



# BEST BODY

## BOSS LADY

Wanna kick 2016's butt? You need a life coach who'll help you troubleshoot away the bad and usher in the good. That coach is Jillian Michaels. She drops and gives us 15 ways to a fitter body, sounder mind, and totally baller career.

*By Dibs Baer*

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF LIPSKY





RONNY KOBOS DRESS; ANIL ARJANDAS NECKLACE; DAVID YURMAN BRACELET

Jillian Michaels's therapist wants her to go on a diet—a diet from doing it all. Far as we can tell, the fitness entrepreneur is failing. Hard. We're at her expansive ranch house up in the hills of Malibu, where Jillian—still clad in the yoga pants and tee she slept in—is overseeing the construction of an arena for six horses. These steeds will join her existing menagerie (a parrot, a pig, three dogs, six chickens, 14 koi, two goldfish, and four beehives). All the while, she's gearing up to film scenes for her new E! reality show, *Just Jillian*, airing now. As we chat, she ignores what seems like a million text messages. Maybe they're about her other show, Spike TV's *Sweat Inc.* (she just produced and starred in the first season), or the book she's writing about healthy pregnancy (she got a crash course when her partner was expecting their son), or or or or...

Really, though—would you expect anything less from the world's most famous trainer? Since appearing as the tough-love mentor on *The Biggest Loser* more than a decade ago, Jillian, 41, has built a health and fitness empire that spans DVDs, books, snacks, supplements, apparel, boutique gyms, and, most recently, the management of aspiring fitness pros. "It's like juggling three balls, then four, then 50," she says. Juggling? More like plucking each one of those balls from the air and pelting them back at the universe, dodgeball-style.

In her mind, staying in the game takes not only her trademark intensity, but teamwork. Speaking of Jillian's crew, the phone rings, and she picks it up immediately. It's Heidi Rhoades, her domestic partner and co-mom of their two kids, Lukensia, 5, and Phoenix, 3, taking orders from Starbucks.

"She's extremely tolerant," Jillian says, "but if she turned around one day and said, 'I'm leaving you,' I wouldn't be surprised. Dude, this is a lot."

As much as Jillian clearly gets that her crazy schedule is a bitch to handle, she's not remorseful about it either. "Life is a delicate balancing act that shifts on a daily basis," she explains. "You have to accept that nothing can be perfect, which is something I'm personally struggling with. But my rule is: If you give it the most you have that day, that will be enough." Think Jillian sounds like a living, breathing TED Talk? So do we. Between her killer résumé and, admittedly, a few trips to the headshrinker, the fitness guru has learned when to say enough, when to push harder, and a riot of other life lessons. Now she's serving up all that wisdom to her latest client: you.



# Let Jillian Troubleshoot...

## YOUR WORKOUT

*How to get your head (and butt) in gear, à la J.M.*

### 1/ Find your motivation.

"We all know going to the gym can be less than pleasurable in the moment. The key to overcoming the hurdle of actually showing up is learning to associate a less-than-pleasurable activity with an extraordinary outcome. Instead of thinking, *I'd rather be dead than go for a 30-minute run*, it's got to be like, *I'm going to the gym because I want to be there at my kid's wedding*, or *I'm going to the gym because I've earned skinny jeans*, or *I'm going to the gym because I want to run a marathon*."

### 2/ Accept certain truths.

"My butt will always have cellulite, and I've come to terms with that. You should do the same, like if you hate your belly. Where your body chooses to store fat, it will always store fat. You can't spot-reduce, so the goal is to reduce overall body fat with clean eating [more on that in "Clean Breaks," page 70] and high-intensity training. Mix it up to keep it fun. I love body weight-based exercises, mixed martial arts, and yoga—those I actually enjoy—but I will still lift weights every once in a while, even though it bores the shit out of me, because I also know it's good for me."

### 3/ Set limits.

"At what point does your quest for perfection begin to compromise your happiness? Honestly, you can only get so thin without looking terrible and being unhealthy, and as you get older, you also start to look really drawn. You could eat nothing but broccoli and chicken for a year, but f-ck that!"

## YOUR RELATIONSHIP

**Confession:** This is about as mushy as Jillian gets, 'k? "I don't think compromising makes us happier, because you never feel like you win. Instead of everything being a compromise and nobody getting what they want, sacrifice here, sacrifice there. [Heidi and I] also really make an effort to be together. We do ridiculous things like 'Escape the Room' mystery games with our friends. Things like that are important. As for marriage, I have a hard time with the concept, but if our kids came to us and said they wanted us to do it, I would ask what it means to them, and I would consider it."



## YOUR CAREER

*Jillian's game plan for owning your professional potential*

### 1/ Take strategic action.

"This doesn't mean go full-steam blindly ahead. There's a concept called 'the fast follower,' meaning one guy runs in with an idea and gets his head chopped off; the next guy gets bloody and bruised; the third guy stands back and thinks, *I see what went wrong*, and cruises in after everyone has blown that path wide open. The one who observes and analyzes and avoids everyone else's screwups—that's the winner."

