

Angela Ruscilli

Age: 52

Competition Highlights: Has had numerous 1st place wins as a IFBB Professional League Masters Bikini Competitor including Pittsburgh Pro, Hurricane Pro, Charlotte Pro, Florida Grand Prix, Puerto Rico & Atlantic Coast

At 16 years old, and a sophomore in high school, I was in a horrific car accident that left me in a coma for eight days. I suffered a traumatic brain injury and was paralyzed on the left side of the body. Shortly before the accident, I had begun training in the gym just to get in shape. It would be a full two years after the accident, rehab, and a tough junior year before I went back to the gym and I just fell in love with it. The worst part about the accident was that it left me unable to remember things so I had to re-learn almost everything; but the weight training came back to me rather quickly.

It's a pretty serious decision for a 16 year old. How do you go about getting back in the gym and lifting?

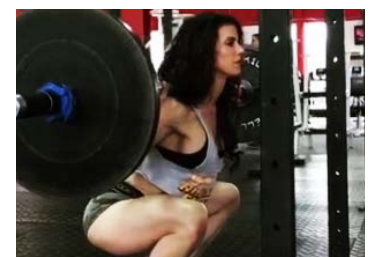
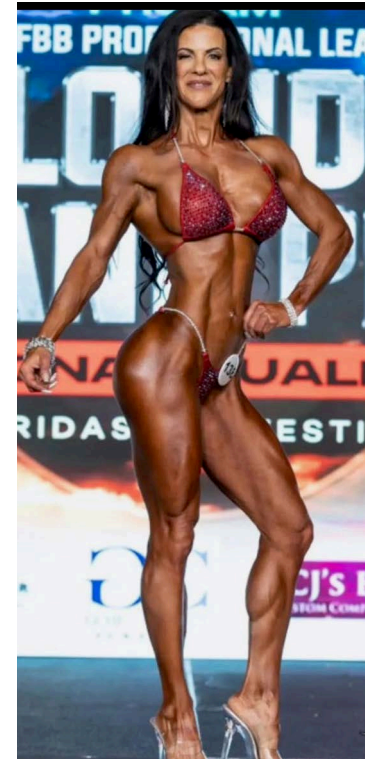
It was really hard. I was on a walker for a month and I wasn't allowed to drive for a year and a half. I entered college and, like many, put on the freshman 30. In 1991, I was dating a bodybuilder and that's when I began competing. I never looked back, I love it! I was tiny, but I just had fun with it. But at that time the only division for women was bodybuilding. After I graduated college I took time off only competing a couple of times between 1994-2006. In 2006, I won the NPC Natural Ohio and went to NPC Universe. After that I tried several other categories including Fitness, Figure and even Women's Physique. I won figure overall at the Arnold Amateur in 2010. I did well in everything I tried but in 2015 I made the switch to Bikini, earned a Pro card right away and I've been doing Bikini ever since.

Did you have someone helping you prep for shows?

I did everything in the weight room myself until 2008. In the very beginning I had help with nutrition from Beverly. After I won the NPC Natural Ohio I trained with Mike Davies for 7-8 years. Then I began training on my own. Mike Ely was my prep coach when I won my pro card.

What an inspiration you are! So now at 52, and a single mom, do you still compete?

I do. I've won 18 pro titles in the last 3 years as a Masters Bikini athlete. I've applied to the Masters Olympia so like everyone else, I'm just waiting to find out on April 24th.



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Angela, it takes a lot of discipline and commitment to go from coma to the competition stage not just to compete but to win! What has been your biggest challenge in sustaining that level of condition for such a long time?

Having kids and working full time is probably my biggest challenge. I have two boys, one is a sophomore in college and the other is a senior in high school. I get up at 3am, have breakfast and train in my gym in my basement. Then I go to work, come home or go to watch them in their sports. I'm a physical therapist, but attended osteopathic classes at Michigan State Osteopathic Medical School so I work full-time in an outpatient rehab clinic and have my own small practice on the weekends. My schedule is crazy but getting up at 3am is how I make it to work.

Did that occur as a result of your accident?

Yes, I wanted to be a brain surgeon, but in school I discovered my memory is a big problem as a result of the accident, so I switched from pre-med to physical therapy. They considered me a student with disabilities which allowed me to test in a distraction free environment and gave me extra time as well. I graduated but it was hard. Prior to the accident I never even had to study and I got straight A's. After the accident I really had to work hard to squeak by, but I did! Graduate school was different. I finished a 2 year program in one year and graduated with a 4.0.

Do either of your kids want to follow your path?

Both of them want to become doctors. They both workout but neither of them are thinking about the sport of bodybuilding at this time.



Angela, as someone in your 50's that has won so many shows, clearly you have set an example for other women. What message would you like to share with them?

Anything can be done if you put your mind to it, within reason of course. It amazes me to see what the body can actually accomplish when you stick to it. You just need to be consistent. I believe that's why I've done so well. I'm consistent, I won't give up on myself and I don't take my health for granted.

Your success speaks for itself and is a true inspiration. Tell us about your current training, what's your split look like?

I am coached by Mike Rattenni, Unchained Physiques but I am still training on my own. As a result, I changed up my training split to upper body 2x a week and lower body plus glutes every other day because I'm in my 50's and it's really hard to build up your glutes. It takes time. Part of the reason for this split is also dealing with stability in my spine (which is from the accident) and compartment syndrome in my arm which I believe is a result of other muscle compensating. Stabilizing my spins takes time and patience because everything has to be done so slowly and intentional. Since I've been training on my own, I've had a lot less injuries because I know what my body can and can't do.

Do you ever train other people?

I have recently started posing and coaching for other athletes on my days off. I live in the Upper Arlington area of Columbus, Ohio. I'd like to do more coaching with women. I filed an LLC called Angel Fitness Studios that incorporates both physical therapy and anything else I do fitness related. I have about six girls I'm working with that will be competing in a local show in April. I'm excited!

Angela, you've proven that you're a force to be reckoned with. Good luck at your next show, the NPC IFBB Pro League Girl Power Championships and hope you make it to the 2023 Olympia Masters. Thank you.

