

Grace Griswold

Age: 21

Senior at University of South Carolina
 Summer 2023: Marketing Internship at
 Women's Fitness Studio, Madrid, Spain

Grace competed in gymnastics, diving, and cheer-leading growing up. She began lifting about two years ago, but wasn't really familiar with bodybuilding competitions. However, as she looked into fitness online, she saw photos and videos of people competing and it struck a curiosity in her. Previously not even knowing what bodybuilding competition was, she thought it was something she'd like to try, so January 2, 2023 Grace began her prep.

Her journey would require that she not only lose weight but also add muscle. While her best estimate on total weight lost is 35lbs, her pictures say it all. She began her competition prep while studying and going to school. Admittedly, prep is never easy but to do it at her age and while in school made it even more difficult. Mentally, you're tired, you still have to study, and food prep and you have to do it all on your own.



Eventually Grace found a good routine and even found fun things she could do while on prep. One of the things that made a huge difference was who's around you. She said "It was definitely hard. Many times I even brought my food to restaurants but the temptation was still hard. I really had to remind myself everyday the reason why I was doing what I was doing, thinking about the outcome and knowing it would be worth it."

It's very admirable and amazing that at such a young age Grace took on this challenge and saw it through. Competition is not an easy task for anyone, at any phase of life. There are always challenges and obstacles to overcome and it is hard. Finding little ways to keep motivated throughout the journey is key.

Grace competed in her first show at this year's NPC Cydney Gillon Peach Classic in Bikini where she placed 3rd in True Novice, 4th in Novice and 4th in Open Class A and in Figure placing 4th in True Novice, 3rd in Novice, and 8th in Open Class A. 6 classes, 5 medals, Grace definitely has got the competition bug! She says she was kicking herself when she watched the videos because she knows she can do better and I have no doubt she will next time.

"From the moment I put the suit on and stepped on stage for the Bikini division," Grace explains, "it just felt different, it just felt right and I enjoyed myself so much more. I realized this is why everyone loves it so much." She is definitely excited to focus on the Bikini division for her next show.

The plan at this point is to finish her senior year of college, use that time to grow and then prepare to compete. With a year of building it will make a huge difference in Grace's physique and it's refreshing to see that she understands that bodybuilding is more than just dieting to lose weight, it's about shaping the body. In addition to her graduate classes,

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Grace is working on becoming a certified Personal Trainer through NASM. Ultimately, her goal is to be involved in the fitness industry and whether that means coaching one on one or online, or promoting other fitness brands, we'll just have to see where life takes her.

The most insightful thing Grace realized was that knowing she prefers individual sports, she can't believe she didn't start this bodybuilding journey sooner. Overall, it's been the hardest thing she's ever done. She explains that the journey to the stage taught her so many things about life and about herself including how to be disciplined, a new way to look at what she's eating and putting into her body, and that she is capable of much more physically and mentally than she ever thought. Having a natural competitive drive helped!

Remembering your "why" is the one piece of advice she shares with anyone wanting to start their own fitness journey. Whether you're struggling one day or not sure if you're making progress, remembering your "why" and thinking more long term, instead of thinking that the one exercise that you don't feel like doing or that one bite of something that's not a part of your plan, will make a difference so just stick to the plan. When you can see where you started and think about how good you will look and feel in a few months, you can achieve your goals and it'll all be worth it. The time is going to pass anyway so you might as well make the most of it and leave no regrets on the table.

Now that she's experienced her first show, we are so excited to see what Grace does next!

