

RAPHAEL CALZADILLA

By Pete Dombrosky

Raphael Calzadilla doesn't teach in a classroom, but there is plenty that we can learn from him. This ACE certified personal trainer committed himself to what he loves through no easy means. When he graduated from

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college, he spent 10 years working in tech sales. He had a high income and worked for a number of prestigious companies. But one day, he realized how much he hated his job. So, rather than continue down a path of unfulfilling monetary gain, Raphael took the risk of a lifetime. He quit his job and sold his home. He moved into a small apartment, got his personal trainer certification and started his journey into the fitness world. "That was the turning point in my life," Raphael says. "As soon as I entered this industry, I knew I was home. I ended up earning more of an income than my previous career and was a thousand times happier."



This West Palm Beach, Fla. resident is now a self-employed online coach and fitness blogger. He has two websites that he runs to help clients mold their physiques in a supportive and efficient atmosphere. The first – <http://www.fitbyraphael.com> – is primarily for people who are interested in lowering bodyfat and improving their fitness level. The second, <http://www.rippedbyraphael.com>, is a training, nutrition and contest preparation service specifically for bodybuilders. Raphael creates customized workouts with videos for beginning clients and has a meal tracker on his website that clients can use to analyze their eating habits. He keeps in close contact with his patrons and takes pride in going above and beyond to help customers like they are members of his own family.

Raphael says most of his clients are unfit, overweight women that struggle with stress and aren't sure how to eat right, work out or build consistency in their lives. Raphael not only shares his knowledge of how to change their bodies, he offers a constant support system for them because he believes that part of being successful is having an appreciation for what they are going through physically and emotionally. "It's easy to berate someone and say 'just do it,' but to help motivate someone on a physical, mental and emotional level is extremely gratifying," he says. "It's a pleasure watching someone I work with become empowered."

When clients take advice from Raphael, they know it's going to be beneficial. After all, Raphael has been training for 35 years, so he knows just about everything there is to know when it comes to cutting fat and putting on lean muscle. He



began hitting the weights hard when he was 18 years old. He trained at World Gym East and learned from the great bodybuilder Mike Katz. It wasn't super-modern at World Gym East, but Raphael says it was one of the best gyms he has ever trained at. "By today's standards, that gym was very primitive," says the 5-4, 135-pounder. "But it had an ever-present, super-intense level of energy and you'd want to go there just to feel that electricity."

These days, Raphael trains at Powerhouse Gym in West Palm Beach. His training philosophy centers around listening to his body and training with strict form. He says that knowing when to push hard by increasing intensity and when to back off is vital. Those are the reasons he is still able to be competitive on stage at age 53.

Raphael typically works out five days a week (although he changes up his workouts frequently). He works his traps and shoulders on Monday, his back on Tuesday, quads and hamstrings on Wednesday, chest on Thursday and his biceps, triceps and forearms on Friday. He performs cardio three times a week for 20-25 minutes or at a higher intensity for 12-15 minutes.

For his diet, Raphael eats six meals a day with high protein at each meal. While prepping, his daily protein intake is about 225 grams, while he consumes about 150-200 grams of carbs and 40-50 grams of fats.

Through strict dieting and a solid exercise routine, Raphael has established himself as a successful pro bodybuilder and it's all been done the natural way – without the help of performance-enhancing drugs. "I've always taken pride in making bodybuilding a matter of added muscle and vibrant health, I've never considered taking drugs," Raphael says. "To me, that's what it's all about." ★