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*edition*

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- Vendor deals
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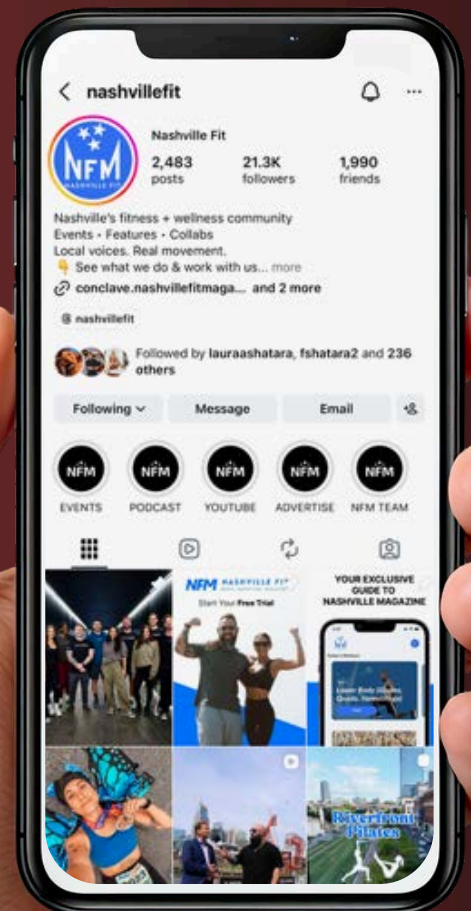
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MARKETING TRICKS GUIDE



## FROM THE EDITOR

Our May/June issue proves to show just how vibrant the fitness scene gets when summer arrives. This issue is full of amazing, need-to-know knowledge from Middle Tennessee's leaders in all things wellness, health, nutrition and everything in between! Get ready to meet a personal trainer who's desire to help people shaped his career. Find out how energy drinks and even socks are creating viral buzz in our city and beyond. Ladies, and even gentlemen, hear from an expert aesthetician who has helped build companies such as Estée Lauder and Kate Spade. Find out how you can get in her chair here in Nashville for that *much-needed* facial you have been dying for! And did you make it out to the Monster Energy AMA Supercross event at Nissan Stadium? Well we have a full recap for you! It's all in this issue plus so much more! But one thing truly stands out these months... THE MUSIC CITY FIT EXPO IS BACK!

I remember my first Music City Fit Expo...

My husband bought the tickets months in advance and had been counting down the days until we went. So what – It's just a fitness expo!? I doubt I will be impacted by an event as simple as this.

### WRONG!

The Music City Fit Expo changed my life – literally. As a person who never thought she could never find comfortability in health and wellness quickly found out just how accessible it is, especially in Middle Tennessee. What seemed like an unapproachable and intimidating world was shut down when I walked through the doors. Hundreds of health and fitness professionals invited me into their world and they are here to do the same for you! You can live a healthier and better life and many experts are onsite to start this journey with you, regardless of skill level and experience. Stop by on June 5 and 6 at the Nashville Fairgrounds to see just what I mean.

Now, I look forward to the Music City Fit Expo every year, and as you can see, I even turned it into my job! I look forward to chatting with you about your fitness journey, and remember – it's never too late to start.

Tala Shatara

LEAD EDITOR & REPORTER



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# *The Strongest Version of You With Zack Henderson*

In a city known for its ever-evolving fitness scene, trainers come and go, but the ones who leave a lasting impact are those who lead with purpose. For Nashville-based trainer Zack Henderson, fitness was never just about building strength. It was about helping people discover the strongest version of themselves, inside and out. A message he had learned himself.

“I was learning the kettlebell Turkish Get-Up,” Henderson said. “And I remember thinking, maybe I’m not trying to be the strongest person in the world, but I am trying to be the strongest version of myself.” That thought became the foundation for everything that followed.

Like many in the industry, Henderson didn’t grow up planning to become a trainer. In fact, his early years were marked by uncertainty.

Graduating college during the Great Recession, Henderson found himself at a crossroads. He was full of energy and curiosity, but without a clear direction and lack of options available. “I really had no idea what I wanted to do,” he said. “I had passion, but no outlet for it yet.”

Coming from a family of therapists and those in social work, he had seen at a young age how impactful it can be to spend your life helping others. As he began exploring personal development and fitness in his early 20s, those two paths collided. What started as a personal journey toward self-improvement quickly transformed into a professional calling. Soon after college, he was off to becoming a trainer that not only would help support your physical needs, but your emotional ones too.



"I feel uniquely drawn and passionate with folks who have quality of life, longevity and independence as their main priority," Henderson shared.

That realization became his foundation.

"If I can continue to go down this path of being the strongest version of myself, and if I can also parlay that into a career of helping people, that sounds like a really good plan."

Today, Henderson trains a wide range of clients, but his primary focus is adults over 50. While he has experience training everyone from youth athletes to individuals recovering from surgery, Henderson is especially passionate about helping clients maintain independence, move better, and feel stronger in their everyday lives, not just in the gym.

"If they're going to invest an hour working out with me, it's my goal to have that translate into weeks, months and years of quality time," Henderson said. "That's really what it's all about."

But how did the Virginia-native land in Nashville?

"I just put feelers out and cold emailed gyms across the country," he admitted. After a much anticipated 'yes' from a gym in Nashville took a chance on him, he packed his bags and kettlebells and headed west.

That opportunity brought him to the city, where he's now spent more than a decade building his career. And, he is one of the few that are making personal training easier and more convenient for you. "I come to you!" Henderson shared. He operates primarily as a mobile trainer, bringing workouts directly to clients. "Either my clients have a little home gym setup or I have some kettlebells in the back seat that I'll bring out."

For his own training, he keeps it simple at Gym 5. "The attitude of that place is full of hard work," he said.

