



# Zac & Lana

## Team Titus Takes the '06 FitExpo's Fittest Couple Competition

by David Young • Photography by Michael Neveux

Around November of last year Zac and Lana Titus picked up a flyer about the '06 FitExpo, which was being held in mid-February in Pasadena, California. They put it aside but came across it a few months later and decided to check out the Web site. They noticed the fittest couple contest and thought, "We would get to be onstage together."

"We'd been training together for months," Zac said, "and to be onstage together and show what we've worked so hard for seemed only natural. We were excited, to say the least. So we made arrangements to attend and compete."

"Winning, however, seemed only like a dream," Lana recalled. "A dream that came true!"

We're getting ahead of ourselves, so let's rewind.

**DY: Let's start with your basic stats. How old are you, and what's your height and weight?**

**ZT:** I'm 27 years old, 5'11" and 178.

**LT:** I'm 24 years old, 5'4" and 123.

**DY: How long have you been training?**

**ZT:** I have been training seriously for about six years.

**LT:** I have always tried to stay in shape, but eight months ago I became really serious about getting in competition condition.

**DY: Were you involved in athletics growing up?**

**LT:** We have both been very athletic since an early age.

**ZT:** I was active in about every sport I could find. I began gymnastics at four years old. After that I went

on to wrestling, baseball and soccer, climbing and in-line skating. After high school I took my soccer skills to college football and became a kicker for four years. We won two national titles with the NAIA division at Carroll College.

**LT:** I started gymnastics at three years old, stayed with it and became competitive until the age of nine and then went on to figure skating. I loved the freedom of the ice as well as the competition.

**DY: What got you interested in bodybuilding and fitness competition?**

**ZT:** I wanted to better myself both inside and out. Six years ago I saw a sign at my gym, and some of the trainers encouraged me to enter a bodybuilding competition. I did, and I have been hooked ever since.



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After a few shows I noticed fitness modeling, which was just getting started. I decided that my physique might be a better fit for that type of competition and decided to enter a show. I ended up getting second at my first show, so I went on to compete further.

**LT:** I was just watching Zac on the sidelines. I was intrigued but not sure I had the discipline required—especially with the diet—to compete. In March of 2004 we became pregnant, and I said, "After the baby comes, I will compete." Zac held me to my word. When our daughter was six months old, I began training seriously for my first show. In October 2005 we both competed at the California Championships, our daughter was 10 months old, and I ended up placing in first!

After that we went on to Hollywood for Musclemania's Model America. Zac placed third out of 55 guys, and I made top 10 out of 45 women.

**DY: What do you do for a living?**

**ZT:** We manage a bed-and-breakfast in Helena, Montana.

**DY: Do you have any other hobbies?**

**ZT:** I love outdoor activities, like hiking, biking, snowboarding, rock climbing.

**LT:** I love the outdoors as well, and I like most of the same sports as Zac—but on a much less extreme level.

**DY: What keeps you motivated to train and diet?**

**LT:** I love how it feels and looks, bettering ourselves and inspiring others to do so as well. That's motivating!

**DY: What's your diet strategy—on-season and off?**

**ZT:** We just keep it healthy year-round. It's a lifestyle for us. We get more strict with our diets when we're competing, but we always eat well.

**DY: Do you have a cheat day?**

**ZT:** Well, after a show you can be sure to see us scarfing down some pizza and ice cream!

**DY: Can you give me a sample of your eating for a day?**

**LT:** Sure!

Meal 1: 1 cup oatmeal, fruit, 4 egg whites

Meal 2: 1 cup oatmeal, fruit, 4 egg whites

Meal 3: Protein shake

Meal 4: 2 skinless chicken breasts, 1 cup broccoli

Meal 5: Turkey burger, bell pepper, 1/2 cup blueberries

Meal 6: 1/4 cup almonds, buffalo steak, 1 cup carrots

**ZT:** Mine is:

Meal 1: 1 cup oatmeal, fruit, 6 egg whites

Meal 2: Whole-wheat toast with almond butter, protein shake

Meal 3: Chicken breast, broccoli, brown rice

Meal 4: Elk burger, veggies

Meal 5: Protein shake, fruit, flax-seed oil

Meal 6: Buffalo steak, salad, sweet potato

**LT:** We put some variations in our meals, but this is pretty standard. Zac tends to eat more just because he is bigger.

**DY: It looks like it's working! Tell me your proudest achievement.**

**LT:** I think our daughter is the biggest one. She is our pride and joy; she makes our lives worth living. If you need a smile, you just have to look at her. She is such a fun-loving individual who loves life and everyone in it, and she is only 15 months old. The fact that we created her is an amazing achievement.

**DY: Are there any other exciting things you're working on?**

**ZT:** We are working on creating some fitness retreats to go along with our bed-and-breakfast. We want to specialize in helping people, not only with exercise but also with the diet to go along with it, which is *so* important. We want to have people stay with us for at least three days and help them learn how to live healthier lives and show them things they can do at their own

homes. Check out our Web site [www.ZacAndLanaTitus.com](http://www.ZacAndLanaTitus.com) for more info. We are also both working as fitness models and getting work in L.A. and Miami.

