

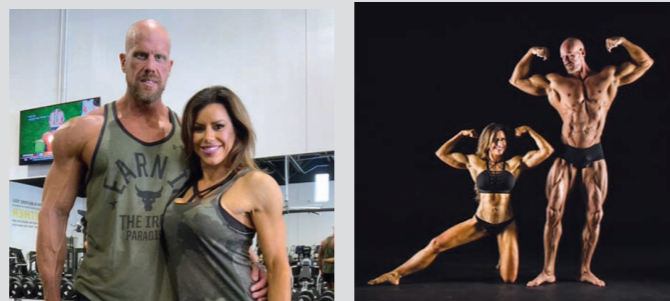
MASTERS ATHLETES

STEFANIE LISA

Figure Competitor

LARRY WATERS

Bodybuilding and Classic Physique,
North Carolina



Not only did Stefanie Lisa compete in her first show at the age of 52, but she did it alongside her boyfriend Larry Waters, who also competes. Being partners in and out of the gym, training together has brought them even closer. As an added bonus they cited their prep has become immeasurably easier, having each other's support through the process.

Stefanie began lifting at 19 largely influenced by female bodybuilder, Gladys Portugues in her book, *Hard Bodies*, co-authored with Joyce Vedra, PhD (1986). Young Stefanie was focused on shaping her body to what she envisioned as a better physique. Over the years, Stefanie discovered the importance of surrounding yourself with like-minded people, visualizing your goals, and learning how to overcome the challenges that life stresses and the occasional injury presented. The key is having a positive mindset so that you focus on what you can do rather than what you can't.

In his words, Larry describes himself as "the fat kid." But at 15, he was influenced by one of his dad's Flex Magazine's that showcased Berry DeMay. Larry said, "My dad tried to explain what it would take to develop a body like what I saw on the cover, but I wasn't deterred. I got my first weight set that Christmas, fell in love with it and haven't looked back." Larry began competing and continued to work toward muscle gains.

He discovered the key to his success was in planning and making his goals a priority. He shares, "When you make it a habit to plan and prepare, then it feels wrong not to do it. For the most part, "I know what my schedule is, so I plan ahead, restructure my schedule, do whatever it takes to make sure I can do what I need to do to work towards my goals." He's also thankful for how supportive his entire family is by not only going to his shows, but also having foods that are on his prep at family gatherings and even following his example of healthy living.

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They both agree, it's a challenge to convince family, friends, and co-workers that taking care of their bodies on the outside, leads to healthier bodies on the inside, affording a better quality of life both now and in the future. Larry is the first to admit, he feels women have a harder time, from a societal perspective. This is mostly because they are expected, guilted, or even shamed into participating in social events more than men are. Stefanie feels that age is irrelevant and refuses to accept the normal paradigms when no matter the age, you have the ability

to control how you train and what you eat to be the best you can. She recognizes how bodybuilding has affected all aspects of her life giving her more confidence, garnering more respect from others in the workplace, and providing an overall feeling of empowerment. This past year, Larry was encouraged to compete in the classic physique category and hopes to compete in his first national level show in 2021. Stefanie also plans to compete again. One thing is for certain, they will do it together and will be cheering on and supporting each other.