Many reading his story might feel the inspiration to do the same and help others find the strongest version of themselves too. Henderson's advice to aspiring fitness and health professionals is to always be in a room with those who you look up to and can learn from. **If you are at the Music City Fit Expo, you're already doing it!**

That mindset led him to not only learn from industry leaders but also share that knowledge with others. "You must not hoard information," he said. "Anything that I know, I try to teach and give away for free."

More than a decade later, Henderson has watched the Nashville fitness scene grow rapidly, and he believes it's only getting better. "There's a lot of cool new places opening and a lot of great trainers here who are all doing great work."

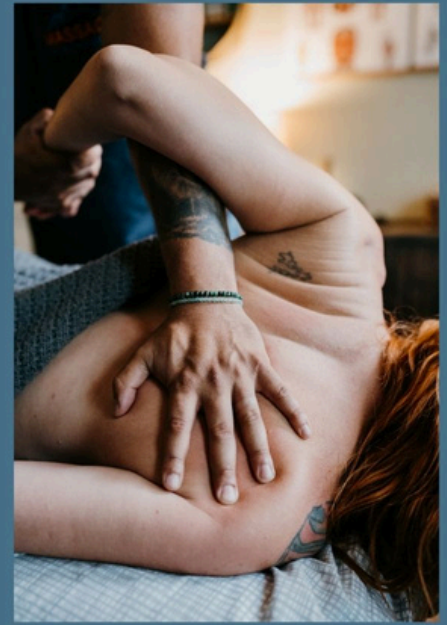
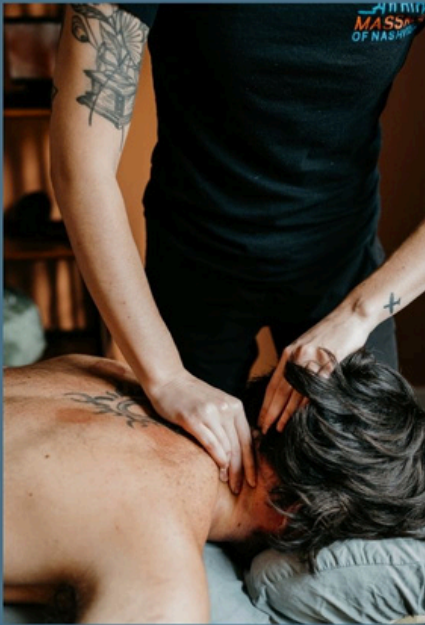
For Henderson, being part of that growth is something he doesn't take lightly. "I'm just... happy to be a part of it"

You can start your journey with him now either in person or visiting his site where all of his knowledge lives at [zackhenderson.com](http://zackhenderson.com)



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BY DR. PHILLIP OWNES,  
EXODUS COUNSELING

## Did you know that sleep matters as much as your workout?

**A client once told me, “Doc, I hit the gym at 5 a.m. every day... but last week I fell asleep on the leg press.” (No injuries—just dignity.) That humorous moment highlighted a serious truth: “Sleep is not optional recovery, it’s the foundation of performance, mood, and health.”**

Sleep is when your body repairs muscle, balances hormones, and resets your brain. Think of sleep like restarting your computer. Without the reboot (sleep, in this case), your computer (brain) does not update itself and begins to slow down. Research shows that poor sleep reduces muscle strength, slows reaction time, and increases injury risk. A lack of refreshing sleep also disrupts hormones like cortisol and growth hormone, which are critical for recovery and fat metabolism. Simply put: “You can out-train a bad workout—but you can’t out-train bad sleep.

## Are you struggling with poor sleep regardless of how much you workout?”

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, adults need at least 7 hours of sleep for optimal health, yet about one-third fall short. If you notice your sleep is not what it used to be, you may have stress-related sleep disruption known as insomnia.

# ***Are You Working Out But Still Feel Exhausted?***



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This is characterized by difficulty falling, or staying asleep and frequent wakings throughout the night. Poor sleep habits, such as late night blue screens (T.V., iPad, cell phone, or computer), late-day or excessive caffeine or nicotine, and irregular schedules disrupt restful sleep, preventing your brain from recovery.

Physical issues, like sleep apnea, OTC drugs (sleep aids) or medications can keep you from getting into deep, or REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, which is where the brain is actually repairing the “broken links” or connections needed to improve thinking capabilities and speed up reaction time.

It's a fact that high-quality sleep improves: 1) memory and learning; 2) muscle recovery; 3) immune function; and 4) emotional stability. We know that athletes who sleep get regular, restful sleep perform better, react faster, and experience fewer injuries. Still, you may be wondering “What can I do to improve my sleep and productivity throughout the day?” Let's keep this practical and real-life doable with these six proven sleep improvements techniques.

### **1. Build a Consistent Sleep Schedule:**

You know the importance of regular workouts. Going to bed and waking up at the same time—even on weekends—helps regulate your internal clock (circadian rhythm).

### **2. Limit Blue Screens Before Bed:**

Blue light from phones, computers, tablets, and T.V. suppresses melatonin, the hormone that helps you sleep. Try powering down 30–60 minutes before bedtime.

### **3. Watch Caffeine, Nicotine and Alcohol Intake:**

You may think that using stimulants or depressants help you sleep. However, these “mind altering drugs” actually cause you to sleep lighter, shorter, and get less restorative sleep.

### **4. Create a Sleep-Friendly Environment:**

Cool, dark, and quiet rooms improve sleep quality. Think “cave-like,” not “concert venue.”

### **5. Use Exercise Strategically:**

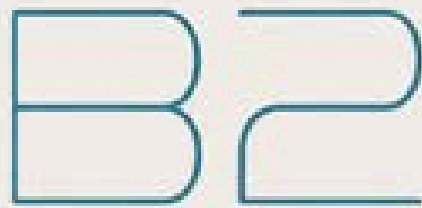
Exercise improves sleep—but intense workouts too close to bedtime may backfire for some people.

### **6. Manage Stress:**

Mindfulness, journaling, or breathing exercises can calm your brain before bed. For the long-term, consider seeing a mental health counselor to help you learn new coping strategies.

