



BIG BUFF & JEWISH

Shoshana Treichei
& Bruce Pediman
prove that
members fo
the Tribe can
flex it with the
BIG kids, any day.



SHOSHANA TREICHEL
Nice Jewish girls aren't supposed to bench press more than twice their own body weight. Nice Jewish girls aren't supposed to deadlift 400 pounds or leg press a half-ton. And nice Jewish girls aren't supposed to do 50 pushups.

Shoshana Treichel shatters the stereotype of what a Jewish mother is supposed to be like. She can bench press 265 pounds and leg press 1,000 pounds. When you consider that she competes at 124 pounds, these feats of strength are astonishing.

Treichel can pump some serious iron and she's also a competitive bodybuilder. She not only powerlifts, but she also she bodybuilds. During competition time, Treichel

reduces her body fat percentage to 5.7.

She chats about her training schedule as the two of us pedal incumbent bikes, warming up for a chest workout in a Cardiff gym where Treichel is a trainer.

"Every year, it takes longer for me to get ready for a show," says Treichel, who has a daughter at the San Diego Jewish Academy.

"It's a process of elimination." First the wine and all other alcohol must go, then the pasta, followed by bread, fruit and other sugary foods. "By the end of the diet, I only eat fibrous vegetables, clean proteins and very few complex carbs."

Treichel moved to San Diego this past summer, from Kodiak Island, Alaska, where she owned her own gym—Shoshana's

Gym. It was at her gym that she met her husband, Jake, a man 10 years her junior.

"Jake wanted to be a competitive bodybuilder," says Treichel, whose house in Kodiak doubled as the JCC and was listed as such in the local phone book.

"He approached me to see if I would train him. I told him, 'If you make it through a week of my workouts, I'll train you.'"

I think I know what Treichel's husband must have felt like working out with his wife. At the end of my chest workout with her, consisting of 12 sets of presses and flyes, my pectoral muscles feel like they need a bra to stay in my shirt. Still, Treichel and her chiseled muscles are ready for even more.

by Judd Handler



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHOSHANA TREICHEL



PHOTO BY HEDI SCHWEL

INTRIGUING LADY: Outside of the gym, Treichel has attended Tel Aviv University, learned several languages, and performed professionally as both an actor and a dancer.

“Treichel’s house in Kodiak doubled as the JCC and was listed as such in the local phone book.”

LEAN, BUT NOT SO MEAN: Treichel, who gets her body fat down to 5.7 percent for competition time, recently moved to San Diego from Alaska, where she owned her own gym. Now her daughter attends the San Diego Jewish Academy and Treichel works as a trainer at a Cardiff gym.

With her iPod blasting the motivational and operatic theme to the Rocky soundtrack, Treichel challenges me to a pushup contest, this after she performed 10 repetitions of 225 pounds on the bench press.

I give up after 15 pushups; Treichel easily does 20 and mercifully stops so as not to show me up.

If Shoshana isn’t a typical Jewish mom, she’s also not the typical one-dimensional gym rat.

She speaks several languages, plays piano, attended Tel Aviv University, performed in professional dance and acting companies, has a master’s degree in exercise science from Harvard, and created the curriculum for the weightlifting program at Kodiak College.

Treichel was 10 years old when her mother became blind from macular degeneration. Despite her blindness, Treichel’s mother went on to receive a Master’s

degree. Treichel helped her mom get the degree by reading textbooks to her.

Treichel has trained numerous celebrities including David Bowie’s supermodel girlfriend, Iman, adult film star Vanessa Del Rio and teenage surfer Bethany Hamilton, who had her arm ripped off by a shark while surfing in Hawaii in 2003. In her autobiography, Hamilton credits Treichel for getting her back into the water in good shape.

Treichel also trained a few Miami Dolphins in the early ‘90s, making her one of the only women to have ever been the personal strength and conditioning coach

for an NFL player.

In 1992, the stress and aftermath of Hurricane Andrew caused Treichel to miscarry her first pregnancy.

"I lost my house, my business, I couldn't afford good medical care and I ended up needing two blood transfusions, the second of which gave me hepatitis," says Treichel.

After her health recovered, Treichel relocated to Alaska, where she reached out to every Jew in the communities of Kenai and Kodiak.

"I became the community *Emma*," says Treichel, using the Hebrew term for mother. "I made sure to celebrate every holiday. I wrote the services myself, and in my daughter's school, I taught all the children about Hanukkah and the story of the Maccabees."

Though she is proud of her numerous high placements in bodybuilding contests in the U.S., including her win at the Pacific USA Bodybuilding Championships in Anaheim last year, Treichel has a deep connection with the bodybuilding scene in Israel.

In 1998, she was one of the judges and main guest posers at the "Mr. Israel" Bodybuilding Championships.

"The bodybuilding scene in Israel is amazing," says Treichel. "The contests in Israel are as good as any federation show in the U.S."

Treichel honed her stage presence in the world of theater. She performed in professional productions of *A Chorus Line*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hello Dolly* and *Bye Bye Birdie*.

Treichel was attacked while living in New York City in 1985. One day, minutes after auditioning with dance teacher Paula Herald, who discovered Jennifer Beales of *Flashdance* fame, Treichel was jumped in the street, mugged and sexually assaulted.