### 2/ Be flexible.

"You can't get too attached to an idea or you will die there. Pivot when

something goes wrong or you learn new information. My business partner and I put a ton of money and time into Active Connection, a social network around sports. Then Meetup.com came up. Done! I had to put my ego aside and admit failure. I'll be honest: I have a hard time with failure. But you have to take responsibility, because if you don't, you become a victim and you're fundamentally disempowered."

### 3/ Don't defer to men.

"It's a man's world—that is the reality. We need to figure out how to navigate it. I had a situation where I didn't take control early on because I wanted to be the 'good girl.' I was sick of being called 'difficult,' and I didn't want to emasculate the guy running the project. This was a huge mistake. Always trust your gut. We get insecure and think, *Who do I think I am? This guy has done X, Y, and Z in the field...* Stop being the pleaser. At the same time, you don't need to go in there and be like, 'Listen, you incompetent toad...' We've got to be better, smarter, more patient, and more informed. Is it fair? No! But the world's not fair."

## YOUR PARENTING SKILLS

*Mama Michaels's ground rules for (relatively) sane motherhood*

## 1/ Loosen up a little.

"I never let Lu have soda, and she was like, 'When I grow up, I'm going to have soda!' So we try to balance it. I'll explain, 'This food is bad because it has artificial color and artificial sugar. Let's make cookies at home with real butter and real sugar.' I just don't want their little bodies to do the fake food."

## 2/ Break the cycle.

"My daughter is going through this thing where she whines when she's upset. The way I grew up, it was like, 'You're fine!' But my shrink said,

'What's the harm in acknowledging it? Because you're teaching her not to trust herself. Maybe acknowledge how she's feeling without making a big to-do. Why does it bother you?' I realized it was all my own childhood shit about feeling helpless and weak."

## 3/ Cut yourself some slack.

"You're not going to be a perfect parent because you're a human being, not a god, right? You've got to get to that place where you know you're going to disappoint your kids, but internalize that it doesn't make you a bad parent. Have the ego strength to own your mistakes; apologize for them, then work to improve yourself. That's the best you can do."



## YOU DO YOU. BETTER.

"Kaizen is a Japanese business philosophy that I learned about from Tee Major, one of the guys I'm managing. You just try to be a better person to yourself and to the planet. You try to be a healthier person. I also

call this 'reduce-itarian' because it's incremental. I can't turn around and be a better human the next day, so I'm constantly trying to improve. I've gradually hacked away at parts of my life that are less than good. I don't do

drugs, and I'm not a big drinker, but swearing and caffeine are the two things I just can't kick. Swearing bothers a lot of people, but for me, it's a stress reliever, so it's one of the things that I don't give up."

## NO WORDS MINCED

Agree with her or not, Jillian on three major wellness trends

## BELFIES

"I'm not into fitness professionals who post selfies that show off their butts or other body parts. Come on, that's not fitness—it's soft-core porn. God bless, but let's call it what it is. We've come so far, and this is where you're taking the movement? Put your clothes on. I get it—you love your body and bravo that—but it's not fitness. Fitness to me is about empowering people. It's about redefining self-image."

morbidly obese, and I'd say a lack of self-worth. If you really loved yourself, you would know that if we cut your artery open, it wouldn't be a beautiful thing. So this is where I'm like, 'Let's completely separate your beauty and your worth from your body. You as a person? You're beautiful; you're worthy. Your body? Unhealthy.' Let's cut the shit."

## HAVING IT ALL

"Maria Shriver said this so well: 'Yeah, just not at the same time.' For Heidi and me, it worked out: I love my career, whereas she just wants to be a mom. She used to work with musicians but gave it up because she didn't like the business side of it. Now she's happy: To her, this is all. She loves gardening, farms, and kids. She's very earth mother. I want to work really hard for 10 years, and by 50, I'm on a reserve in Africa."

## THE

## FAT-ACCEPTANCE MOVEMENT

"I think people need to love themselves no matter who they are or what they look like, because only from that place can you truly have happiness and abundance. But I'm not going to embrace people being unhealthy. People ask me what's a through-line for the

## CLEAN BREAKS

How does Jillian define clean eating? Certain foods (namely, "white shit" like refined sugar and flour) generally don't cross her lips—though yes, if her daughter wants to share a slice of pizza as a treat, or if Heidi's mom makes cake balls during the holidays, she's all

in. Her day-to-day diet, however, is built on fresh veggies, fruit, and lean proteins (fish, chicken) along with some healthy dairy and complex carbs. "I don't believe being completely meat-free is healthiest, but I am trying to move away from it for the planet," she says. ■