If you're grinding through workouts but skipping sleep, you're leaving results on the table. “Think of sleep as your body's overnight training session—no gym membership required.” So tonight, instead of one more episode or “doom scrolling” session, try this radical idea: go to bed. Your future self (and the leg press machine) will thank you.

Dr. Phillip Owens, LPC-MHSP-S is a licensed professional counselor with 21 + years experience, and a regular contributor to NFM. You may reach him at: [phillip@exoduscounseling.org](mailto:phillip@exoduscounseling.org) or **615-437-7677**. This article is for educational/entertainment purposes only—not a replacement for therapy or medical care. For a full list of references, please see digital article on [nashvillefitmagazine.com](http://nashvillefitmagazine.com)



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# David Ziegler Returns to Music City Fit Expo with a Message Bigger Than Muscle



In a sport often defined by extremes from size and discipline, David Ziegler has carved out a reputation not just for longevity, but for authenticity. As he prepares to return to the Music City Fit Expo, Ziegler brings with him more than two decades of experience, a global competition résumé, and a perspective on fitness that challenges the very idea of what it means to “inspire.”

Ziegler’s story begins far from the bright lights of Las Vegas, where he now resides. His love and passion for building himself and others up began in Philadelphia where no sport was off limits.

Like many young athletes, his introduction to weightlifting was rooted in performance, not aesthetics. “I got into weightlifting when I was around 12 years old, and I did it for sports. It had nothing to do with building muscle. It was all about trying to be stronger and faster.”

He was a very active child, playing basketball, football, baseball, running track, and even racing motocross. But after graduating high school early at 17, without a scholarship or clear academic path, Ziegler entered the workforce, while continuing to train.



During those formative years, the gym changed everything for what was next to come. “A guy came up to me and he asked if I was getting ready for a bodybuilding competition. I had no idea what that meant,” Ziegler laughed.

That moment sparked a transformation and a new interest which eventually turned into his career. Ziegler recalls buying the bodybuilding magazine, Muscular Development and initially feeling unsure about the physiques he saw inside. “I remember thinking to myself that I hated how big everybody was. I thought they were too big.”

But curiosity quickly turned into obsession, much like many who follow in the world of bodybuilding. “About a week later, I was super obsessed and I wanted to be the biggest man in the world.”

More than 20 years later, that interest hasn’t faded.

Ziegler has competed 31 times since 2009, never stepping away from the stage and hoping to earn a new title each time. “I’ve never taken a break,” he said.

His consistency on international bodybuilding stages has made him a recognizable figure in fitness circles across the country and abroad. His longevity speaks to something deeper than the titles he brings home, and is why many look to him during their own bodybuilding journeys’.

“Most guys are not top three, so most people can relate to that grind, sweat and drive,” Ziegler recalls about his own competition experiences. “And then to not receive that huge reward at the end every single time is what makes my story relatable.”

That relatability has become one of Ziegler’s greatest strengths and why so many eyes are on him.

When Ziegler began his career, the path to success looked very different. “There wasn’t social media and the only way to really win or to get paid was to be on a magazine cover,” he said.

But as the digital landscape evolved, from early platforms like MySpace to modern giants like YouTube and TikTok, Ziegler became one to watch and has amassed over a million followers across all platforms.

“When I saw the shift in social media, I was like, ‘This is a great opportunity to just show everybody what I do every day.’” Instead of chasing perfection, he chose transparency. “I don’t win the show every time, but I live the lifestyle, I eat all the food. I train until my nose bleeds,” Ziegler said. “I obsess about this all day long.”

In an era where fitness and social media often go hand in hand, Ziegler offers a nuanced perspective for those entering the industry.



"If it's bodybuilding, you need to get off of social media and just focus on trying to be the best bodybuilder you can be," he said.

However, as a thriving fitness mogul, Ziegler recognizes the power social media can play, especially for those pursuing influence or business growth online, his message shifts. "Communication is everything."

He points to a common mistake in today's saturated fitness space that is inhibiting growth and relatability. "Everybody puts out their workouts, but what a lot of people don't do is let people know who they actually are," he said. "That's the way you build a relationship with your audience."

Perhaps the most striking part of Ziegler's philosophy is his take on inspiration itself.

"Never in my life have I ever thought that I wanted to be motivational or inspirational," he said.

Instead, he views motivation as a shared experience, not a personal achievement.

"I feel like I am part of this wheel of encouragement and motivation, and that wheel is not made up of any singular individual. It's made up of all of us together."

Still, the impact of his journey isn't lost on him. "When somebody does come up to me, it touches me very, very, very deeply."

And you too can experience the motivation first hand. Him and his wife, Dr. Amanda Ziegler combine years of fitness experience, passion and science to bring their clients a holistic coaching program. "The Iron Family is just a phrase that represents everybody who wants to better themselves," he said.

It's an approach rooted in integrity, ensuring clients get the best possible results. His wife, Amanda, adds a unique dimension to their coaching. "She has two doctorates! She's a doctor of research," Ziegler said. Her expertise helps bridge the gap between emerging studies and real-world application, complementing Ziegler's decades of hands-on experience. "With me, you get all the bro science, but then you also get Amanda, the scientific mind."

Beyond coaching and competition, Ziegler is expanding his reach through a growing digital series called Guest Pass, which is a online show that travels around the world touring gyms. The concept is simple: highlight independently owned gyms with character and community, especially spaces that often go unnoticed.

"The best gyms are the ones with vibes and souls," he said.

With more than 120 gyms filmed across five countries, the project is evolving into an app designed to help travelers quickly find quality training spaces when on-the-go. "We want it to be very quick and efficient, as if you showed up to the gym to tour it yourself."

As Ziegler returns to the Music City Fit Expo, his presence represents more than just another appearance. It's a continuation of a journey built on persistence, evolution, and self-driven purpose.

From Philadelphia to Las Vegas, from magazine pages to digital platforms, his story is why thousands of people are continuously watching his every move.