"The worst part about the assault was the lineup," recalls Treichel, who claims that her assailants, to her knowledge, have never been caught. She also had an unpleasant experience attending a Victims Crisis Center.

"Everyone was a prostitute except for me," she recalls.

After the experience Treichel says she vowed to become the strongest woman.

She did. ☆

BRUCE PECHMAN

In the seminal 1977 bodybuilding docu-

“The neighborhood bully kept stealing my gelt everyday. I was a skinny nebbish in those days.”

mentary *Pumping Iron*, which chronicles Arnold Schwarzenegger's sixth consecutive Mr. Universe title, one bodybuilder, Mike Katz, who was Mr. Universe 1973, claims that he got into bodybuilding because he was sick and tired of being picked on as a skinny little Jewish kid.

Bruce Pechman can relate. Born and raised in the Bronx, Pechman weighed 133 pounds when he first started lifting weights at age 16.

These days Pechman has triple-peaked 18-inch biceps and has an appropriately named website, mrbicep.com. He will be 50 next year, but he looks a decade younger. His waist measures a svelte 30 inches, while his chest bulges at 47 inches.

"Katz's physique was not very symmetrical, but he was huge and very strong," says Pechman while doing some back rows with moderate weight, completing each movement slowly and in a full range of motion.

Working out with Pechman is easier on the body than working out with Shoshana Treichel.

"I don't believe in using heavy weights," says Pechman, who trains six days a week, one hour per workout. He admits to not doing any cardio unless he is training for a bodybuilding competition.

"I'd lose too much muscle if I did cardio," he says.

Pechman started bodybuilding for two reasons: "One was the neighborhood bully who kept stealing my gelt everyday. I was a skinny nebbish in those days. The second reason was so I could lift the newspaper stacks," says Pechman who was a paperboy growing up in New York, where he lived until age 18.

Pechman then moved to L.A., where he

lived for 20 years, followed by a 10-year stint in Atlanta, before settling in Solana Beach for the last couple of years.

Pechman will be competing in a National Physique Committee contest in January, his first competition in five years. Why the long layoff?

"Getting ready for a bodybuilding show literally monopolizes all of your time and is a major drain on your family," says Pechman. "The training and diet triples in intensity. You become consumed by it."

Though he's been bodybuilding for over 30 years, Pechman's paychecks have very little to do with fitness. He is a technology guru with over 20 years experience as a project engineer and director of information technology.

Pechman devours every technology periodical on the market and keeps abreast on the latest innovations such as MP3 and DVD players, iPods and digital cameras.

But Pechman is no ordinary high-tech geek. He has created a *shtick* for himself with his highly engaging personality, which combines caffeinated energy and copious jokes.

Since May 2004, Pechman has been the tech reporter on KUSI. His on-air moniker is, "The Muscleman of Technology." Pechman's website features many of his on-air segments, including a fun review of Halloween gadgets.

When he is in front of the camera, Pechman is in complete control, never uttering one hesitant "um" or "uh."

Pechman is currently in talks with Turner Media negotiating a 13-episode series for his own 30-minute weekly tech show to be aired on the Men's Channel.

