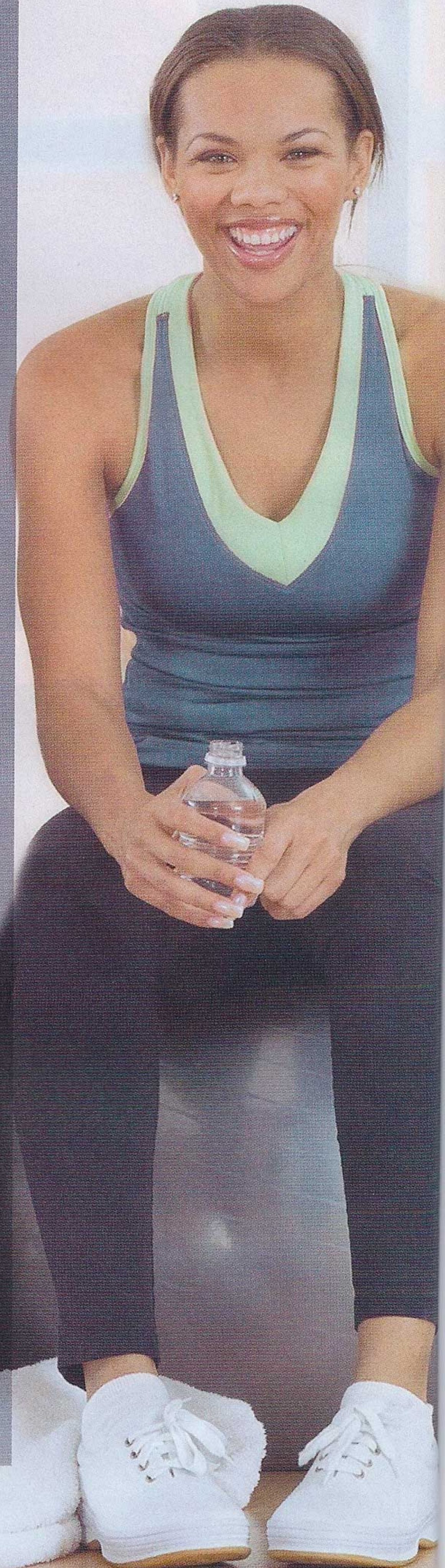


PROFESSIONAL EDGE

# A FITNESS DAY IN THE LIFE

The Ups and Downs  
of Being a Presenter

BY LAWRENCE BISCONTINI, MA



**Y**ou're a presenter—what a glamorous life!" are often the words that fitness presenters hear around the world at professional training conferences. Many times each month, fitness presenters leave their regular classes, clubs, clients and clinics, heading off to teach at conventions. Often compared to a traveling circus, many of the same fitness presenters see each other on weekends and repeat the same sessions in different cities, working on more "normal" jobs between weekends. While the cultures and cuisines change, oftentimes the presenters' schedules stay the same across time zones.

This article gives an extremely candid, up-close-and-personal glimpse of the fitness presenter's life from the perspective of some of the world's busiest and best teachers. Each of these stories represents a valid, yet simultaneously different, aspect of the life of a traveling fitness presenter. From getting drumsticks through customs to having caring husbands provide dinner and wine, these truly characterize stories from the real world.

**Janine Mongardini** from Ecuador, Master Instructor and Training Coordinator for Mad Dogg Athletics' Spinning® Program:

At 5:00 a.m., my alarm goes off and I make myself eat a very healthy breakfast to last the entire day because that's usually my only meal until dinner. After we start, I answer questions during breaks, so I can't usually use the bathroom or eat. I don't hydrate enough because I don't want to slow the flow by having to take frequent bathroom breaks. At lunch, the participants usually want to talk and share their experiences in the field with me, so this is a rushed hour as I'm torn between bathroom, eating and active listening.

The Spinning Certifications last 9 hours, so I finish my paperwork in the late evening. I have been on my feet (and saddle) all day working out, changing my clothes at least twice. In the evening, I'm calling my husband, chatting with my kids at home, and open my emails at about 9:40 p.m. A shower or bath before bed at 11:00 makes me a tired girl!

**Carrie Ekins**, MA, Founder and Executive Director of Drums Alive®, IDEA 2012 Program Director of the Year Award Recipient based in Germany:

**Preflight:** It's 3:45 in the morning when the alarm clock rings after only 2½ hours of sleep from teaching regular classes the night before. I finish last-minute packing, cleaning, laundry and cooking. I know I am forgetting something. ... Where is my iPod and my international transformer? The doorbell rings—the car service for the airport—and I have not even brushed my teeth. I open the door with my mouth full of toothpaste and I try to tell the driver through various hand signals that I will be out shortly. After pulling the curlers

out of my hair and multitasking by pushing the suitcase with my feet toward the door, I kiss goodbye my three kids and husband who are still in bed.

**At the airport:** Finally ready to go through the scanner (I always beep because of my two artificial hips). As I arrive at my aircraft seat, I smile and greet the family with the three kicking children that are sitting right behind me, ready for our 12-hour flight.

**Arrival:** Customs almost always whisks me off to a private room to ask me details about my dozens of wooden drumsticks, jingle bells and scarves. To explain the equipment, I have learned to carry flyers with me so I can show them what I do.

