



FIGURE PHENOM SOUNDS OFF

Tara Segundo

Tara's Stats:

Height: 5-5

Weight: 130-135 lbs.

Contest weight: 120-125 lbs.

Date of birth: July 3, 1965

Education: Master's degree in exercise physiology (Columbia)

Titles: Top 10 in 2004 WNBF Ms.

Exercise World Championship;

Runner-up in 2004 INBF

Naturalmania Nationals Figure;

Winner of 2004 Ms. Figure

America; Winner of 2003 Ms.

Figure Empire State.



Sometimes, words are best put when they come directly from the source. We believe this certainly holds true with up-and-coming WNBF figure star Tara Segundo. Between the unique circumstances that motivated her to enter the world of figure, how her sights are set firmly on an entertainment career and why some people say she's no fun at a party, we figured it would be best for you to hear it from the woman herself. So instead of a written interview, we have provided you with Tara's uncensored thoughts on bodybuilding, drug use, divorce and more . . . in her own words.

■ **Tara on some of her favorite things:**

I love to be outdoors . . . biking, hiking, rollerblading, playing paddleball on the beach and jet skiing. I love the beach and the sunshine. I love the electric charge of New York City, and I also crave getting away to a beautiful, breezy beach, where the most I have to wear is a bikini and some oil!

■ **Tara on her start in figure competition:**

In late 2002, I went through a very sad divorce. If you have ever been divorced, you know that you feel like you failed . . . yourself, your spouse, the marriage, whatever. Besides feeling like a failure and being broken-hearted, sometimes your life can get off track while you're struggling to put all the pieces back together.

About five months after my divorce was final, I was feeling like I wanted to win something . . . I really needed to prove to myself that I wasn't a failure and boost myself in another direction. At that same time, there were a lot of people at my gym asking me if I had ever considered competing. It was bizarre because so many people were asking me the same thing, almost as though God was whispering in my ear through these people.

One Sunday at the gym, I decided I would be a fool if I didn't at least investigate the possibility. I thought I could realistically do better in figure shows as opposed to bodybuilding based on my physique. I set my sights on my first show, the Ms. Figure-Empire State competition, which was July 12, 2003. It was a big accomplishment for me, as it was nine days after my 38th birthday, and I felt like I was getting a late start in the sport.

■ **Tara on her career as a personal trainer:**

I work privately only, mainly going to people's homes. Until about two years ago, I also was an aerobics instructor, specializing in step aerobics and intense conditioning classes.

■ **Tara on her acting and modeling aspirations:**

I gave up teaching [aerobics] classes to give myself more time to pursue another passion – a career in TV, film and print. I have

made TV appearances as a fitness expert on both network and cable shows. Last fall, I was in a national McDonald's commercial where I played a bodybuilder.

I have done commercial print work and am now doing fitness modeling. Another part of the business that I love is voice-over work. From 1998-2000, I was a traffic reporter for Metro Networks, both on TV and radio. I loved being on the air, but found the subject matter a bit boring! I would try to spice up my broadcasts and make even the worst traffic jam feel exciting, but I don't think it worked!

My ultimate career goal is to work heavily in the media, mainly TV. I enjoy acting, as well, and have been lucky to have some great film auditions recently. So far I haven't booked any of those great films, but I feel confident things will happen in their own time.

■ **Tara on the benefits of competing:**

I enjoy competing because it is a great way to challenge myself, to take my training a step beyond 98 percent of the people at the gym. People who are willing to do what it takes to succeed are fascinating to me, whether they are athletes or performers. I love that drive we all have in us when we feel passionate about something. I feel very passionate about my training.

Competing has really been a blessing for me on several levels. First of all, it gave me something to focus on during a really bad time when I desperately needed something positive to distract me from all the sadness in my life. Secondly, I love to set goals and challenge myself to meet them. Nothing feels better than beating the odds. Usually when we have discipline in one area of our lives, it is easier to be disciplined in other areas, too.

■ **Tara on drug use:**

I am scared to dabble in any form of drug use because I am aware of the long-term damage that can happen in a short period of time. I am also just a big goody-two-shoes and have never been into any of that stuff. I am happy to be part of a federation like the WNBF that really does drug-testing and just doesn't give it lip service. I have also been told a number of times that between my eating habits and my lack of desire to drink I am not much fun at a party, but I respectfully disagree! *(continued on page 112)*



PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA BOUVIER BREWER

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Tara on her diet:

I eat all sources of animal protein, including fish, shellfish, poultry, red meat, eggs and so forth. I eat as many green veggies as I can for all the great nutrients, as well as whole grains, nuts and seeds. I drink at least a gallon of water per day. I avoid sugar, flour products (bread and pasta), alcohol, caffeine, food dyes, preservatives, wheat (I am allergic), soda, commercial juices, milk products (I get my calcium from dark leafy greens), and anything I cannot pronounce or with a shelf life of, oh, say seven years! If I stick to whole grains, vegetables and protein sources, that's all I need. As a competition approaches, I cut carbs dramatically, but not completely.

I take creatine and glutamine twice daily, both in powdered form. About three weeks before a show, I stop the creatine and start using uba ursi, an herbal diuretic.

Tara on her training routine:

I normally work out 5-6 days a week. I usually do chest and triceps on day one, back and biceps on day two, legs on day three and shoulders on day four. After a rest day I start over again. I do abdominals every other workout. I also stretch for 20-30 minutes after each training session. When I skip the stretching, I feel it within a day. My workouts suffer if I am not flexible. I also think that I am just getting older and can't get away with what I used to in my 20s.

For large bodyparts, like chest or back, I do five sets per exercise for five different exercises. I need the variety of exercises to hit the muscles from many angles. For smaller groups like biceps and triceps, I select three different exercises per workout. I am a form fanatic and would rather use less weight and have impeccable form than lift lots of weight and just use momentum.

Tara on her advice for up-and-coming figure competitors:

I would encourage anyone who wants to compete to give it a try. Only good things come from carrying through on a promise made to oneself. The people you will meet along the way are amazing and inspirational. I can honestly say that through it all I have not encountered one nasty person. On the contrary, I have found people to be generous and kind and excited to share their knowledge, especially in the WNBF. I feel lucky to have met the great people I have so far, and really look forward to the new friends I will make this year. Set your goals, keep records and make progress. It is worth the effort. ★