

Get the body (and the life!) you want

Maria Menounos, *Access Hollywood* and NBC *Nightly News* reporter and author of *The EveryGirl's Guide to Life*, changed her body. Next? Oh, just the world! Let her inspire you. By Amy Gallo



"I used to huff and puff running up a flight of stairs. Now, after a jog, I feel a great sense of accomplishment."



"We make such a good team," she says of boyfriend and one-on-one opponent, Keven Undergaro. "Everyone needs a champion."



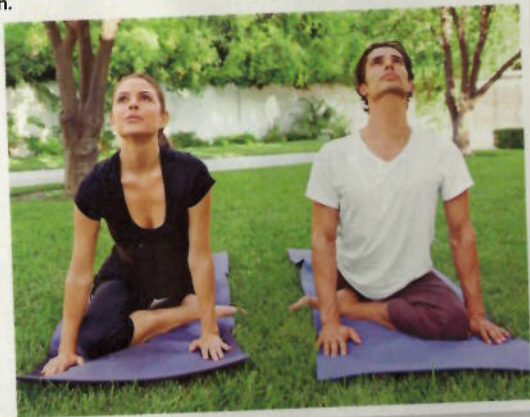
"Hire a trainer at least once to put you on a plan. I go see Andrea Orbeck, my trainer, for refreshers and to check my form."

"After stretching every morning, I say, 'Today is going to be a good day,'" says Menounos, here with her yoga teacher, Cameron Alborzian.

"I do my own hair and makeup for red carpets and for *Access*," Menounos says. She even put her how-tos on video. Visit Bing.com/Maria.

"In life, you've gotta own it"

"Even in college, when I was 40 pounds heavier, I was super confident. It's about knowing who you are. And being fit only adds to that. You feel as if you can take over the world. Still, at a big red-carpet event recently, I was nervous. I felt that my whole look wasn't coming together. Then I thought, You know what, it is what it is—just own it. That's a big thing, whether it's owning your curves or that \$10 pair of heels. When you show people that nothing is holding you back, nothing will."



Considering what a hyphen-happy career Maria Menounos has (she's a correspondent-host-actress-producer-author!), it's no surprise that her approach to fitness is multifaceted. "Variety's important to me, not a strict gym routine," says the star, who runs and practices yoga, and loves to play basketball. "It kills two birds with one stone: It's a social event and a workout."

To fuel her go-go-go life, Menounos, 33, swears by a healthful diet and an eat-only-when-hungry philosophy. She stashes almonds in her purse and also snacks on fruit and veggies. "I recently lost 10 pounds and two sizes, and I'm less cranky!" she says. It's on a deeper level, however, that Menounos has discovered even richer rewards. "Before I started running, I used to be so afraid when I saw catastrophes—like the crisis in Japan—of being trapped and unable to escape. Getting fit has been empowering. In a situation where people need help, I don't want to be the person who needs it. I want to be the person who gives it."

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cover star

Steal her workout!

"On the campaign trail in 2008, I was in my hotel watching the vice presidential debate—and wanted to exercise. I made up this workout right then and there. My trainer thinks it's brilliant!"

1 Saddlebag slimmer

works hips, butt, thighs

Lie on left side on bed with legs stacked, knees bent, left forearm supporting upper body, right hand planted in front of torso for support. Place a blanket over legs to add resistance. Pressing in steps together, lift feet off bed and open right leg to ceiling, forming a diamond (as shown). Release to start. Do 2 sets of 12 reps. Switch sides; repeat.



3 Tush tightener

works butt, abs
Start on all fours, wrists directly beneath shoulders. Keeping abs and butt engaged, lift right leg to the ceiling, knee bent, foot flexed (as shown). Return to start. Do 2 sets of 12 reps. Switch sides; repeat.



Doing moves on a soft surface boosts the burn. As on a BOSU, the balancing engages more muscles!

2 Belly buster

works abs
Lie faceup with knees bent, feet flat, legs pressed together, shoulders hanging off edge of bed. Place hands behind head, elbows out, to start (as shown). Engage abs and slowly sit up straight. Return to start. Do 2 sets of 12 reps.



4 Thigh trimmer

works thighs
Lie on left side with legs stacked, knees bent, left forearm supporting upper body, right hand planted in front of torso for support, back straight. Lift right leg as high as you comfortably can and lower slowly back down. Return to start. Do 2 sets of 12 reps. Switch sides; repeat.

Maria doing good

Her passion project "Strengthening communities by empowering women was the big call-to-action at last year's Clinton Global Initiative, President Clinton's annual summit on world issues. I was determined to cover this for NBC News, so I traveled to Kenya to report on what's happening there. My story will air in three parts on *NBC Nightly News* starting May 19, as part of their Making a Difference series."

Her discovery "In Kenya, 25 percent of teens and young women lose their virginity by rape. Girls are sold, beaten and abused. But things are changing now because philanthropic organizations like CARE work with local programs that teach girls about self-confidence and protecting themselves. CARE's Sport for Social Change program uses activities such as basketball and boxing to empower girls in a safe place where they can play and be kids again while developing a sense of community."

Her life lesson "One girl I met, Mamu, had such an impact on me. She cried, because she was getting to go to school. We take so many things



Menounos with Mamu (left) and Florence, two girls from Kenya benefiting from CARE's programs. Want to help? Visit CARE.org.

for granted here! Growing up, I helped my parents clean nightclubs. And my dad would say, 'Maria, you can do whatever you put your mind to.' I was lucky to have someone telling me that I could do more. These girls are hearing for the first time that they have value, that they can dream. That changes lives, families and, in turn, whole towns. It was so inspiring to see."