And while he may not have set out to inspire, his impact is undeniable.

"I started because I wanted to have bigger biceps," he said. "But the fact that me chasing my own dreams inspired you to do the same thing is what motivates me."



# “Skincare is like working out” Face Foundirés Heidi Bellerjeau

As the owner of Face Foundiré Nashville in The Gulch, Bellerjeau has already introduced a more accessible, results-driven approach to facials in the heart of the city. Now, she’s gearing up to open a second location in Belle Meade, bringing that same model of efficient, high-quality skincare to even more Middle Tennesseans.

“It’s not vanity,” Bellerjeau said. “It’s foundational for confidence and mental health.”



But long before she was leading the charge in Nashville’s skincare scene, Bellerjeau’s journey began behind a cosmetic counter—one that would eventually launch her into a decades-long career with some of the biggest names in beauty.

At just 18 to 20 years old, she was immersed in an environment that blended creativity, hustle, and education. Bellerjeau got her start working with Prescriptives, a division under the Estée Lauder umbrella—an experience that would shape her entire trajectory.

“Of course, I loved it... all the free products,” she laughed. “But I learned so much, not just about the makeup artistry piece, but skincare.”

# ESTÉE LAUDER



A major turning point came through mentorship from celebrity makeup artist Tricia Sawyer, who is known for working with stars like Kristen Wiig and Julia Roberts. She's who taught me everything I know about brushes and how to apply makeup," Bellerjeau said. "That's what really got me excited to look at this industry as a career path."

After studying public relations and communications, Bellerjeau initially planned to enter the PR world—but life had other plans.

"I did not get the internship. Thank goodness," she said. "Because I know my path would have been different if I had."

Instead, she landed a regional role with Estée Lauder right after graduation—launching a career that would take her across the country and around the world.

"I lived in Birmingham, then Atlanta, then ultimately New York City," she said. "My commute was Delta Airlines."

Her role extended far beyond the retail floor. Bellerjeau developed training curriculum, worked alongside chemists, and even launched the brand in Singapore.

One of the most defining moments in her career came when Estée Lauder partnered with Kate Spade to launch a beauty line.

"Kate, sweet Kate, was the sweetest soul," Bellerjeau said. "Her attention to detail was impeccable."

From fragrance to packaging, every detail reflected Spade's signature aesthetic. "The inside of the box was the wallpaper of her guest bathroom," she said. "Just red with these gorgeous yellow flowers... it was her favorite room in her New York City apartment."

While Bellerjeau had her hands in fragrance, cosmetics, it was skin health that ultimately became her passion.

"When people would sit in my chair, if they were struggling with skin concerns, I knew I had to fix that first," she said. "That was foundational."

She quickly realized that great makeup starts with great skin. "Even as a makeup artist, I realized early on: the less I did, the better it looked. But I needed a good canvas for that."

For Bellerjeau, skincare is about far more than appearance. "I don't think of it as vanity," she said. "I truly think of skincare just as I think of working out!" She expressed.

Although with decades of years under her belt with the beauty industry's biggest brands, there was still so much to learn and Bellerjeau wanted to know it all.

She made the decision to go back to school and earn her aesthetics license at age 55.



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## MUSIC CITY MINDSET

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She made the decision to go back to school and earn her aesthetics license at age 55.

“I said for three years, ‘I want to do this,’” she said. “And then I finally did it.”

Through an accelerated apprenticeship-style program, she completed rigorous hands-on training in just six months.

“My instructor said, ‘It’s not going to be easy,’ and I said, ‘I don’t like easy. Bring it.’”

Today, Bellerjeau is helping lead the growth of Face Foundrié Nashville, introducing a new model to the city’s skincare scene.

Inspired by the convenience of blowout bars, the concept offers accessible, results-driven facials in a streamlined setting.

“It’s the med spa integrity at a fraction of the cost,” she said.

The layout is unlike anything ever done before with its bar-style layout you would see at a hair or nail salon. “Why don’t we have a place like Drybar for facials?” she said. “And the idea was born.”

Clients can expect high-quality treatments without the traditional barriers. “You can get in and out under 100 dollars and many times you can book the day before,” she said.

At the heart of Face Foundrié’s success is a deep commitment to education.



“The beauty industry is always changing and we need to be ahead of that,” Bellerjeau said.

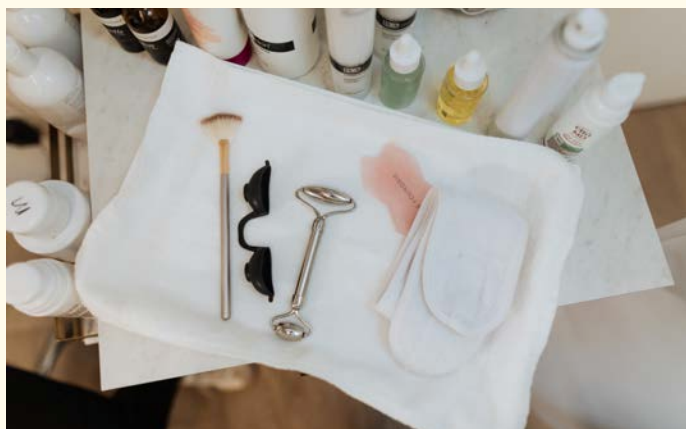
Her Nashville team includes a structured hierarchy of aestheticians, educators, and leadership, all supported by rigorous training programs that can take weeks or months to complete. “If you’re not comfortable, we’re not moving on,” she said. “I love that because I know they feel empowered.”

If you haven’t had a chance to stop by Face Foundrié’s Gulch location, you will have even more of an opportunity with the second location opening in Belle Meade, this summer.

“We’re sister stores, not twins,” she said. While services and quality will remain the same, design elements will reflect the surrounding community. The Belle Meade location is expected to bring a more organic and modern look. Bellerjeau says she hopes everyone who walks in can feel like they have entered a spa-like sanctuary.