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**DY: What are your favorite supplements?**

**ZT:** Whey protein for sure. I use L-glutamine, creatine, whey protein, acetyl-L-carnitine and alpha lipoic acid. I also use flaxseed oil.

**LT:** I use Lean System 7 when I'm getting ready for a show to help me cut down.

**DY: How do you overcome training plateaus?**

**ZT:** We try to constantly switch things up. We do outdoor activities as well as weights at the gym.

We are always trying to learn more from books and magazines and expos. You can never know it all. We mix up our muscle pairings as well as rep schemes, and we use supersets and drop sets to add variation.

**DY: How did you find what works for you?**

**ZT:** Trial and error. You have to figure out what works for your body type and what you are trying to achieve. We set forth our individual goals and set out to find a routine that built full muscles while maintaining flexibility and definition.

**DY: What techniques do you use to keep motivated?**

**LT:** Training together is a big part of it. If Zac is slacking on a rep or set, I will give him good verbal inspiration.

**DY: You mean like, "You wuss!"? I imagine the whip and paddle in your gym bag come in handy at this point too, right?**

**LT:** Absolutely! But sometimes we switch and he gets to do the whipping! *[All laugh]* Seriously, having a partner can be a really important part of working out because you don't want to let the other one down.

**DY: What are your goals regarding competition?**

**LT:** We just want to keep bettering

"If you want something badly enough, you can and will succeed."

ourselves and others.

**ZT:** I hope to maintain a healthy, fit lifestyle so that I can lead by example and help motivate others to take care of themselves. As for fitness modeling, we hope that our self-discipline and family support will help us continue to compete and get work in this field.

**DY: What mental or visual principles to you use?**

**ZT:** The mind/body connection is really important for me, and I believe in it very strongly. By visualizing the rep and the completed set, I prepare my mind and body for the rep at hand.

**DY: What is your life philosophy?**

**LT:** We both learned at an early age that life is short. We have both lost people very close to us, so we really value life and the loved ones that we share it with.

**ZT:** We just try to live life to the fullest each day.

**DY: What strategies did you learn for bodybuilding and fitness success that you're able to carry into your life and career?**

**ZT:** Hard work and dedication. If you want something badly enough, you can and will succeed.

**LT:** I usually go into everything full throttle, no holding back. This carries over from work to fitness.

## Fittest Couple Training

### Monday: Legs

#### Superset

- Squats 4 x 6-10
- Leg extensions 4 x 10-15

#### Superset

- Stiff-legged deadlifts 4 x 6-10
- Wide leg presses or leg curls 4 x 10-15
- Calf raises 4-6 x 8-12

### Tuesday: Chest

#### Superset

- Cable flies 4 x 8-10
- Bench presses 4 x 6-10

#### Superset

- Incline dumbbell flies 3 x 10-15
- Decline dumbbell presses 3 x 10-15
- Cable flies or crossovers 3 x failure

### Wednesday: Cardio, abs and obliques

### Thursday: Shoulders

#### Superset

- Cable laterals 4 x 6-10
- Dumbbell presses 4 x 6-10
- Bent-over lateral raises 3 x 10-15

#### Superset

- Cable raises 3 x 10-15
- Reverse pec deck 3 x 10-15
- Iron crosses 2 x 30 seconds

### Friday: Back

Bent-over barbell rows 4 x 6-10

#### Superset

- Dumbbell rows 3 x 10-15
- Pullups 3 x 10-15

#### Superset

- Pulldowns 3 x 10-15
- Cable rows 3 x 10-15

### Saturday: Cardio, abs and obliques

### Sunday: Arms

#### Superset

- Dumbbell curls 3 x 8-10
- Overhead triceps extensions 3 x 10

#### Superset

- EZ-curl bar curls 3 x 6-10
- Skull crushers 3 x 6-10

#### Superset

- Cable pressdowns 3 x 10-15
- Cable curls 3 x 10-15







"Training together is a big part of how we stay motivated."

**DY: I like the full-throttle analogy. I use that myself all the time. You have to walk out of the gym knowing that you left it all out on the table. What's your training philosophy?**

**ZT:** We train hard every time we go to the gym, but it's also important to us that we have fun with it. That's why we started doing the competitions—so the workouts would be fun and serve another purpose.

**DY: What do you do when you switch to contest mode?**

**ZT:** The biggest change is that we tighten our diets, but we also add more cardio.

**LT:** I try to get up and cycle at 6 a.m. three days a week in addition to my normal routine. Zac thinks this is crazy!

**DY: He gets no argument from me! That's an ugly hour.**

**ZT:** I add interval training into my

routine, no more than 20 minutes a session. Then the day of the show we wake up, and it's all focus.

