. Recently, she spoke

How did knowing it was your last show affect your preparation?

It changed everything, from the way I worked out to how I planned my meals. I reached a



LOW ROW

ADD ON
WEIGHT
5 lbs / 2.5 kg

SNAPSHOT
**CANDICE
LEWIS-CARTER**

BIRTH DATE:

July 27, 1984

HEIGHT: 5'5"**CONTEST WEIGHT:**

126 lbs

RESIDENCE:

Houston, TX

INSTAGRAM:

@icandyfitbeauty

YOUTUBE:

@icandylewis

TWITTER:

@icandyfitbeauty

CANDICE LEWIS-CARTER

new level in my training I didn't even realize that I was capable of. Don't get me wrong, I've always trained extremely hard, but this last year was more intense and more of a physical and spiritual journey. I felt like I was training with the weight of the world on my shoulders every day for about four and a half months.

Would you ever consider returning to competition?

I never say never, but my main priority is starting a family. We'll see how I feel after some time away from the stage. I've heard of competitors having the urge to compete right away after having a child, while others fully embrace motherhood, so it will depend on my mindset once I'm at that stage of my life.

You received a PCOS diagnosis at age 30. Did you sense something wasn't right before then?

Looking back now, I do realize something was going on around age 20 but didn't think much of it. I've always had symptoms of PCOS, which can go undetected because they're basic, like acne, fatigue, belly fat, and an irregular menstrual cycle. I felt those things were normal as I was growing older. Around age 30, I immediately knew something within my body



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CANDICE'S DELT WORKOUT

NOT-SO-BORING

BUILD BOULDER SHOULDERS

EXERCISE	SETS	REPS
DUMBBELL Y-RAISE	4	20
ROTATOR CUFF DUMBBELL RAISE	4	20 PER ARM
BUS DRIVER	3	20
AROUND-THE-WORLD	3	10 PER DIRECTION
UPRIGHT BAND ROW	4	20





AROUND-THE-WORLD

TARGETS: ANTERIOR, MIDDLE, AND POSTERIOR DELT HEADS; ROTATOR CUFFS

■ Transitioning from bus drivers (below) to around-the-worlds is easy, as you'll be using the same 25-pound plate. Only this time, you'll be circling it around your head, which targets all three heads of your delts.

■ **DIRECTIONS:** Hold the weight plate in front of your chest, hands

at 9 and 3. From there, lift the weight up and to one side, circling it around your head by moving your arms. You'll feel your shoulder muscles firing as the plate makes its revolution all the way around. Continue this motion 10 times, then reverse direction for 10 revolutions.



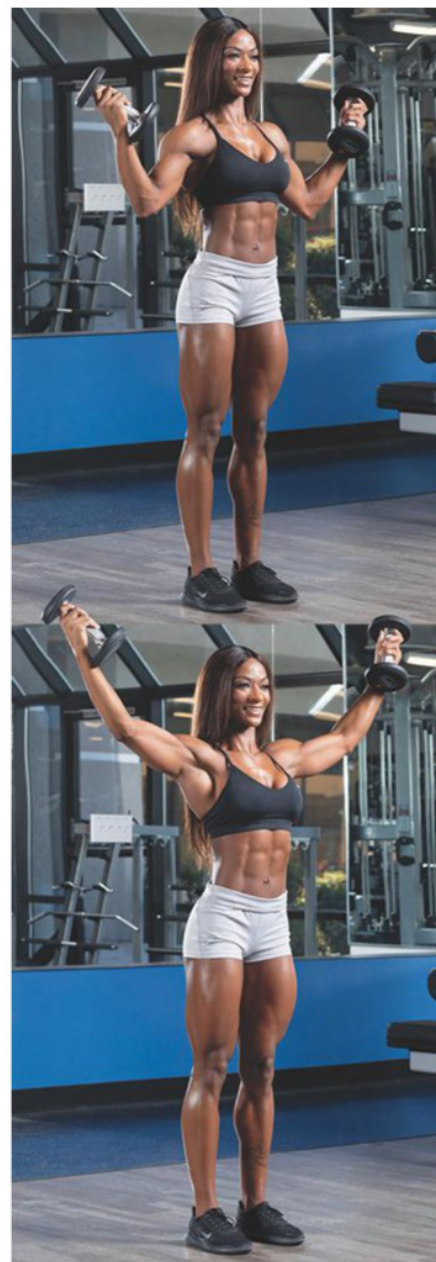
BUS DRIVER

TARGETS: ANTERIOR AND MIDDLE DELTS

■ This move may look easy, but it can get challenging in a hurry, since it keeps your shoulder muscles under stress as you hold a weight plate out in front of your body for a while.