Beyond her work with Face Foundrie, Heidi Bellerjeau isn't slowing down anytime soon. She's preparing to launch her own mineral-based makeup line, Salt Mineral Beauty, a project that reflects her long-standing belief in skin-first beauty.

Rooted in her decades of experience—from working alongside chemists at Estée Lauder to hands-on treatment room expertise—Bellerjeau's approach continues to center on ingredients, education, and long-term skin health.



Beyond treatments and techniques, Bellerjeau is equally focused on the experience itself. From the layout of the space to the way clients are greeted, every detail is intentional. Inspired by high-level hospitality brands, she's rethinking what a skincare visit should feel like—less transactional, more personal. It's a philosophy that shows up in everything from the curved front desk design to the sensory elements inside the studio, all aimed at creating an environment where clients feel comfortable, cared for, and completely at ease.

Bellerjeau also finds purpose in mentoring the next generation of aestheticians. She has a particular passion for working with those fresh out of school—those who are eager, curious, and ready to grow. For her, it's not just about building a business, but about building people—helping them gain confidence, refine their skills, and step into a career with intention.



Another piece of Bellerjeau's vision is redefining time when it comes to self-care. In an industry where treatments can feel like a full-day commitment, she's created a model that fits into real life. Whether it's between errands, before school pickup, or during a rare free hour, her goal is to make skincare something women can realistically maintain—not something they have to plan their entire day around.

For her, the future of beauty isn't about covering imperfections—it's about understanding them, treating them at the source, and giving people the confidence that comes from truly healthy skin.

As Heidi Bellerjeau continues to expand Face Foundrie Nashville across Middle Tennessee, her focus remains on creating an experience that is both approachable and deeply impactful.

At its core, her mission goes beyond treatments and trends—it's about helping people understand their skin, trust the process, and feel confident in their own.

"If there were problems on the skin, I wanted to know where it was coming from, how we could get to the root cause of it."

For more information, to explore services, or to book an appointment, visit [facefoundrie.com](https://facefoundrie.com) or on Instagram at [@heidi.facefoundrie](https://www.instagram.com/heidi.facefoundrie)

Entrepreneurs are wired to solve problems. For Josh Hudson, the problem was personal. He saw how men and women were living below their potential - exhausted, stressed, and out of balance, and realized the missing link was optimizing their hormones. From that vision, Optimize U was born: a health and wellness brand built to help people age with confidence, clarity, and strength. Today, Optimize U is helping thousands of patients across the U.S. unlock their full potential: mentally, physically, and sexually.



**“NORMAL  
is not OPTIMAL”**

Josh Hudson, CEO of Optimize U

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# VOLTA ENERGY

## ONE-ON-ONE WITH VOLTA FOUNDER, JOHN FIORENTINO

### What makes VOLTA different from anything else out there?

The way we've built this, from the molecular chemistry and the ingredients to the actual flavor profiles, literally doesn't exist anywhere else. And I say that with total confidence because I've traveled all over the world just to research and take notes on what's out there. This is the result of that inspiration. With standard pills and powders, your body is only catching about twenty percent of the nutrients. With what we call the 'VOLTA goo,' our specialized formula basically gives you 10 times that absorption.

### Why Nashville?

I feel like in Nashville and Tennessee in general, there's a really great, genuine sort of spirit and soul here. It seems like Nashville is one of the last places in the country that has sort of kept its soul intact and is a little bit like a no B.S. type of town. It just responds well to things that are authentic.

### How did your passion for drinks start?

My dream has always been to do something [regarding] drinks. It goes all the way back to when I was ten years old, setting up lemonade stands and figuring out how it all worked. I was always in the kitchen making these homemade mixtures, just playing around with different health ingredients and experimenting until I found something that actually worked.



## What do you want people to feel when they walk into VOLTA?

“When someone walks into the shop for the first time, the reaction is almost always the same – ‘Whoa’. When people walk in, I wanted them to feel that shift. We’re doing something with our drinks and products that’s never been done.

## What exactly does VOLTA mean?

The very simple translation in Latin is basically to turn. The philosophical context comes down to transformation.

## Have you seen real impact from customers?

I actually just saw a comment on our Instagram from someone who had finished chemotherapy and was struggling with hair loss. They told us that after just a month of using the collagen, the regrowth was honestly shocking. Seeing that kind of impact is exactly why we do this.

