

FORTRESS FITNESS

LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE ISSUE 2 - 2024

NAVIGATING HEALTH AND WORKLIFE BALANCE

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
OFFICIAL SILVER FOX DEBUT

MS. UNIVERSE T & T REP 2023
FAITH GILLEZEAU CHIMES IN

EMPOWERING BODY
& SPIRIT

NUTRITION CORNER
THE WINNING TEAM

CONTENTS

05
**How to Control
Diabetes**

06
**Cultural Foods &
Eating Healthy**

11 **Miss T&T Universe
Representative 2023
Faith Gillezeau Chimes In**

Wazim and
Marissa the
Winning Team
Story on p. 32



32
The Winning Team

Marissa & Wazim

3
Editor's Note

13
Self-Care Tips For Work-From-Home

15
Silver Fox Debut - Ian 'Jamesy' Adams
Becoming the "Caribbean Silver Fox"

19
Meet Abeni Procope
Meet the newest member of the Fortress
Fitness Team

24
**Natasha Ali: Balancing Business &
Wellness**
How she balances work and fitness!

27
Meet Lee-Ann Keith
This year's most-awaited thriller

29
Trainer and Student
John-Ross Wong & Shania Deosaran

36
Empowering Body & Spirit
by Samantha Ramischand Kublalsingh



Editor's Note

NAVIGATING HEALTH AND WORKLIFE BALANCE

We are at it again providing the best content related to lifestyle change in a magazine. We are bringing you tips and telling the stories of those who are committed to living healthily. Their stories have encouraged me on my weight loss journey that one day I too will be able to share. It is not easy but the race is not for the swift, but for those who endure till the end. Enjoy!

Candice Reid Bethel

Editor-in-Chief



In this issue

I am immensely proud of the work Candice, Abeni and I have done to bring this 2nd issue to fruition. The unending support and positive feedback we continue to receive for our Facebook LIVES/Podcast Series. Thank you to ALL!

~ Victor Francis Chief Operations Officer

dry!

THEN READ THIS...

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200 YEARS

1824

2024



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extra delicious*

TOASTING to 200 YEARS and BEYOND

HOW TO CONTROL DIABETES

This was an interesting topic for me to cover because as Didi, your Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, I help my clients to overcome Diabetes. Yes, many research supports this because as I always say, "if you ate your way into it, you can eat your way out of it!"

There are 3 types of Diabetes, Type 1 which is where people need insulin to control their blood sugar levels as they can't produce it. Type 2 and Gestational Diabetes are the areas of my focus when it comes to overcoming uncontrolled blood sugar levels with nutrition. Type 1 can be better managed with a healthy lifestyle, but the other two types you don't have to live with.



It's important to learn how to balance and create a suitable lifestyle for you specifically! This is why I recommend my nutrition products and services for those who are ready to become empowered. It's definitely not an overnight process, but these are 3 main areas of focus for better controlling blood sugar spikes:

- 1) Focus on combinations with snacks and meals e.g. banana and peanut butter or nuts. Combinations give you a variety of nutrients that help with your blood sugar levels.
- 2) Make healthy swaps e.g. using honey instead of sugar for a sweetener.
- 3) Adding more fibre to meals e.g. vegetables such as lettuce, cucumber.

Remember, you can't just overcome it from these habits, but it helps! The aim is to develop a healthy relationship with food. It's best to overcome the misconception that Diabetes can't be overcome. Whether you believe it or not, my clients adjust their lifestyle based on a personalized approach to eat to nourish their bodies effectively.

The main concerns with Diabetes is that if your blood sugars remain high, it can damage your kidneys, eyes, feet and cause major complications long term. This is why it's important to correct this lifestyle disease now. Your blood sugars should never cross 100mg/dl fasting value and 200mg/dl 2 hours after a meal.



Candida Khan Dietician Nutritionist, Chronic Disease Specialist and founder of Didi's Nutrition Consultancy.



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CULTURAL FOODS AND HEALTHY EATING

A quick Google search for ‘healthy eating’ will yield a flurry of images and lists of “foreign” foods like berries, kale, asparagus, and Atlantic salmon, to name a few.

In addition, you may have encountered several people—Caribbean health and wellness professionals included—that have told you to “cut out” many cultural foods to eat healthy. Whichever of these may have been your experience, I’m here to add a new perspective on healthy eating with cultural foods.



By Amber Alexis, MSPH, RD



CULTURAL FOODS CONNECT YOU TO YOUR COMMUNITY.

Culture influences the foods that you eat, your religious practices, and even your perspective of wellness, healing, and healthcare. Research even shows that your thoughts about some foods and your willingness to try new foods are influenced by your cultural background. Therefore, healthy eating must be understood within the context of culture.