■ **DIRECTIONS:** Hold a 25-pound plate straight out in front of you with

your hands at 9 and 3 or 10 and 2. Slowly rotate the plate as far to one side as you can, as if you were turning a steering wheel. Go as far as is comfortable and then reverse the motion. Once to each side equals a full rep.



DUMBBELL Y-RAISE

TARGETS: MIDDLE DELTS

■ The Y-raise keeps the middle delt head engaged throughout the exercise, as compared with the lateral raise, in which it relaxes in the down position.

■ **DIRECTIONS:** Start with a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing forward and elbows slightly bent. Raise both dumbbells simultaneously upward and out, until both arms resemble the letter Y. You should feel a strong contraction in your delts as you hold that position for a count, then lower your arms back to the start.

CANDICE LEWIS-CARTER

had shifted even more. I noticed I wouldn't see positive results until much later in my contest prep—I was now doing up to three and a half hours of cardio and one to two hours of weightlifting just to get my body fat to drop.

How did the diagnosis impact you in that moment?

The day I was officially diagnosed caught me by total surprise. I was going in for a yearly checkup. As the ob-gyn was doing the exam, she casually pointed out a small black mass that was circular in shape, then counted six cysts. She asked, "Have you ever been diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome?" I couldn't even ask



I FOCUS ON
CARDIO,
MAINTAINING
A HEALTHY
WEIGHT, AND
PUTTING THE
RIGHT FOODS
IN MY BODY.



her what it was before my entire body went cold and my mind went blank. It took me a few days of doing my own research before I told my husband.

How does PCOS affect your efforts to have a child?

My husband and I are now in the first steps of trying to get pregnant, and that consists of tracking ovulation and taking my basal body temperature every morning, along with prenatal vitamins. It's been four months, and we're still hopeful this month or next month will be it. It's emotional and

UPRIGHT BAND ROW

TARGETS: ANTERIOR AND MIDDLE DELTS

■ **Lewis** likes these as a finisher. She chooses a medium resistance band, one that allows her to get about 20 reps, preferring that to dumbbells or a barbell for the continuous tension the band provides.

■ **DIRECTIONS:** Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, a band running directly under your feet. With arms down and elbows straight, hold the

band with an overhand grip, hands together. At the start, your hands should be in front of your hips. From there, bend your arms as you raise them—your elbows should point out to the sides as you pull the band up toward your face. Once your hands reach chin level, pause and squeeze for a moment, then reverse the motion under control.





ROTATOR CUFF DUMBBELL RAISE

TARGETS: ROTATOR CUFFS

■ Lewis-Carter prefers to do these one arm at a time so she can focus on each rotator cuff complex individually. She errs on the side of using a lighter dumbbell—because the rotator cuff is small relative to the deltoids, going too heavy makes it more likely that larger muscles will come into play.

■ **DIRECTIONS:** Stand upright with a

dumbbell in each hand, to help with balance, and keep one arm parallel with the floor, elbow bent 90 degrees. Keeping your core tight and the rest of your body still, twist the bent arm up to bring the dumbbell upward in an arc toward the ceiling, then return it deliberately along the same path. Complete 20 reps with one arm, then switch.

embarrassing at times, but I feel I have prepared myself as best as I can for the unknown. Our next steps will be to exhaust all of our options to have our baby.

How has having PCOS changed your outlook on life?

I'm focusing on the good, and gaining self-awareness in order to help others in any way I can. There are many ways to ease some of the symptoms, like cutting out sugar, eating fewer carbs, adding more vegetables to your diet, and working out. You can live a healthy and happy life with PCOS. The possibility of having a child may be harder, but it is possible.

How are you going to approach training now that you're not competing?

My training intensity went from 10 to about a 5. I focus on cardio, maintaining a healthy weight, and putting the right foods in my body. I absolutely love yoga, so I practice a lot at home to relax, as PCOS causes depression and anxiety because of the hormone imbalances.

In what other ways are you keeping busy?

I'm working on some projects, including a TV show, and I'll also continue to travel around the world thanks to my sponsors, Yamamoto Nutrition and Six Deuce Leggings. I enjoy a strong relationship with the FitExpo team, too, and just returned from trips with them to San Diego and Los Angeles. I have my second-annual Candice Carter Classic coming up, and I train figure competitors, with about 20 on my current roster. But most important, after five years of marriage, Wahhab and I are excited about the next chapter in life together. I look forward to announcing the birth of our baby. **MAF**