

FROM PROFESSIONAL DANCER TO FITNESS PRO

JACLYN BAKER

IFBB Fitness Pro, Age: 40

Occupation: Fitness Nutrition Specialist

Coach & Trainer: Chino Burgos, Pro Body Fitness, Mamaroneck, NY

Competition Highlights:

2024 Arnold Sports Festival, Fitness, 2nd Place/ Runner Up

2023 IFBB Mr. Olympia, 3rd Place

2023 Arnold Sports Festival, Fitness, 2nd Place/ Runner Up

2022 IFBB Mr. Olympia, 2nd Place

2022 Arnold Sports Festival, 3rd Place

2021 IFBB Mr. Olympia, 5th Place

2021 Arnold Sports Festival, 4th Place

2020 IFBB Mr. Olympia, 5th Place

2019 IFBB Pro Miami Muscle Beach, Fitness, 1st Place

2018 IFBB Tampa Pro, Fitness, 2nd Place

2017 NPC Universe Championships, Fitness, 1st Place – earned Pro Status

2017 NPC Steve Stone Metropolitan Championships, Fitness, 1st Place

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How did you begin in the sport of bodybuilding?

I was actually a professional dancer for 10 years prior to bodybuilding. I was in the gym in New York City using the pool because I had a dancing injury. I met Chino Burgos, now my coach, and he asked me if I had ever thought of competing. He was looking to get back into the bodybuilding industry and wanted to transform someone from beginning to end. He thought I had the potential he was looking for. I had thought about it in the past, but I was always dancing and competing and that wasn't really in line with what I was doing. However, at the time that he asked, I was transitioning out of dance and looking for an alternative. I asked some friends to make sure that if I was going to commit to competition, he would be a good coach for me and was told "If you're wanting to do bodybuilding, definitely work with him."



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Where do you work?

I work in New York City in-person and virtual as a fitness nutrition specialist. I love helping people and educating them on nutrition and fitness. The name of my company is Jax B Fitness. I currently have mostly lifestyle clients, but also a few competitors. Some of my clients are dancers that work with me to improve their strength and I do assist in choreographing routines for Fitness competitors.

What are your future business and competition goals?

I’d like to expand my business and continue educating and helping people on nutrition programs that work for them. At this point, I want to continue competing. This year I plan to compete at the Arnold, Ohio, Arnold, UK and then Olympia. This will be my first year competing internationally. I’m really excited about that. I enjoy judging amateur competitions, so after I retire I’d like to judge professional competitions as well. Beyond that, I would like to continue choreographing, performing and continue speaking.

You mentioned a dance injury earlier, what kind of injury was it?

It’s what I would call a wear and tear injury. I have torn cartilage in my hip and have a chronic hamstring tear. There wasn’t a specific incident that occurred where I injured myself, but I’ve been managing it with physical therapy and doctor’s guidance since 2010.

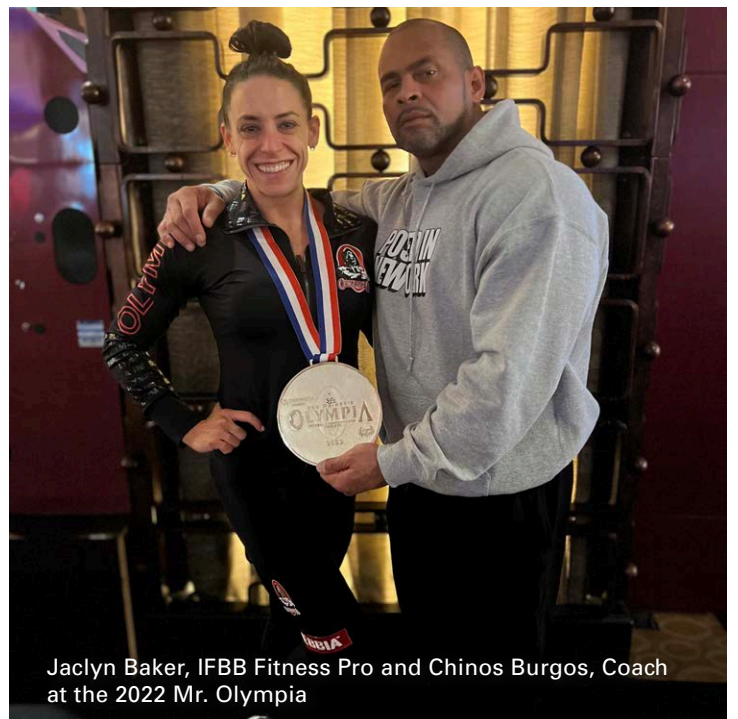
I trained with him for six months. I competed in my first bodybuilding competition in Figure at the 2015 NPC Steve Stone Metropolitan Championships. I won both Novice and Class B and just kept going. Once my coach discovered my extensive dance and acrobatic background, we switched to the Fitness division. I earned IFBB Pro status in 2017 at the NPC Universe Championships.

What kind of dance were you a professional in?

Growing up I was a competitive dancer and received a bachelor’s in fine arts of dance from the University of Arizona and trained in lyrical, ballet, tap and jazz. After that, I danced for two contemporary companies in New York and Royal Caribbean cruise lines.

When did you make your pro debut?

I made my Pro Fitness debut at the IFBB Toronto Pro Supershow in 2018 and competed in my first Olympia that same year. Since then I’ve competed at five more Olympias placing top 5 in all of them with my highest finish to date at 2nd place in 2022 along with four Arnold Classics placing top 3 in the past three years.



Jaelyn Baker, IFBB Fitness Pro and Chinos Burgos, Coach at the 2022 Mr. Olympia



Who do you use to do your choreography or do you do your own choreography?

I have a friend, Grady Bowman, that I danced with years ago. He's well-known in the dance industry and actually lives in Atlanta. When he comes into town for a weekend, my coach Chino and I meet with him to come up with a new routine. My sisters help me rehearse. We all work together as a team. People like my routines because they are a little bit different than some of the other women's routines. My costumes are all created by a friend named Andrea; she's fantastic.

I currently train with my coach about three times a week. I just turned 40 and you have to train smarter when you're older. You have to listen to your body to know when to push and when to pull back. There are different tricks that have a high degree of difficulty without the risk or impact to the body and you also can change up the way you rehearse, making sure not to push your body into the ground. I have found if I focus on training skills that will help me with the push up for example, I don't really have to do the push ups all the time.

Is there something special or different that you're going to do this year, to try to push you up into that top spot?

We've tweaked my physique and really aiming to nail the conditioning. My routine has a little bit of a different vibe to it, still really true to me, what I do on stage, and what I like to do as an athlete. Hopefully the judges will like the new vibe and the changes we've made.



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Chinos Burgos, Coach, Jaclyn Baker, IFBB Fitness Pro and Grady Bowman, Choreographer at the 2023 Arnold Sports Festival

What are you doing for your business to appeal to new clients? And how do you advertise and acquire your clients?

I use Instagram and Facebook, and I also send out monthly newsletters to all of my family and followers. I really don't believe in filtering my life or portraying this perfect persona. I feel it's important to be as real as possible on social media, be relatable in showing the struggles and that it's not all about looking perfect and plastic all the time or having shredded abs all the time. It's okay to see the struggles, the ups and downs, and just showing what life is really like as opposed to some sort of idea of perfection.

Fitness is a tough category but one of the most exciting and entertaining. While there's not a lot of shows and opportunities to perform, it is a division you seem to have excelled at. We are wishing you all the best this year!