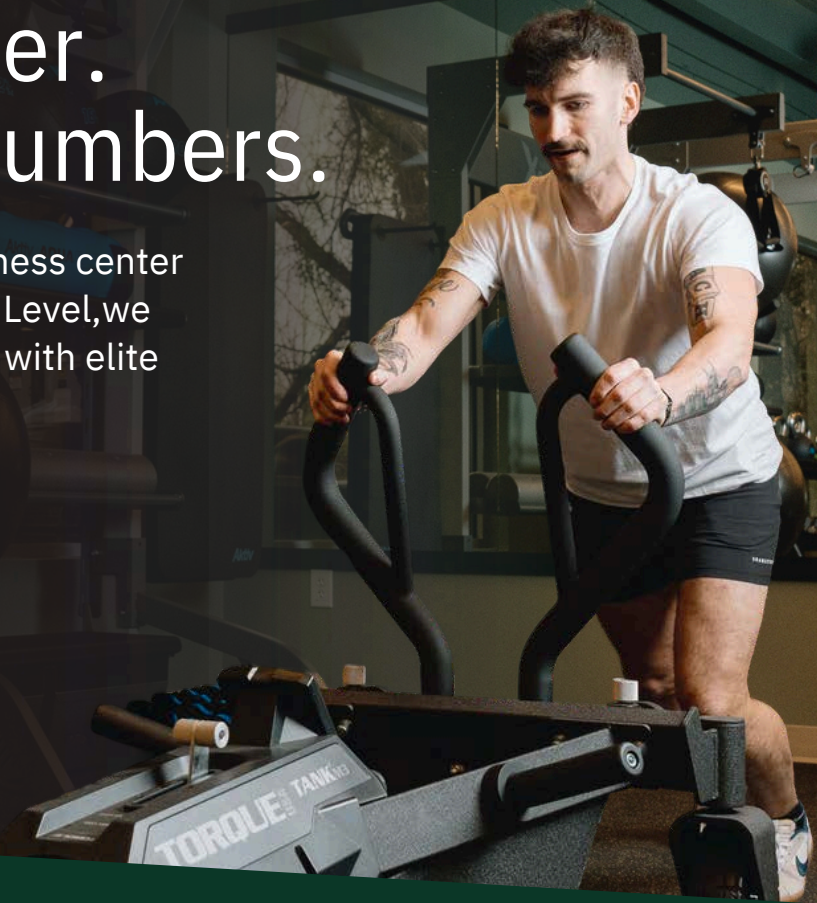


## What’s your long-term vision for VOLTA?

I want to go really, really big! I don’t want to grow it to a place where it’s going to break or compromise the ingredient or experience. We are growing intentionally, both fast and slow, with plans to take over the world, but doing it the right way. I just bought three trailers that I’m going to scatter around Nashville, Franklin and Brentwood.

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# VIRAL GRIPPY SOCKS: GABBY & THREADS STITCH BY STITCH IN NASHVILLE



What started as a small creative outlet has quickly evolved into one of the most recognizable brands in boutique fitness retail. Gabby & Threads, founded by Gabriella Bricker, is now stocked in more than 300 studios, ships to over a dozen countries, and has become a staple in Pilates, Barre, and Lagree and other fitness communities from Nashville to Dubai.

Known for its embroidered grip socks, sweatshirts, and accessories, the brand blends personality with performance, featuring fun designs that show off interests and hobbies. What began as a few handmade pieces quickly gained momentum. Early designs inspired by Bricker's own personality, featured art that many resonated with, and her business has been climbing the ladder ever since. "I was like, 'This is so crazy!'" From there, demand didn't just grow—it multiplied.

A defining moment came when Bricker received her first major wholesale inquiry from a local studio. "They were like 'We'd love to order 800 pairs,'" she said. "I just *kind of* blacked out, and said 'Yes.'" At the time, she didn't have the equipment or capacity to fulfill an order of that size. But she leaned in, investing in commercial embroidery machines and scaling her production.

“I just said yes and decided I would figure it out later,” Bricker said. That mindset has become a defining characteristic of Gabby & Threads. Today, the business runs on multiple commercial machines and continues to expand both its product offerings and its reach. Despite that rapid growth, one of the most surprising elements of the brand’s success is how it happened.

“One thing that surprises a lot of people is I didn’t do any ads,” she said.

Instead, Bricker focused on organic growth—leveraging Etsy visibility, word-of-mouth, and showing up consistently at pop-ups across Nashville and Middle Tennessee. In 2025, she spent nearly every weekend between May and October at events, often bringing her embroidery machine and stitching live on-site. “I honestly just kind of said yes to anything that came my way,” she said.



That “yes” mentality continued to open doors. Gabby & Threads has since been featured in influencer gift guides, collaborated with brands, and even stitched live at events for companies like Vuori, Tito’s Handmade Vodka, and Porsche.

One viral moment in particular helped catapult the brand even further. “I can honestly attribute almost a 1000 orders between November and December to that single post.”

As the brand grows, so does its sense of community. From affiliate partnerships to relationships built within the fitness space, Gabby & Threads has become more than just a product, it’s a lifestyle brand woven into the culture of boutique fitness. A brand all backed by a woman who keeps Nashville’s entrepreneurial spirit strong.

“I once saw a quote that said a really great product will sell itself,” she said.

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Looking ahead, Bricker continues to expand her offerings. From grip socks to sweatshirts, hats, and tote bags, with potential plans for a future retail storefront in Nashville, Bricker is continuing to become a larger name in the fitness retail space.

“As of right now, the plan is just to keep growing, keep getting more machines and getting more help.”

Behind the scenes, she credits her husband, Garrett, as a key part of that growth. With a background in business management, he has helped support and scale the brand from its earliest days. “Having him in my corner has made a huge difference. He has experience in business management, which has been a huge asset to me because it helped me grow Gabby & Threads quickly.”

Just over a year into their rise, Bricker is continuing to work alongside large brands, locally and nationally.

At their core, Gabby & Threads wasn't born from a business plan, it was built on creativity, resilience, and one brave yes. Customers can also join in, with Bricker offering customizable designs for individuals, gifts, and special occasions.

Looking ahead, Bricker sees embroidery only getting more popular from here. “I feel like embroidery is something people are always going to need.” Bricker said. “Whether it's grip socks, a baby blanket or a sweatshirt.”

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# BENEATH THE HELMET:

## Supercross Athletes Redefine What Fitness Really Looks Like

*While the high flying action of Supercross draws attention, it is the unseen work that defines these athletes. The discipline required to train, fuel, and recover at such a high level is what allows them to perform under the lights on some of the toughest tracks.*

- Tylor Gentry, Contributor



When people think of holistic health and athletic performance, motocross is not usually the first thing that comes to mind. Energy drinks, speed, and gasoline do not typically suggest long term wellness.

But what fans see on the track or on their TV screens at home only tells part of the story. Behind the scenes, there is a deep level of discipline, preparation, and care that often goes unnoticed.

On April 11th, the AMA Supercross came to Nissan Stadium. Dirt, roaring engines, and thousands of fans filled the stands to watch their favorite riders battle it out as they weaved, jumped, and whipped their way across the track.

What many do not realize is that Supercross athletes are among the most physically conditioned competitors in sports. Beneath their helmets and jerseys are strong, highly trained bodies, carefully planned nutrition strategies, and recovery routines that rival traditional athletes.



