

ONE SMALL STEP

Health and fitness wonder-woman, Kim Miller, shares her story of how it's never too late to get started on a path to a healthier lifestyle. You never know where it might lead!

It's often surprising in life how one impulsive thought or one small step outside of your comfort zone can be life-changing. Kim Miller was rolling along in life as a 30-something mom, following her interest in fashion by working at a Scottsdale boutique owned by two of her friends, when her life took an unexpected turn. A long-time reader of *Scottsdale Health* and *So Scottsdale!* magazines [both owned by Richman Media Group], Miller responded to the call for a local woman to be featured in the January 2011 "Me" feature in *So Scottsdale!* She admits that at the time, she thought it was absolutely crazy, but that decision started her on the path to a successful career as a model, fitness talent, health and fitness writer, coach and stylist.



Kim Miller

Model, fitness talent, health and fitness writer, stylist, coach

AGE: 39

STATS: 5' 7", 124 lbs.

STATUS: Married with two boys

WORKOUTS: A variety! Works out most days. Yoga and Pilates once or twice a week; workouts that combine strength training, cardio and plyo; long and short runs; trail runs.

WORKOUT TIP: "Capitalize on the times you have a ton of energy and do the hardest workout, but you don't have to have a workout that kills you every day."

TYPICAL DAY OF FOOD: Scrambled egg whites and steel-cut oats for breakfast; organic cashews and a whey protein shake mid-morning; sweet potato and fish or grilled chicken for lunch; jerky or Greek yogurt and berries in the afternoon; salad with spinach, veggies and chicken for dinner; maybe organic peanut butter before bed.

"The most important thing to me is that I eat clean."

FOOD WEAKNESS: Frozen yogurt with chocolate chips; French fries.

HEALTHY EATING TIPS: Especially for active young families—plan ahead for meals so there are always healthy options; eat when you're hungry to avoid overeating; drink plenty of water to keep food cravings away.

ULTIMATE CAREER GOAL: To nationally represent a company on some level that promotes health, fitness, wellness, empowerment and happiness. "The opportunity to really connect with others in an effort to promote something I believe in—that's what I want to do."



As a mom of two young kids who were both born with medical issues, there was a time when it had been hard for Miller to make fitness a priority. She had always been an athletic person, and was active in gymnastics, dance and basketball as a girl. An injury sidelined her plans to play basketball in college, and as she juggled responsibilities in graduate school and as a new mom, fitness wasn't a priority. "I know how difficult it is," she says of being a young mother. "I was this new mom, I was overwhelmed, my kids would cry all the time, my husband was gone... how am I going to do this?" she remembers thinking.

When her husband suffered a near heart attack five years ago at age 32, they knew things had to change. "Basically at that point, we realized we really didn't have a choice in this matter," she says. "That was the turning point for us."

The traumatic experience was life-changing for Miller, who lost 50 lbs., while her husband dropped nearly 70 lbs. But it didn't happen overnight. "For me it started with running—deciding that I was going to try to run a mile. I was just going to try to make it around the block, which I could barely do at the time," she says. The couple made a commitment to simply being more active—taking the kids out more, enrolling in activities and just trying to stay moving in their free time.

Tremendous changes in eating habits went along with the increased activity level, and Miller believes that clean eating and making gradual changes are the key to lasting results. "I'm not a big proponent of dieting or putting things in your body that are designed to give you immediate results," she advises. "It's really just about eating a well-rounded diet for us. It's very clean and healthy, and we spend more time cooking and making eating more about an experience than it is about shoving food in your body."

It was after several years of healthy living and a renewed commitment to fitness that Miller arrived at her photo shoot for *So Scottsdale!*. James Patrick, the photographer, asked if she'd ever done any work in the fitness modeling industry, suggesting that she put together a portfolio and give it a try. Although she was taken by surprise, Patrick's suggestion got her thinking. "I spent some time thinking about what am I really good at? What do I love? What do I want to give back was the important question," Miller recalls. "I guess I didn't really want to just jump into a career that didn't make me feel like I was making a difference."

She decided to book the portfolio shoot, which not only pointed her in the direction of modeling, but her positive connection with Patrick led her to offer to volunteer with the photographer. She began helping with logistics and styling, and learning the ins-and-outs of the fitness modeling business. Armed with her portfolio, Miller auditioned for her first modeling job, a marketing campaign for City Center of City North—and got the job.

Since then, Miller has not only grown her modeling career with clients such as Pepsi, Columbia Sportswear and modeling in national fitness magazines, she's scored a role as featured fitness blogger for the *Arizona Republic* and written for numerous other publications. Through her business, Kim Miller Style (www.kimmillerstyle.com), Miller has dedicated herself to following her passion for health and fitness, and to helping others along the way.

The modeling industry can be tough, and Miller found that insiders were not quick to help her learn the ropes. This experience only made her more determined to work with other models as a way of giving back. Miller explains, "The way I craft my career is that I want to learn it, then do it, then teach it. There are enough opportunities—when somebody else gets

something, they're meant to get it—it's meant to be. My goal is to learn all of this so I can turn around and teach other people how to do this."

As a pro who juggles many talents, Miller admits that she has been told to narrow the scope of what she does, and has struggled with that advice at times. Ultimately she has decided that because she loves every part of what she does, she'll continue to put her energy into whatever feels right to her. "My brand or what I represent is that diversity," she says with conviction. As much as she loves being in front of the camera, her heartfelt writing and working behind the scenes to coach others are equally important to her. "That's the place that I make dreams come true for people. I mean, even sometimes in small ways—to me it makes the biggest impact," she concludes.

Despite her success, things haven't come easily to Miller, and that in itself should serve as inspiration to us all. "I think I spent 36 years being scared to try, and now I'm like, 'What's the worst that can happen?'" she says with a smile.

Miller says she's written countless articles that have been rejected, has chased modeling jobs she hasn't gotten, and has been selected for competitions and contests she hasn't won. But she takes it all in stride as part of the journey, admitting that she's grown comfortable with the idea of losing. "I try to do things for the experience and be the best version of myself and not dictate success on whether I got the crown or whether I won the title. I just try to surround myself with people who make me a better version of myself and help others achieve their goals," she explains.

Her advice to anyone who wants to make changes? Just take one small step.

Wendy Rubicam can be reached at www.rubicamwriting.com