The Caribbean is a melting pot of many cultures, and you can bet that the heart-and-soul of many social gatherings is the food.

Although many traditional meals are not typically seen as nutritious or healthy, they may be filled with dietary fiber, complex carbohydrates, and vegetables. For example, a plate of chicken pelau, coleslaw and sliced avocado can be both heart- and blood sugar-friendly when served in appropriate portions for your health goals.

CULTURAL FOODS AND HEALTHY EATING CON'T

HEALTHY EATING IS NOT A ONE-SIZE FITS ALL.

Yes, kale is a nutritious vegetable, but so are dasheen bush (taro leaves) and bhagi spinach.

Quinoa is an excellent source of protein and dietary fiber, but so is rice and beans.

Atlantic salmon is rich in heart-healthy omega-3 fats, but so are local salmon, sardines, and smoked herring.

Healthy eating is not limited to Eurocentric foods—it doesn't need to be whitewashed—and does not require specific 'foreign' foods.

In fact, healthy eating looks different across various cultures, is based on what you comfortably have access to and can sustain for the long-term.



EAT HEALTHY WITH CULTURAL FOODS...EVEN IF IT'S NOT POPULAR.

Caribbean cultural foods fit into a healthy eating pattern.

Let's go back to that chicken pelau for example.

Pelau is a one-pot dish made with caramelized chicken, rice, pigeon peas, and vegetables like pumpkin, carrots, sweet peppers (bell peppers), and herbs and seasonings like chives (green onions), chadon beni (culantro), thyme and bay leaf.

The dish may be made with other meats like beef or skip the meats altogether and be vegetarian.

In this one pot, the Caribbean six food groups are represented:

- staples (rice)
- foods from animals (chicken)
- legumes (pigeon peas)
- vegetables (coleslaw)
- fruits (counting a side of tomato and cucumbers as such)
- fats (in the cooking and if served with a slice of zaboca/avocado)

CULTURAL FOODS AND HEALTHY EATING CON'T

Of course, your portion sizes matter, but we can already see how this dish is rich in a variety of nutrients that can support optimal health—and you didn't have to cut it out.

TAKEAWAY

Healthy eating must take culture into account since it can influence so many aspects of your health and wellness.

Despite mainstream health and wellness imagery and messages, healthy eating is not a one-size-fits all and does not demand that you cut out cultural foods to achieve your goals. Speak with your registered dietitian to learn which portions are right for you.

Sources:

- [the_cultural_dimension_of_food.pdf \(unscn.org\)](#)
- [Cultural Moderation of Unconscious Hedonic Responses to Food - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)
- [The Purnell Model for Cultural Competence - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)





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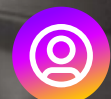


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MISS T&T UNIVERSE REPRESENTATIVE 2023 FAITH GILLEZEAU CHIMES IN

Hailing from San Fernando and having won Miss Universe Trinidad and Tobago 2023, Faith is no stranger to national service having been a member of the National Squash Team since the age of ten.

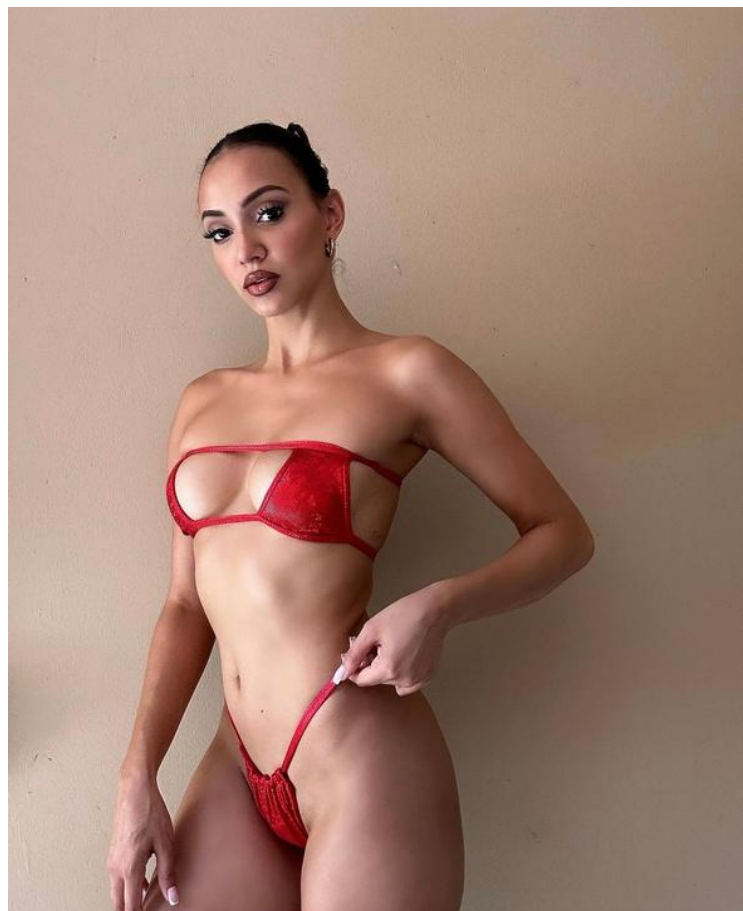
She is a pharmacist by trade holding a BSc. Pharmacy and an MBA in Hospital and Health Services Management, and continues to apply her medical knowledge through her social advocacy aimed at teaching children the benefits of diet and exercise in mitigating their risk of chronic disease.

