

CARLOS RODRIGUEZ

IFBB Classic Physique Pro

Everybody's journey starts somewhere and everyone has their own story. Some people fall into this sport by chance and some choose it from the get go. I'm not one of those former athletes that took up bodybuilding after their football days where over. I set out to pursue the sport of bodybuilding since I was 13 yrs old. Not that I had a vision or assurance that I had what it took to be a professional, but just a desire to immerse myself into this sport.

I remember my mom taking me with her to the gym when I was 3 and 4 years old and seeing all the shiny equipment and my mom training. Then she had me watch the show "The Incredible Hulk " and told me about Lou Ferrigno. She's the one that introduced me at a young age to the idea that I could create and shape my body. I became fascinated with the idea of looking like Lou and started collecting and drawing from comics. At 13, she bought me my first home gym. My mom made sure my magazine subscriptions were always up to date and any book I needed, she got. At 15, even as a single mother barely getting by, she bought me a membership to Gold's Gym.

I have never stopped training since she bought me that first home gym or let her money go to waste by hanging out with friends, instead of going to the gym after school. I competed in my first show when I was 16 years old where I won the state championship for my age category over 3 other boys. At 19, I won Teen Nationals. She was there and supported me in every way.

Even though I was successful as a teen, I still had to work harder than most since I wasn't genetically gifted. When I got older, competition against grown men became even more difficult and I was nowhere near an overnight success. I pushed year in and year out and worked my way up. I placed well at National and International events, but always came up just short. I placed top 4 at 10 pro qualifiers but still hadn't got the gold. It's a lesson in persistence and drive. I could have quit but mom didn't raise a quitter.

In 2018, I went to New York. After being a runner up the year before, this could be my year. I placed second, again, losing by one point. What did I do? I could have got frustrated and quit but instead I came back home, got back to work and 9 weeks later won my class at the IFBB North American Championships and finally earned pro status.

The lesson is to not only keep fighting and never quit, but also enjoy life as you go. I still had kids and a real life outside the gym. Don't make your job, hobby, or passion become the only thing in your life. Even while on prep, I still take them out to the movies or restaurants. Make those around you be inspired not just by your body, but by your ability to also find value in the lives and goals of those you love.

If you're just starting out in this sport and the stage is your goal, be patient. A champion isn't made in 6 weeks. Be ready to put in the time and know you will get better the longer and harder you work. No one starts off at the top. Give yourself enough time to prepare and seek the guidance of people who actually know what they are doing and have experienced the journey themselves.

If you're at the national level or plan to do your first show at that level, be ready! It's a whole different game. Every top person at that level has a certain degree of natural ability towards this sport. The work and dedication it takes to win at a national level is a lot more than at a local one. If you don't win the first time, remember that most don't. Get back to work and keep fighting until you no longer have a passion for it. One last thing, remember that we only get one body - take care of it. No trophy or title is worth your long term health.



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