



Chiropractor by day, bodybuilder by night

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By: Jeff Powers

By day, Dr. Matt Harper is busy with his chiropractic profession, but when the doors are locked chances are you'll find him preparing for an upcoming bodybuilding competition.

"Several friends of mine told me that my structure looked good, and that I should give this a shot," Harper said. "I decided to do so and the end itself proved quite positive."

Harper recently won the middleweight and overall division in a national bodybuilding competition here in Austin.

At 162 pound, Harper will be the first to tell you separation or muscular definition is one of the main keys to winning over the judges.

"It's a combination of what you look like on stage, because body building is an illusion," he said. "You can look like you weigh 200 pounds and you only literally weigh 162, and that's where the separation comes in."

As one would imagine, diet is probably the most important part of bodybuilding. Harper begins his diet 22 weeks before a competition.

"You basically start out with a greater number of calories and slowly but surely you cut them back while your chloroexpenditure becomes high," Harper said.

"I was doing cardio there at the end probably two hours a day, one in the morning and one in the evening, while working out with weights in the middle of the afternoon at lunch time. So you are roughly burning more calories than what you are taking in and that's what gives you that muscle separation and definition and ultimately what you look like on stage. It takes a lot of preparation, a lot of science and a lot of time to produce a winning physique."

Bodybuilding can be a lucrative sport, but Harper chose to go into the field of chiropractic work to help people overcome aches, pain and injuries.

It's been a good choice for him and his family.

"I take care of a lot of local high school athletes, older individuals, younger individuals," he said. "It's really grown the practice gaining patients from outside in gym aspects and doing the body building show and stuff like that. Everything that I do it comes from growing this practice. It's been beneficial by far."

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