She is a professional model, avid steelpan player, and advocate for youth and female empowerment leading through her example.

A healthy lifestyle is not only beneficial but truly critical to an enjoyable and fulfilled life. What we put into our bodies is reflected in what we can ask of them and for someone who wants to do it all, a healthy diet and regular exercise are imperative!

My idea of fitness is an incorporation into my daily life with simpler diet choices that exclude excessive fried food and high-sugar items combined with regular exercise in the form of sports which can also be a positive use of my energy.

By making small efforts daily, caring for my body consistently becomes a simple way for me to feel and look my best!





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Article By: Desi-Ann Gordon CEO of Caribbean Virtual Assistants

SELF-CARE TIPS FOR WORK-FROM-HOME SUCCESS

As a work-from-home professional, I've learned firsthand the importance of prioritizing self-care. Balancing work responsibilities with personal well-being is challenging. However, I've discovered several tips that have helped me to be productive and healthy.

Self-care refers to any activity that we do to take care of our mind, body, heart, and spirit. So how can you incorporate self-care when working from home? You can start by establishing a healthy routine which includes effectively managing your time and setting clear boundaries.

Here are some more tips.

YOUR MIND (MENTAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH)

Schedule time for activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Here are a few examples:

1. Do deep breathing exercises to reduce stress.
2. Take regular breaks to rest and recharge your mental energy.
3. Play soft music while you work.
4. Maintain a gratitude journal.





YOUR BODY (PHYSICAL WELLNESS)

Sitting at your desk for long hours is not a good practice so take advantage of any opportunity to change your position. Try these:

- Invest in a comfortable chair, proper lighting, and ergonomic accessories to help maintain good posture and reduce strain on your body.
- Stretch and move your body e.g. a short workout, yoga session, or outdoor walk.
- Set reminders to drink water throughout the day to stay hydrated and maintain optimal energy levels.
- Eat nutritious meals and snacks to fuel your body and brain for sustained focus and productivity.
- Get enough sleep at night.
- Schedule a spa day.

YOUR HEART (EMOTIONAL WELLBEING)

Working from home can be lonely at times. Here are some ways to stay connected:

- Participate in virtual networking events and online communities.
- Work outside with a colleague at least one day per week (e.g. at a coffee shop).
- Call a friend or family member.



*Article By: Desi-Ann Gordon
CEO of Caribbean Virtual Assistants*

CARIBBEAN SILVER FOX





WE PRESENT TO YOU THE

CARIBBEAN SILVER FOX

BECOMING THE 'CARIBBEAN SILVER FOX'

JAMESY

Becoming the Caribbean Silver Fox' (as some refer to him) was a vision Ian "Jamesy" Adams envisaged almost 30 years ago. It all started during his earlier years as a body-building coach, when he recognised the preservatory effect weight lifting had..the ability to keep the human body youthful at any age.

He concluded that youthfulness wasn't reserved for the young, contrary to what was widely believed; it was available for anyone at any age. He determined then, to prove that he would not deteriorate, but get better with age!



Meet 'Ian Jamesy' Adams

DEBUT



jamesy_the_champion_trainer



WE PRESENT TO YOU THE

CARIBBEAN SILVER FOX

**3 DECADES LATER &
NOW 68 YEARS OLD**

JAMESY

Jamesy validates what he set out to prove - that 'Age is Just a Number' as the Mighty Sparrow sang.

Now in his sixties, he strives to crush the outdated ideas of what a man his age, appearance, dress, fitness, and health should be. his goal now, in a society that embraces aging is to show others what is possible.

That the new image of sixty, seventy, eighty year old and beyond could be one of style, confidence, health, sophistication, and wisdom.