**DY: How many weeks out do you start your preparation?**

**LT:** For my first show I had to diet for 16 weeks because I had a lot of baby weight to get rid of. But now that I am maintaining my weight, I only need about four weeks of hard dieting.

**ZT:** I only need about three weeks because I eat well year-round.

**DY: I hate you! Three whole weeks. And your training gets more intense?**

**ZT:** When we know that we have to get ready for a show or a shoot, we add more supersets and drop sets. We try to maintain strict form so when it comes to forced reps, we only add a few partner-assisted ones.

**DY: What's your cardio program?**

**ZT:** I really don't do that much cardio at the gym. I do snowboarding in the winter and mountain biking in the summer. If I do cardio at the gym, it's interval training; for example, run two laps, sprint two, walk one.

**LT:** I do three to five days of cardio, depending on how busy we are at the lodge. I will cycle at 6 a.m. and then go back in the evening and do a class. I do 45 minutes to an hour a session.

**DY: When you're hitting the weights, what cadence, or speed of movement, do you use?**

**LT:** On the negative we use a three count, and on the contraction we use a two count—until we get to a burn-out set. Then it's more like one and one. We focus on the slow stretch of the muscle, and when we warm up, the reps may be as slow as four down and two up.

**DY: What about rest periods?**

**ZT:** We take one to 1 1/2 minutes after sets of six to 10 reps and only 30 seconds for sets of 10 to 15 reps. Once the heart rate increases, we even like to jump rope or do jumping jacks between sets. Fun stuff!

**DY: What do think are the key elements of training, nutrition, supplementation and cardio that lead to building a great body?**

**ZT:** Nutrition, nutrition, nutrition. So many times people will tell us stuff like, we can work out for hours, but we can't change our eating habits. You have to; there's no way around it. There are very few people who can eat pizza and ice cream every day and go to the gym and lose weight; it just doesn't work. You have to have a good balance. Being educated on food is the biggest problem for people. There are a lot of misconceptions out there.

When we work out, we really work out—none of this sitting around and B.S. with your friends. This is one of my complaints: When you see that I'm sweating and pushing myself, why the hell would you start asking me questions about training? Let me finish my routine and then ask me. I go to the gym to kick my own

## The Second Annual Subway Fittest Couple Competition



The contest was held at *IRON MAN's* FitExpo in Pasadena, California, on February 18, 2006. It was open to amateur contestants 18 years of age or older who were not professional models, bodybuilders or figure competitors. The couples were evaluated for stage presence, fit-and-toned physiques and overall couple chemistry.

The distinguished panel of judges included last year's winners, Mike and Holly Semanoff; *IM* art director Terry Bratcher; and fitness-industry star—and *IM* cover model—Brenda Kelly. The top-10 finalists were judged on the main stage in front of more than 700 enthusiastic FitExpo attendees.

"There's something pure and wonderful about this competition," Bratcher said. "It showcases the many positive aspects of a fitness lifestyle, and it's not just for genetically gifted athletes. Anyone who trains can enter and do well."

When all of the posing and comparing was done, one couple stood out from the rest. Zac and Lana Titus of Helena, Montana, were crowned the Fittest Couple and received a \$2,500 cash prize as well as a photo shoot with famed physique photographer Michael Neveux, which led to this feature.

As an added bonus, Zac also received a modeling contract with the Silver Agency in New York after *IRON MAN* photographer Bill Comstock sent the agency's owner pictures from the contest.



At press time *IM* was in discussion with Subway's Southern California Marketing Co-op to expand the scope of the Fittest Couple competition for 2007. For more information, go to [www.FittestCouple.com](http://www.FittestCouple.com) or [www.IronManMagazine.com](http://www.IronManMagazine.com).



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ass. Oh, and please don't bring your cell phone to the gym. Respect yourselves and those around you. You cannot expect to make any gains if you're not putting forth the effort.

**DY: How does bodybuilding affect your relationship?**

**ZT:** It has really brought us together; it's something that we do together every day. When we are working out together, we are pushing each other to our limits and building more trust as we do so.

**LT:** It has really helped us connect on another level. Now that I am competing too, I can really appreciate what Zac was going through before. I feel bad for eating some of the things I did in front of him when he was dieting, and I respect what he went through on a whole other level now.

**DY: Do you have any role models?**

**LT:** Our parents have always been very active in leading a healthy lifestyle, so they became our role

models at an early age.

**DY: What's the toughest thing about bodybuilding?**

**LT:** The continual dieting for shows and shoots. Some friends of mine only do one or two shows a year, and then they get fat in the off-season. We are lean year-round.

**DY: What's the best thing about being a bodybuilder?**

**ZT:** The confidence in your body and the satisfaction of knowing that you pushed yourself harder today than yesterday.

**Editor's note:** Zac and Lana Titus' Web site is [www.ZacAndLanaTitus.com](http://www.ZacAndLanaTitus.com). They are also sponsored by [www.MontanaBuffalo.com](http://www.MontanaBuffalo.com). **IM**