# From classroom to championship: how Natasha Kostalas found strength in bodybuilding



Natasha Kostalas, a former secondary school English teacher from Hertfordshire, has made a remarkable transition from the classroom to the competitive world of bodybuilding. After spending a decade teaching, the 35-year-old decided to prioritise her passion for weight training, a pastime she initially adopted to cope with poor mental health and a binge eating disorder.

Ms Kostalas began lifting weights as a distraction but soon found weight training to be transformative, both physically and mentally. Over the last ten years, she has dedicated herself intensely to developing her muscular physique, a commitment that has seen her achieve notable successes in bodybuilding competitions. In 2019, she competed in her first shows, finishing fifth and fourth in two separate events. Balancing her training with her teaching responsibilities at the time, Natasha eventually recognised that the gym was the place where she truly found happiness, prompting her to leave teaching to focus on her bodybuilding career.

Speaking about her journey, Natasha said: “I was training for my bodybuilding shows while I was still a teacher. But I realised the only place I was happy was in the gym. Despite some people saying, ‘No, you shouldn’t do it,’ it’s led to so many things I’m doing now. What was meant to be a little hobby to cure me turned into something else.”

Her strong, athletic appearance has also altered social dynamics, with some men reportedly feeling intimidated by her physique. Natasha addressed this perception directly, stating: “We live in a world where women are more equal than they ever have been in the past yet especially men who don't train probably feel intimidated if they meet a woman who can. Old fashioned values still persist especially the older generation who don't understand the benefits. I think it's time to challenge these ideas and show that strength is for everyone.”

In addition to her bodybuilding career, Natasha is preparing to publish a book titled *Beyond the Barbell: Confessions of a Female Fitness Competitor*, which is set to delve into her experiences and the impact that fitness has had on her life.

Natasha’s story highlights the growing prominence of female strength athletes and the broader acceptance of women in traditionally male-dominated sports. The Daily Star also recently reported on another inspiring athlete, Lucy Garland, a Royal Mail worker and former triathlete who has rapidly risen through the bodybuilding ranks since a serious road accident led her to strength training. Garland’s commitment includes early morning cardio sessions before starting her postal duties, followed by weight training after work, culminating in a historic Ms Universe 2023 victory.

Together, stories like those of Natasha Kostalas and Lucy Garland illustrate the diverse pathways and profound personal impacts that sport and fitness can have.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.instagram.com/natashakostalas/> - This Instagram profile is associated with Natasha Kostalas, showcasing her role as a fitness coach, body transformation specialist, and upcoming author of 'Beyond the Barbell' set to publish in September 2025.
* <https://www.kostalaspt.com/copy-of-about-anton> - This webpage provides background information on Natasha Kostalas, including her former career as a teacher and her transition into weight training for improved physical and mental health.
* <https://needtoknow.co.uk/2025/04/14/ex-secondary-school-teacher-is-now-getting-the-grades-as-a-top-bodybuilder/> - This article highlights Natasha Kostalas' transition from a secondary school teacher to a top bodybuilder, emphasizing how she overcame mental health struggles through weightlifting.
* <https://www.magzter.com/stories/newspaper/Daily-Star-Sunday/WEIGH-TO-GO-MISS> - This article from the Daily Star Sunday discusses Natasha Kostalas' journey from teaching to bodybuilding, focusing on how weightlifting helped improve her mental health.
* <https://www.instagram.com/natashakostalas/p/DFF5giutgBW/> - This post from Natasha Kostalas' Instagram announces the launch of her podcast 'The Binges to Barbells,' relating her personal struggles with mental health to her fitness career.