Now the only question is, will you accept the challenge to be a better vision and version of you like Jamesy did?



Meet 'Ian Jamesy' Adams

DEBUT

 jamesy_the_champion_trainer



SALADS

Transform your tastebuds with a symphony of freshness in every bite—who says salads can be excitingly delicious?!

Meet Abeni Procope

*First Trinbagonian Athlete to transition from amateur in the category of Bikini Fitness to a new category Body fitness, competed as an amateur in two shows back to back, won them both , then went go on compete at an International competition in Barbados for a chance to win my professional card status. I won the Pro qualifier in the morning then won my pro debut just a couple hours later the same day all in just 10 months.

*First IFBB Elite Body Fitness pro athlete in Trinidad and Tobago.

*And first IFBB Elite Body Fitness to obtain this title in the Caribbean.

*First Trinbagonian Athlete to win their professional card status and pro debut on the same day.

*Fitness Model over 10 years.

*World ranking of 10th for 2019 in the category of Body Fitness.

*Certified Fitness Trainer over 12 years.

*Certified TRX Instructor 8 years.

*Certified nutrition Coach and consultant over 12 years.

*Certified Mental Toughness Coach.

*Owner of Artistic Palette handmade home and office Decor business.

*Over 26 shows in 9 years



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Natasha Ali Tells Us How She Does It!





NO DIVING

Balancing Business & Wellness

How do I balance work and fitness?

Well, this has to be the most frequently asked question for me apart from, how do I have so much energy?

I have been in the gym and very active all my life, from sports to lifting weights. I started the gym at 15 years old and never stopped since. I've been a massage therapist for the last 24 years and although my job is very physical and quite demanding, I still always get my workouts in every single day and you can too!

Our lives can be so stressful and overwhelming, and we often wonder how or when we get the time to exercise...firstly plan your workouts, and set a time that's realistic to get it in and do it!! No excuses, it's so easy to say that we will do tomorrow and that turns into never... don't let that be you! Early mornings are a blessing, you can take on the world after and your endorphins are kicked in! You will feel so much better after. I've always had the determination and drive and I try my best to be always positive even if I'm tired.. I just dress and show up! Sometimes I say "gosh how am I getting through this day" but then switch right away to "I'm soooo getting through today!"

When it comes to working out, finding time to balance work and exercise is really about efficiency, problem solving and knowing what's best for you and your schedule. If you're committed to a fit lifestyle, however, you will find a way and make it happen, no matter what kind of obstacles you face. Get it done guys!!! Fitness is a lifestyle!!!





**Who says healthy
eating can't be
deliciously fun?**

Meet Lee-Ann Keith





I was introduced to fitness from the age of 11 through spin classes but fell off when I went into secondary school. Unfortunately, i was on and off for years in the gym struggling to juggle studies and my fitness life. In August 2023, I decided to take my fitness journey seriously and since then, I've been weightlifting and attending spin classes at least 4 times a week. Seriously incorporating weightlifting and spin classes into my daily life has overall made me happier. I use exercise as an outlet to remove all negative emotions I may experience resulting from school and other aspects of my life. Fitness has transformed my life giving me balance with the discipline and happiness I've developed within these last 7 months.

YUMMY HEALTHY RECIPE

This Bad Boy Is For High Blood Pressure



*Recipe by Dr. Carlos Navarro
Physical Therapist
Eden Garden Clinic,
Ramsaran Steet, Chaguanas*



Ingredients

- 1tbs. raw cocoa powder
- 1 tbs. blackseed oil
- 1 tbs. flax meal

Directions

Add all ingredients to a tea cup with warm water, mix well and consume once a day



Trainer And Student





Meet Shania Deosaran

My fitness journey started over a year ago as a quest to self-improvement under the guidance and unwavering support of my personal trainer, John-Ross Wong.

Not only was I able to reach my fitness goals, but I have since embraced a healthier and more vibrant lifestyle. Undoubtedly, my journey has been a testament to dedication and belief in oneself, but also showcased the significance of having a supportive mentor.



Meet John-Ross Wong

My fitness journey began in high school, I was very underweight for my age in comparison to my peers. I decided to do something about it and adopted a fitness lifestyle.

For me fitness is much more than just lifting weights it's about eating healthy and getting the necessary rest and recovery for the mind and body.

I am very passionate about helping others feel good about themselves and their life through this lifestyle.