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Supercross is not just about throttle control and speed. It demands heavily on having full body strength, cardiovascular endurance, balance, and intense mental focus. During a main event, a rider's heart rate can stay near its limit while their muscles absorb constant impact from jumps, hard landings, and occasional collisions. Add adrenaline and a 450-horsepower engine and you've got a recipe for controlled chaos.

Riders rely on grip strength to control the bike, core stability to stay centered, and explosive power to handle technical sections of the course. At the same time, they must track their position and make split second decisions. It's a mix of technical skill and elite athletic conditioning that is easy to overlook.

"...before my knees, I liked to run a lot. I've had both knees done, ACL and meniscus, and at some point you have to learn to love to suffer in this sport." Gavin Towers #73

To meet these demands, riders follow structured training programs that include cycling, running, strength training, and mobility work. Many spend hours each week building endurance through road biking or interval sessions that mirror race intensity.

Training often focuses on functional movements like deadlifts, squats, and grip work to prepare for the unique stress of riding. Flexibility and mobility are just as important, helping riders stay loose and reduce the risk of injury. "I do a lot of cycling. I don't know why, but it's fun to me. Probably running too. It's the closest thing to the heart rate of riding. Then I mix in crossfit style circuits." Christian Craig #28

Nutrition is another key piece of the puzzle. Riders often work with coaches to build meal plans that support performance and recovery. Lean proteins, complex carbohydrates, and proper hydration are staples of their daily routine.

Race day nutrition is especially precise. Riders need steady energy without feeling heavy, so they focus on simple, easily digestible meals that keep them sharp from start to finish.

"Dude, we are so boring," he said laughing. "It's basically chicken, rice, and avocado. It couldn't be more basic. We aren't trying to lose or gain weight. But if I do well at this race, I'm going to smash a cheeseburger." Christian Craig #28

Perhaps the most overlooked part of Supercross is recovery. With a demanding schedule and constant travel, riders must prioritize sleep, physical therapy, and active recovery to stay competitive.

Ice baths, stretching, massage therapy, and even mindfulness practices are common tools used to help the body reset. Injury prevention is always top of mind given the high risk nature of the sport too.

"I have a hyperbaric cold chamber that I use a lot, along with dynamic stretching, sauna sessions, and getting as much sleep as I can." Jordan Smith #20 Supercross may not fit the typical image of wellness, but behind the scenes it tells a different story.

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	Competition	Time	Location
	<p>Music City Mayhem</p>	<p>Friday 8-5p-Individual Saturday 8a-5p- Team</p>	<p>Expo 1</p>
	<p>Tennessee Strongest Man 5</p>	<p>Saturday 8a-5p</p>	<p>Expo 1</p>
	<p>Sakura Cup Sumo Wrestling</p>	<p>Saturday 8:30a-5p</p>	<p>Expo 2</p>
	<p>SPF Iron Alley</p>	<p>Friday 8a-5p Saturday 8a-5p</p>	<p>Expo 2</p>
	<p>Weightlifting</p>	<p>Friday 1p-5p Saturday 8:30am- 5:pm</p>	<p>Expo 2</p>
	<p>NPC Natural Battle of the Titans</p>	<p>Saturday 8:30am-5pm</p>	<p>Expo 3</p>
	<p>Pro Wrestling Symphony: Resistance</p>	<p>Saturday 3p-5p</p>	<p>Expo 1</p>

# WELCOME TO THE MUSIC CITY FIT EXPO



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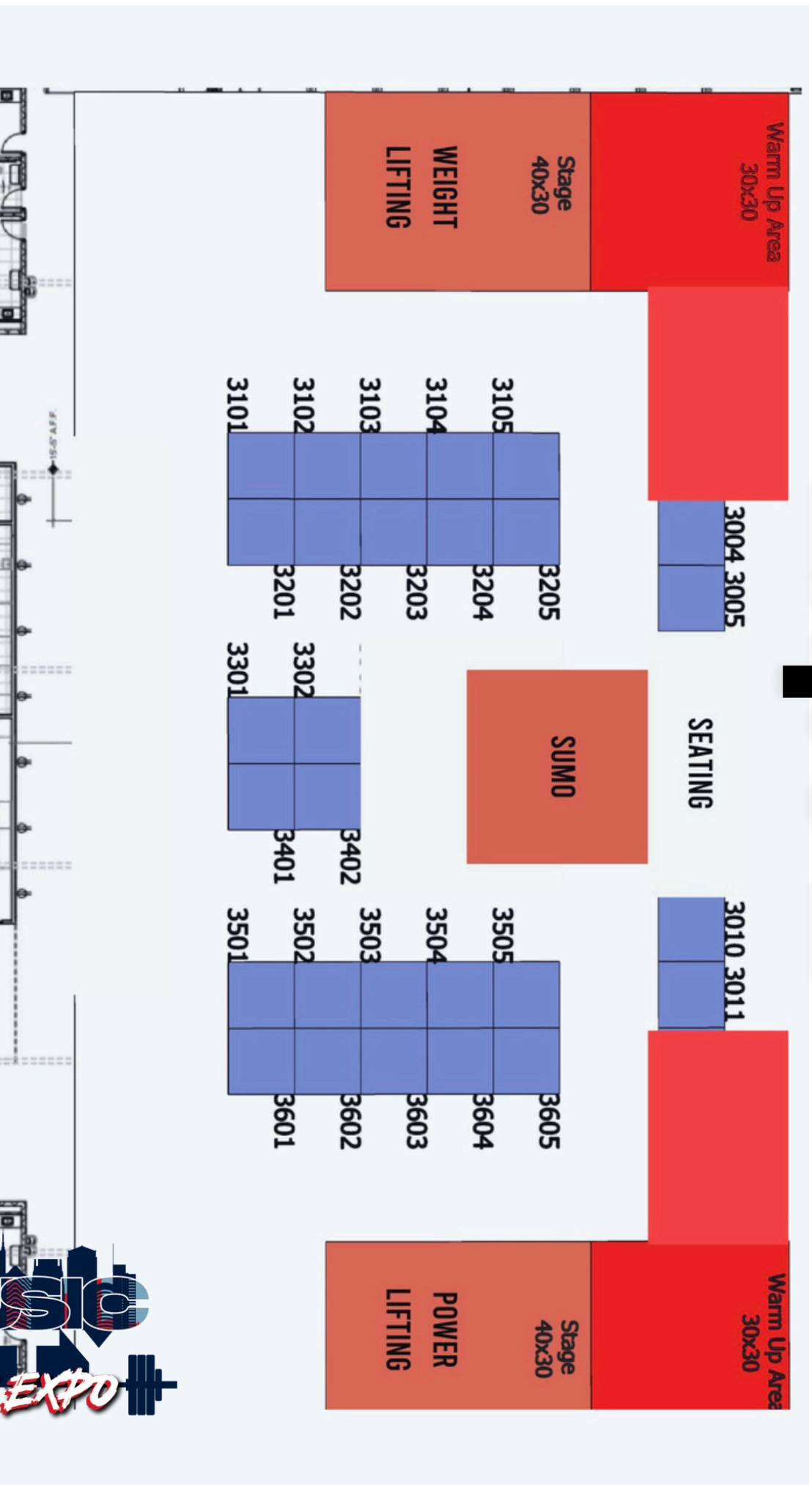
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# Expo 3

