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Melissa Hall, the reigning Ms. Bikini Universe, recently left her job as operations manager at FOX Sports Net North to concentrate on producing fitness DVDs and nutrition programs ([melissahallfitness.com](http://melissahallfitness.com)).

## Solving the puzzle

"I was a dancer and professional cheerleader with the Minnesota Vikings and Timberwolves. I saw a fitness competition on ESPN and said, 'I want to do that.' **Nutrition challenge** I met my husband when I was interviewing different personal trainers. He was very thorough on the nutrition side. He said I needed to eat meals every three hours to get the proper ratio of carbs, proteins, fats and vitamins. It was a challenge to eat frequently. But once my metabolism sped up, I was hungry every three hours. **Know thyself** Understanding how your body works is so important. I liked that; it was like a puzzle. I love pizza, burgers, the glass of chardonnay, and I still have that. It's not a deprivation system. My program is pretty clean, Monday through Friday. On the weekend, I'm more flexible. If I crave a cheeseburger, I'll have it. **Way of weights** I thought if I did a lot of weight training, I would get really bulky. In fact, the weight training increased my lean muscle mass. I burned fat quicker. The important thing was doing higher repetitions. **Cardio component** I do a lot of walking in the summer. In the winter, I'll use the elliptical machine. It's easy on the knees and works your entire body. **Toning tips** Set goals for yourself. Don't get discouraged. And I'm a big believer in the buddy system."

PAM SCHMID