Connect with John-Ross Wong via his Instagram handle [@coach_johnfitness](#)

Benefits of exercise for Adults

- **Maintains muscle mass and bone strength.**
- **Helps reduce and control high blood pressure, sugar, and fat levels.**
- **Reduces and delays the onset of osteoporosis and its complications.**
- **Assists in stress management and restful sleep.**
- **Makes you feel energetic, younger, and confident.**





The Winning Team

The Winning Team

You've seen him on our most recent Fortress Fitness Podcast, Wazim Mohammed born on May 5th 1976 is a professional bodybuilder who is known for competing in the International Federation of Body Building. This IFBB ELITE PRO athlete from Trinidad and Tobago is also a personal trainer for over 20 years who is well known for his impeccable work in his field. He has trained several athletes for stage who competed in this competitive world of bodybuilding, and is currently training IFBB Elite Pro Women's Physique Athlete Khan - Lutchman.

During his early years of training, Wazim fell in love with the sport and never gave up on his goals and aspirations. Wazim competed in numerous shows locally building his onstage portfolio. Wazim competed in over 30 shows in his career, enjoying each one as it's his first.

After competing for many years Wazim turned Pro in 2019 in Barbados and is now an IFBB Elite Pro Athlete.

Wazim is a full-time personal trainer, always putting his clients first and still, he makes time to work out to ensure he's competition-ready. With an upcoming competition, we at Fortress Fitness wish you a hearty best of luck! To learn more or connect with Wazim, head on over to his IG Account: [wazhardcore_ifbbelitepro](#)



The Winning Team

Marissa Khan Lutchman was born on March 23rd, 1983. She is a professional bodybuilder known for competing in The International Federation of Body Building.

This IFBB Elite Pro athlete from Trinidad and Tobago is also a loving wife and mother of one.

During her early years of training in the gym, Marissa quickly fell in love with the appearance of the bodybuilding figure. She loved the strength and grace that athletes displayed on stage. This is what ultimately spurred her on to choose bodybuilding when it was time to decide which class she'd compete in.

After a few years of competing, Marissa turned up the intensity of her training and diet, which led her to build an outstanding physique.

Marissa has competed in over 11 shows in her career, she enjoys every show like it's her first time competing and faces each head on.

As she prepares for yet another competition, we at Fortress have no doubt she is gonna kill it in her category!

To connect with Marissa head on over to [instagram](#) and connect with her via her handle: [mzfitness_ifbbelitepro](#)





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Samantha Ramischand Kublalsingh



Empowering the Body and Spirit: A Journey of Strength, Motherhood, and Triumph

In the bustling world of fitness, where strength is celebrated, challenges are conquered, and lives are transformed, I am Samantha Ramischand Kublalsingh, and I stand as a beacon of resilience, inspiration, and unwavering determination.

Im a proud mother of two beautiful girls, a devoted wife, and a fierce advocate for health and wellness. I strive to embody the essence of balancing the demands of family life with a passion for fitness, nature, fashion, and really everything I love. My journey is not just about physical strength—it's a testament to the indomitable spirit of the human soul.

Living with type 1 diabetes has been a defining part of my journey. Instead of letting it get the best of me, which I admit can be challenging at times, I use it as a source of strength, proving that with proper care, management, determination, and a positive mindset, anything is possible. Through my journey, I have become a beacon of hope and inspiration for others facing similar challenges, showing them that they too can live a vibrant, fulfilling life.

At the heart of my story is my unwavering commitment to my family, health, wellness, and nutrition, as they play pivotal roles in my life. From the moment I step into the gym, it is my place of sanctuary—a place where I challenge myself, push my limits, and nurture my body and mind. Through dedication, perseverance, and good health I have not only improved my physique but also my mindset, emerging stronger, more resilient, and unstoppable.

As an ambassador of myself (my brand) I try to use my social media platform to share my journey, inspire others, and spread awareness about the importance of nutrition, exercise, and self-care. Through my authentic and relatable approach, I truly wish to build a community of like-minded individuals who support and uplift each other on their own journeys to health and happiness.

My greatest achievement thus far has been the ability to seamlessly integrate my passion for fitness with my role as a mother and wife. Whether i'm juggling work, family, or personal goals, I approach each day with grace, determination, and an unwavering commitment to living my best life.

In closing, I only wish to continue to inspire, motivate, and uplift those around me. My journey is continuously teaching me so much each day and serves as a reminder that with love, perseverance, and a little bit of sweat, we can overcome any obstacle and achieve greatness.



Special Thanks to



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Trinidad & Tobago
'Silver Fox'

Thank you everyone!





Breathing a huge sigh of relief, now that issue 2 is in your possession.

We hope sharing the stories on the persons who were featured, who we consider family, was well received and encouraging.

Candice, Abeni, Kirk, and everyone who has supported us so far thank you from the depth of my heart.

Your boy Vic!

Want to be featured in our 2nd Quarter Magazine?

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