It's amusing to observe Pechman smile

PHOTO BY HEIDI SCHAWEL

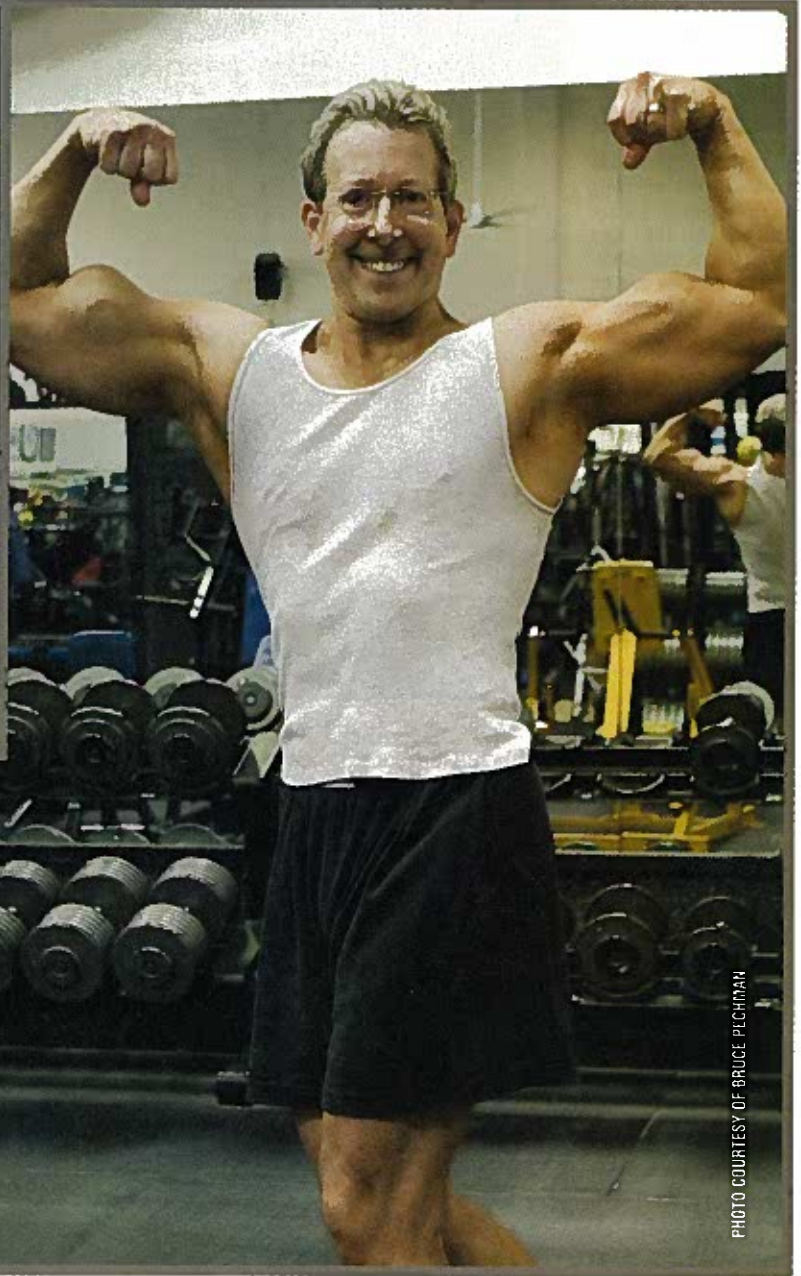
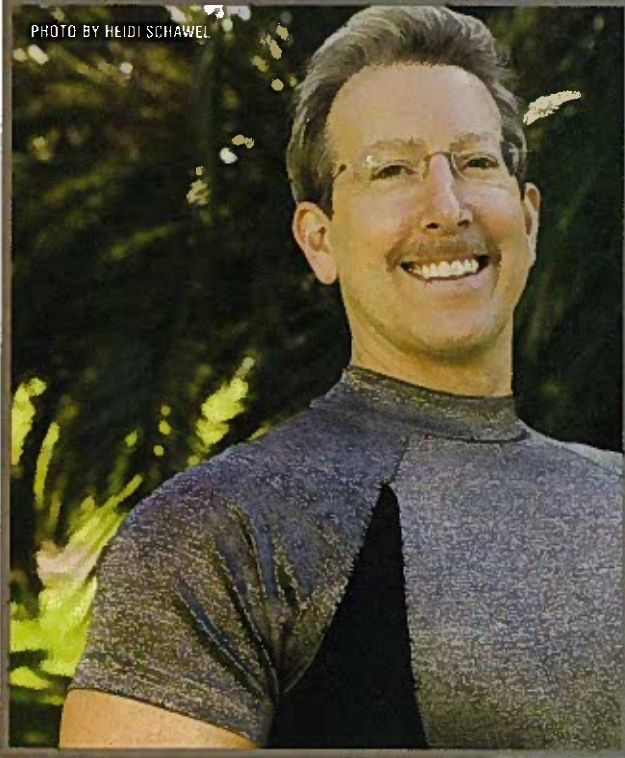


PHOTO COURTESY OF BRUCE PECHMAN

MULTI-FACETED: In addition to building up 18-inch biceps, Pechman also works professionally as a director of information technology.

and strike a “lat” pose in the gym, making his enormous upper back muscles spread out and look like they could be claimed as dependants on his income tax form.

Some people might think Pechman is narcissistic or even a corny anachronism. After all, bodybuilding has lost some of its luster due to steroid scandals. Pechman, meanwhile, claims to be steroid free and eats a mostly vegetarian diet. Some weightlifters even look down on Pechman for not doing heavy lifting. But Pechman could care less about how others perceive him.

Anybody looking to get in better shape can recognize Pechman as a fount of valuable training information, which he will happily give to anybody who asks.

“I can’t stand being normal,” says Pechman. “I love bodybuilding because if you’re going to spend time exercising, it’s nice to get the tangible benefit of getting a nice physique.”

Pechman says he respects runners and cyclists, “but gosh, some of these folks look like they just came back from a year-long vacation in Ethiopia,” he jokes in an admittedly non-politically correct fashion.

One of Pechman’s favorites anecdotes is

PEC-MAN: Do we think Bruce Pechman’s last name is a coincidence? Certainly not!

that while doing a special satellite radio promo for Circuit City stores this past summer, he was in the La Mesa store when someone interrupted him and asked about his credentials.

“Sir,” replied Pechman, “Wouldn’t you rather see my credentials?”

“I then asked, ‘Who else in the crowd would like to see my credentials?’”

Pechman then proceeded to display his humongous full lat spread, frontal-double-biceps pose, topping it off with his affable

smile.

“It took the crowd two minutes for the crowd to settle down,” he says. ✪

Judd Handler doesn’t have 18-inch biceps, but was pleased to have been called “Mr. Biceps Junior” by Bruce Pechman. Handler is a freelance writer, and like Shoshana Treichel, he is a fitness trainer; though he can’t bench press as much as Treichel can. He can be reached at juddhandler@yahoo.com.