



Inspirational Story

ASPIRE: to long, aim, or seek ambitiously; be eagerly desirous, especially for something great or of high value

USE YOUR STRUGGLES FOR YOUR STRENGTH

You can make your own opportunities to realize your dreams

Maria Diaz

IFBB Figure Pro

Age: 36

Husband: Tom Pereira

Co-owner: Prolifters Gym, Malden, MA
Nutrition Consultant, Group Training Specialist

Competition Highlights:

- 7-time Olympia, highest placing Top 6, 2017
- 8X IFBB Pro Figure Champion
- Arnold Classic Brazil, Top 6, 2017
- Arnold Classic Ohio, Top 6, 2018
- Arnold Classic Australia, Top 6, 2018

Sponsors:

- Dragon Pharma
- Liquid Sun Rayz
- Maggie Suits



.....

“ At 17, I met my now husband. He was very into bodybuilding and that is how I was introduced to the sport. ”

.....

COMING TO AMERICA

Originally from Chile, I immigrated with my parents to America 17 years ago. I'm the oldest of five siblings. We lived in Boston and I was in middle school at the time. Coming from what was considered middle class in Chile to walking away from everything and starting from scratch in America was a big change. It was seven of us in one little room, in a basement with no windows. The older siblings took care of the younger siblings, while my parents worked long hours for us to survive. It was very hard. We did not speak the language, could not read the language. We had to learn and do everything for ourselves with no help. There was no option to say, "I can't". We had to focus on what we could do. I learned that at a young age and it's the philosophy I live by and run my business with today.

We moved frequently, so I never developed the long-term relationships that help you navigate the middle school and high school years; it was lonely. Obviously, my parents could not afford to pay for college so I started working early, around 14 or 15 years old, so I could pay for the things I wanted, including my own place to live when I was 17. The alternative, using that as an excuse to do nothing and blame your parents, was not for me. I chose to use the hard times as fuel and strength to keep going and make the life I wanted to happen on my own. I discovered, you start attracting like-minded people to your life and those people are willing to help you because they can see you are hard-working and have a good work ethic. I worked in retail and was able to pay for community college.

CAREER

I really wanted to get a degree in nutrition. I was always an athlete and loved sports. When I tried to join gymnastics in school in Boston, not knowing the language made me very shy in the beginning and being Hispanic, I felt like an outsider. I eventually began playing volleyball but still always felt like I had to work harder to show others what I was capable of.

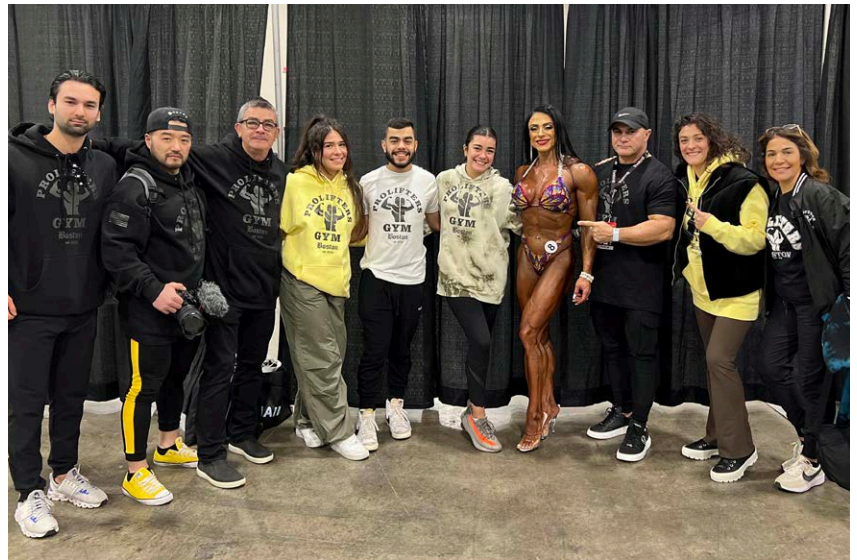


At 17, I met my now husband. He was very into bodybuilding and that is how I was introduced to the sport. Being naturally competitive, I used the struggles of my past to my benefit to overcome the mental challenges. We worked hard to build the life that we have, opening our gym in the middle of the pandemic. Even though others thought we were crazy, it made us work even harder to prove we have the character, determination and perseverance to have our own business. I have a passion to help people and once I began personal training and nutritional guidance, the transformations of our clients from zero to the stage level was inevitable. Word of our success started spreading. Combined with social media, people from all over began contacting me. Our online training has become very strong. When you are in business for yourself, it means very long hours, but it allowed us to save. COVID then became the perfect opportunity to build our dream, even when all the other gyms were closed down. I believe what my parents gave me was an opportunity by coming to America. They taught me and my siblings by example that through hard work you can have what you want. By using your struggles as your strength, you can make your own opportunities to realize your dreams and make a good living for yourself.

.....

“ I have a passion to help people and once I began personal training and nutritional guidance, the transformations of our clients from zero to the stage level was inevitable. ”

.....



IFBB PRO

In 2011, I was 22 years old when I competed in my first bodybuilding competition and earned my IFBB Pro card that same year. I won the NPC Eastern USA, competed at the NPC New England Classic and Steve Weinberger suggested I compete at the NPC National Championships. But at the time I was not a US citizen, I only had my residency. We did not know this would be an issue until the NPC called me two weeks before the show. Instead I traveled to a pro qualifying show in Venezuela. It was a very quick and crazy experience, but in the end I earned professional status and became the first female to become an IFBB Pro from Chile. I made my pro debut at The Pittsburgh Pro and I also competed at the New York Pro and have done those two shows every year since, except for the year I had surgery. I have now competed at 7 Mr. Olympias. I feel that the older I've gotten, the better my body has gotten. I am still placing well competing in the open division so until the judges tell me otherwise, I'm not slowing down.

SPONSORSHIPS

I was recently offered a sponsorship by Dragon Pharma. They've been very supportive and I love their product. They've made a huge difference for me in just a short period of time. Liquid Sun Rayz has also sponsored me and I love their product, too. I always promote what I really like. I've also been wearing Maggie Suits since my very first show and I'm very loyal. I am proud to promote her brand and she continues to sponsor me.

GROWING THE BUSINESS & BRAND

Our goal is to open a second location in the Boston area in the near future and then expand to different states bringing old school to a new generation. We've been able to put our Pro Lifting Systems in place to develop trainers, training programs, nutrition programs and customer service. It's important to us to maintain quality for our clients, so additional locations will be owner operated. Our employees also have plenty of opportunities to grow with us. We believe we have created an efficiently laid out atmosphere with an old school vibe, great music, friendly employees and clients, where beginners and bodybuilders can train and they are all motivated to be their best. The type of place where the diversity and vibe make you want to join. In addition, we sell high-quality, customized, unisex apparel that you can wear to workout at the gym or you can wear it out as a casual look. With systems in place we are ready to duplicate the business model. Florida is another place we'd like to establish a Prolifters Gym; the warmer weather is very appealing to us! I can see offering workshops and even promoting a show as future goals.

Maria, you've worked hard to get what you have, earning every bit of success that you have so far. And that's a good thing. I am sure your plans for the future will also be successful and I can't wait to watch your dreams come to fruition.



“ We believe we have created an efficiently laid out atmosphere with an old school vibe, great music, friendly employees and clients, where beginners and bodybuilders can train and they are all motivated to be their best. ”