**P.S.:** I've learned the Golden Rule of Convention Travel: If you ABSOLUTELY need it there, HAND CARRY it yourself if it's legal to do so.

**In my hotel room:** I fall asleep, but awaken early at 3:30 a.m. because my inner clock is a mess. "I'm ready for my 8:00 a.m. session," I tell myself.

**Preparation:** If I can get into the room early, I check everything I can for readiness. Everyone enters the room, which is the scariest part. I am so nervous but am glad that the participants are excited, supportive and ready.

**The actual session:** People enter, and I fall in love. Again. This is a feeling that I can't describe more as a blessed presenter able to do what I love to make a difference.

**Mindy Mylrea**, Creator of Tabata Bootcamp™, based in Santa Cruz, Calif.:

**Preshow:** My convention experience starts a week before the show as we have to ship our booth items and equipment. This is a huge juggling act, as I am packing for a show that I am presenting at that weekend, and I am simultaneously also shipping to the next convention the following weekend. Logistically, this is a strategic dance that I do almost every week and is quite challenging.

**Show:** A typical convention day begins very early, as I am usually one of the lucky presenters who is chosen for the early a.m. session. I always make sure that I pack food (I am vegan) and I eat as soon as I wake up so that I have time to digest breakfast prior to any movement sessions. I don't eat much, as I am very excited and want to get into my presentation room as early as possible so that I can set the stage for my attendees. I make sure to let the room monitors know not to let anyone into the room until all is set and I am able to meet each one at the door with a personal greeting.

**Post-Class:** After each session I run—literally—to the tradeshow to help with booth sales and to answer questions. It is very important for me that I am always approachable and available. I usually don't eat lunch during a busy convention day unless my amazing, supportive husband gets me something. I am really lucky because my husband has



“DO THE MATH AND **BE SMART...** TAKE THE TIME TO **CREATE YOUR WORKSHOP**, BUT THEN BE SURE YOU HAVE **LOTS OF PLACES TO TAKE THAT WORKSHOP.**”

my back at every convention and manages the booth. I try to have enough time between sessions to change clothes and, if possible, take a shower. But, the reality is I usually don't have time, so I am changing in my presentation room behind the Powerpoint screen and rely on a hat by my third presentation.

**The Expo:** The tradeshow usually goes into the evening, so we don't have really any time to do anything at night but shower and grab a quick dinner. I always pack a bottle of red wine so I have a glass waiting in the room, and dinner usually is at a local restaurant—always standing at the bar because service is quicker, so I can get back to the room to prepare for the next day's workshops.

**Keli Roberts**, Fitness Expert, based in Pasadena, Calif. One of the most sought-after and booked names in fitness sheds light on the reality of travel:

Here's my typical weekend for an 8-hour training out of town: Get to airport on time, wait for 3 hours due to delay and miss my connection. Arrive at hotel at 10:00 p.m. Get up at 6:00 a.m. and eat instant oatmeal with some trail mix (brought with me). Teach all morning then try to find a healthy lunch. Teach all afternoon and finish on time. Quickly get changed (no time for a shower) and RACE to the airport. Check in and find flight is delayed 2 hours. Miss my connection and get booked on a later flight. Arrive home on Sunday night (Monday morning) at 2:00 a.m. Get up at 6:00 for Monday morning client. Train all day, then teach two classes. Come home and collapse!

Finally, **Shannon Fable**, Fitness Education Consultant based in Boulder, Colo., gives us the theoretical sides to the often misunderstood culture of fitness presenting:

Practice! Many times, it's a rude awakening to go from the safe confines of your home and teach to new faces. You have to test your skills and make sure YOU are not the secret sauce...

your ideas must have legs, which means if someone learns your “tricks” and invokes them, they should be half as successful as you! So you must test your work first.

Next, I think people automatically think presenting means more money. Sure, an initial look at the paycheck could look a lot better than what you make teaching an hour at your club... but, many times, you are asked to do the presentations for free—for a minimal honorarium or a “free” registration. Of course, it's appropriate to pay your dues and work your way up through the ranks because most of us have, but please know you are most likely never going to make the type of money a motivational speaker makes!

Do the math and be smart...take the time to create your workshop, but then be sure you have lots of places to take that workshop. Realize that presenting is simply a core promotion strategy. It's a way to gain awareness for what you have to offer. You have to be able to further capitalize on the exposure by selling products, programs, consulting or program development. Have a strategy for entry and exit—both short term and long term.

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**LAWRENCE BISCONTINI, MA**, is an AFAA Contributing Writer and Certification Specialist. He has established fitness history by winning multiple Instructor of the Year Awards from ECA (2010, 2009), IDEA (2004), Can Fit Pro (2004) and ACE (2002). Lawrence works as a Mindful Movement & Wellness Specialist and Creative Consultant, and empathizes with all authors cited in this article whom he feels privileged enough to call friends, and can relate to each and every example (except having two hip replacements!). His newest book is *Meals & Musings*, a cookbook of healthy, quick recipes from around the world and is available from [findlawrence.com](http://findlawrence.com).