



Trish Stratus introduces us to a member of Team Stratusphere - Belinda Kim, an instructor at Stratusphere Yoga Studio. Trish sat down with Belinda to learn about the important role yoga plays in her life and how it will help her in her quest to become Miss Universe Canada 2010.

First of all, tell us about the class you designed called 'Hot Core' which people can come and experience weekly at Stratusphere and what they can expect? Hot Core is a class that fuses genres from the weight training world and yoga (ashtanga and hatha) - vinyasa-flow movements that work to get you to strengthen your core with the resistance of your own body weight. Each week I rotate through the following themes: strength, flexibility of the spine, hipopeners/abs and balance. I wish for my students to understand that it is incredibly important to strengthen the core through many intricate movements (this can be done not just with crunches), and how it will impact their everyday life; once you have a stronger core you have better posture; when you have better posture, you breathe better; when you breathe better, you have a better flow of oxygen flowing through your system and as a result, you are a healthier individ-

## How did you get into yoga?

I discovered yoga at the age of 16 during a rehabilitative phase after suffering from a herniated disk caused by years of participa-



tion in competitive sports, such as soccer, basketball and volleyball. I became more serious into the practice in university as I was noticing severe nerve pains in my right leg after sitting for long periods of studying. I studied with Daniel Lacerda (aka Mr. Yoga) in Toronto and he helped me understand the practice of yoga in such a deeper form. This is when I fell in love with yoga. After discovering this incredible tool and how it was able to heal my body, my mission in life was to use my training to help others maximize the quality of their lives through exercise, nutrition and positive mindset.



Are you using yoga as part of your preparation for the Miss Universe contest?

Yes, definitely. Everything that I do is yoga, as I practice my asanas and meditate daily. In terms of the physical practice of yoga, it's very important for me to maintain the leanness of my structure and prevent myself from any forms of injuries or stiffness from everyday life and my weight training so it's imperative for me to be consistent with my practice. In terms of the mental aspect of yoga, I take time to calm my mind and visu-



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alize the pageant and how I would be onstage. There are days when I feel eager or overwhelmed with my work so I take time to tune the chaos in my mind and enjoy moments of stillness with my breath. Competing against such beautiful intelligent women, sometimes your mind can get the best of you so it's important to stay focused on why you are competing and not compare yourself to the rest. As one of my friends reminds me, "no one can do YOU better like YOU can."

## What about your daily diet and workout routine? Is it different from your regular diet/workout routine?

In preparation for the GTA and Central Ontario Preliminary Pageant, the girls were practicing runway and choreography every weekend for up to 6 hours Saturday and Sunday. Leading towards the nationals, we have runway and interview training once a month. In terms of training, my goal is not to look too muscular, yet I want to represent strength and beauty, so I am training my regular routines to be at peak condition while staying toned, slim and healthy looking. I have, however made some alterations in my diet and training regiments. In order to maintain a slim but strong physical structure, I have begun my strict and clean eating habits daily. This is the challenge.

Those who are close to me know that I am a tyrant when it comes to eating. I am very specific when it comes to my eating schedule otherwise, my energy levels become extremely low. Teaching and training client's 6-days a week, and being out of the house usually from 9am - 9pm at night, a girl has got to eat regularly! My meals consist of eating six to seven small meals per day, limiting out the heavy carbs, such as breads and pastas and consuming more brown rice, veggies, and protein with every main meal.

Some of my favorites consist of chicken breast, lean beef, eggs whites and no-fat cottage cheese. Additionally I take in my supplements of Iso-Flex Protein powder post workouts, muli-vitamins, omega-3 fish oils, calcium magnesium pills, and a vitamin -C pill before my 3 main meals. My weak-

ness, admittingly, is my sweets. Growing up with parents owning several Sweet Factories doesn't help me today - I love and crave chocolate daily. In order to fix my cravings, I eat a square of dark chocolate with almonds daily after my dinner and I also use chocolate/peanut flavor protein powder. It's all mental, ladies and gentleman! If you tell your brain you cannot do something, you want to do it. And so, I avoid telling myself that I cannot do it and recite the words "choose a better option, that one is not too good for your body right now". I know, the brain is a powerful force.

But it works! My philosophy is against any sort of deprivation, hence why I treat myself to a small snack daily this way I won't snap and binge! My training regiment consists of the following: 4-day split workouts (working two muscles groups four days a week), running on the treadmill for 30 minutes six days/week; 1 hr power yoga daily and stretch sessions once or twice a day; one day of rest.. Sleep seven hours a day. Oh how I love my sleep! Now with the extra cardio fitted into my schedule I can feel my body fatigues a lot quicker mid day.

## What is your ultimate goal and how will becoming Miss Universe Canada help you achieve this?

I hope to use the Miss Universe crown as a platform to empower young women around the globe to be powerful, yet selfless leaders through workshops and videos, inspiring them to use their own talents while living a healthy, strong and balanced lifestyle.

You can check out Belinda's Hot Core class at Stratusphere every Wednesday at 8pm, for more information visit: www.stratusphereyoga.com. For more information about Belinda and her journey to become Miss Universe Canada 2010, visit her website: www.belindakim.com.

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