

Fitness therapist shares her journey of 'finding balance'

"It means the world to me," says Sitarz of landing her first magazine cover

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

At 25, Kasia Sitarz had two fitness businesses in full swing, written for a number of magazines, instructed fitness videos, appeared on TV and become both a pro fitness and bikini athlete.

She was a success by just about any conceivable standard. Except, however, by the one that mattered most.

"At the end of the day I'd clean up, go home and I was by myself. I could call my sisters up, but on a personal level I wasn't really able to celebrate," recalled Sitarz, referring to the extreme, all about business lifestyle to overwork, strained relationships and a growing hole when it came to true fulfillment and well-being. "It felt like I was achieving success for everyone else and not necessarily for myself."

Quitting was never an option, but a change to her über-hectic schedule had to come. With that in mind, Sitarz set out on an "extremely difficult" journey to find some balance — a journey she admits was a huge struggle and that required some "outside help."

She recently shared that journey in the July/August issue of OptiMYz.

Gracing the cover of a fitness magazine for the first time, the 28-year-old Miltonian offers a personal account of what it means — and takes — to become a 'true warrior' as part of her eight-page spread.

"It's the perfect magazine to have my first



Milton fitness therapist Kasia Sitarz proudly shows her first magazine cover of OptiMYz. Steve LeBlanc / Canadian Champion

cover because it's all about optimal health," said Sitarz, owner and operator of both True Mentality Inc. in town and Sport Therapy & Rehabilitation Clinic Body Movement Therapeutics in Acton, who's shared her personal struggles through a school nutrition mentoring program, but never in a magazine. "It (first magazine cover) means the world to me."

While admittedly still struggling to balance her personal and professional life, Sitarz can certainly look to a recent act of spontaneity as a positive step in that direction.

Seeing her OptiMYz cover on the shelf for the first time, she decided to take that Friday afternoon off, drive to Niagara-on-the-Lake and find a relaxing spot by the water to read the

magazine from cover to cover.

With no friends or family able to join her for the spur-of-the-moment trip, Sitarz could have easily become discouraged that she was once again alone for a time of celebration. Instead, she chose to answer the knock of opportunity and create her own feel-good moment.

"There were these two couples there having a blast. I walked up to them and said 'Here, I'm done this magazine, would you like it?' One of the women said 'Yes, thanks, I love magazines.' I told them to check out page 29... and the cover. I got back to my car and the husband yells out 'This is you!'

"They had no idea this was my first day see-

ing the cover. The women called me over and said 'You have to celebrate with us' and offered me a glass of wine. It felt incredible." Photographed in Utah, the OptiMYz spread includes both an exercise and nutrition regimen, as well as a cover photo that Sitarz said captured "the real me."

Sporting numerous titles throughout her lengthy, multi-faceted career in the fitness industry, she's especially fond of the one that was used in OptiMYz.

"They called me a fitness therapist and I actually love that term," said the avid health/fitness instructor, who added that the OptiMYz crew and her True Mentality Inc. team were super supportive during the magazine's photo shoot and release. "It's (fitness therapist) is a great way to describe what I do. I'm passionate about all components of fitness and I think there really is a therapy to fitness."

An advocate of 'functional' exercise as opposed to routine trips to the gym, Sitarz highly recommends yoga to develop muscle flexibility and mental relaxation.

Along with her regular exercise classes, she offers nutrition programs and hopes to one day incorporate all aspects of the fitness spectrum in her own book.

Sitarz says she's gotten goose-bumps while reading some of the positive feedback regarding the magazine cover and that she's especially grateful that her young nieces and nephews have got to read her story and see her in this new light.

Whether it be a hardcore fitness enthusiast or someone just starting to exercise, Sitarz has one simple piece of advice. "Be who you are. You need that inner balance to be able to see outer balance with your fitness goals."

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