# Expo 2





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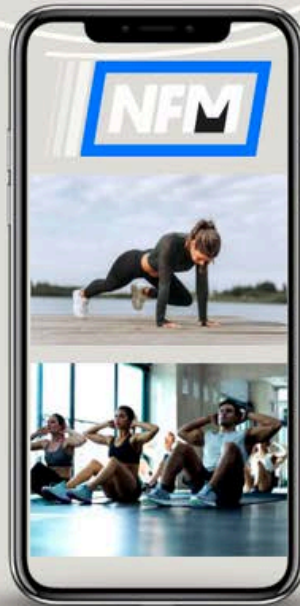


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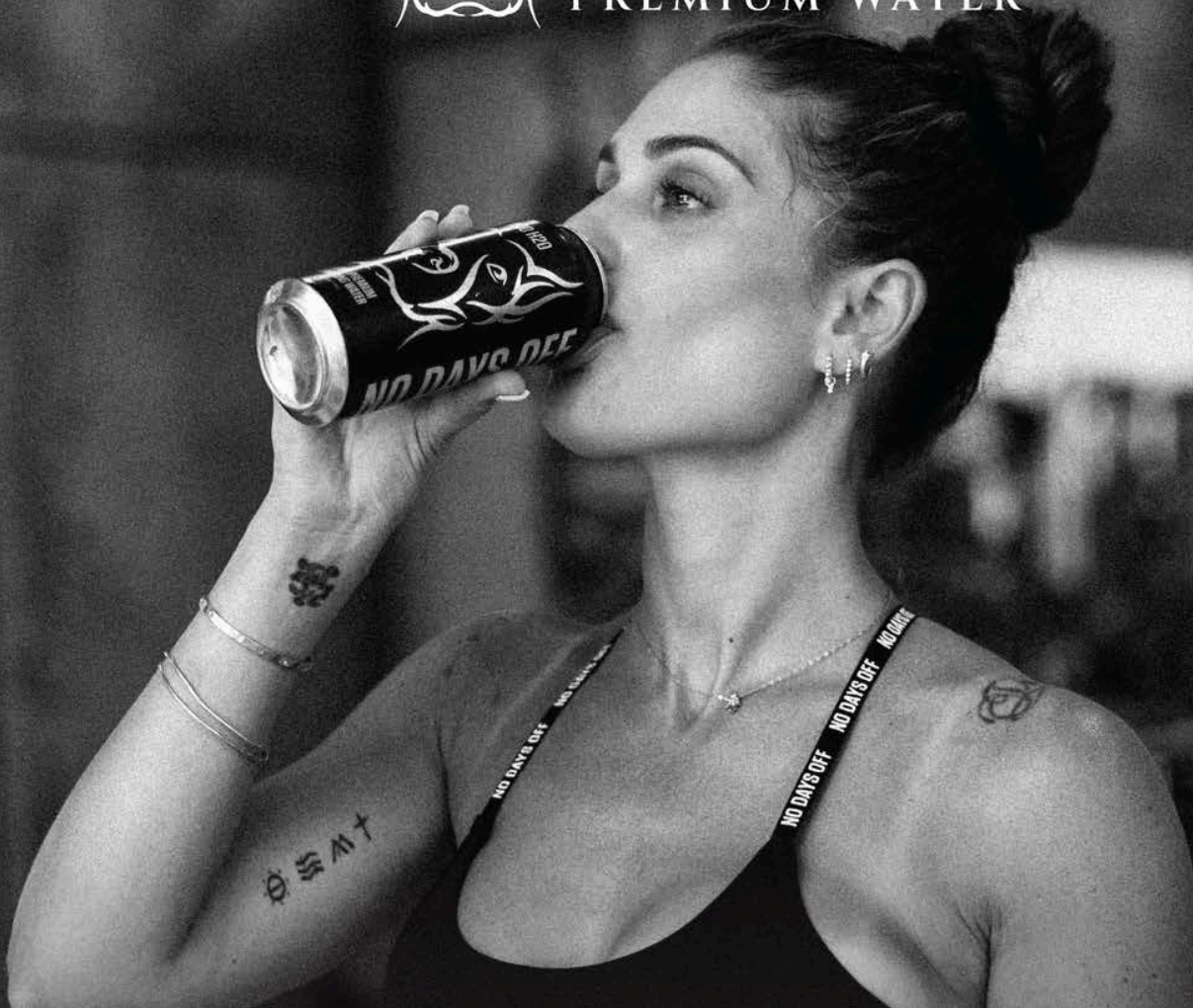
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