



Not Your Average Joe

Fitness coach, TV presenter, author and internet sensation Joe Wicks has taken the world by storm, and it's not just because of his boyish good looks. We chatted to The Body Coach to discover his recipe for success. *By Yi-Hwa Hanna*

Most people know him as The Body Coach or “that Lean in 15” guy, but despite his charismatic and goofy guy-next-door personality, Joe Wicks is anything but average. At just the age of 31, his *Lean in 15* cookbooks (of which there are now two, and we—and the rest of the world—hope there are more to come) have rapidly become best-sellers, and he’s also the presenter of his own show, titled *The Body Coach*, on Channel 4 in the UK. His quirky 15-second video-based recipes, narrated in his signature falsetto, have taken over many an Instagram feed, while many eagerly await his high-energy HIIT workouts everywhere from YouTube to Snapchat. And it’s not just his claim to Insta-fame that’s made him such a household name—his online coaching programmes, tailored to the individual clients’ needs, and his 90-Day SSS plan, have transformed the bodies (and overall lifestyles) of thousands.

The key to his success seems to be the unique combination of his totally relatable attitude that people can connect with. Joe is unapologetically honest about who he is, be it the fact that he enjoys wearing high socks or the fact that he still enjoys occasional nights out with the lads and struggles to get up for an early workout after them just like the rest of us, although he usually always does—and the fact that everything he does has been designed for people who have busy lifestyles, no matter what they do or where they are. By making it easy and accessible to maintain a healthy lifestyle, it’s not hard to see why he’s now worth millions, with a large number of celebrity fans among his ever-growing army of followers. And he’s soon once again headed to our own sunny shores. We caught up with him ahead of his visit to Dubai for the SSS Fitness Fest,

which will take place from November 4-5 at The Palm Skydive Dubai. Find out more about the event (where you can watch Joe give a cooking demo, as well as host a free HIIT session for attendees) at fitfest.ae. We’ll see you there!

WH: So much of what you’re beloved for, from workouts to recipes, [is] designed for busy people with hectic lives (which we really appreciate!). What made you want to focus on this so much?

JW: To be honest, I got bored of hearing excuses! People telling me they didn’t have time to cook a decent meal or didn’t have the energy to exercise. I wanted to show people that you can do it and you can make time, don’t press the snooze button, get out of bed and smash a HIIT session! Don’t wait half an hour for a takeaway to be delivered, make a great tasting meal in 15 minutes, that’s all it takes.

WH: How do you keep up with your online clients and all of the personalised plans you offer, while being so busy?

JW: I think being a bit obsessed with social media really helps. I’m always checking Instagram and Twitter to look at recipes people have posted, or photos of my Leanies’ progress. It’s perfect because when I get a quiet five minutes I can just go on there and see what everyone’s up to.

WH: Your recipe books have been a hit (no pun intended). One of our favourite things about your attitude towards food is the seemingly endless combinations and options, and that you seem to truly enjoy food while still keeping it healthy. What’s your overall philosophy when it comes to healthy



eating, and allowing yourself ‘treats’ in a healthy manner vs. deprivation?

JW: My attitude towards food has always been the same—eat more! The reason I started getting into cooking and exercise is because people would tell me they were essentially starving themselves to lose weight. That’s not right, and it’s not fun—the key is eating well and exercise. If you’ve trained today, have a burger! If not, have something just as delicious but a little less high in carbs, like an omelette. Make sure you’re eating really great food—[there’s] no need to eat salad three times a day seven days a week!

WH: If you could pick any superpower in the world, what would it be and why?

JW: I’d want to fly, how cool would that be?! Plus I love holidays so if I could get there on my own, whenever I fancied, that’d be ideal!

WH: You have amazing hair. How do you keep it in such great condition?

JW: I wash it! Honestly that’s all there is to it.

WH: What’s your go-to shower or karaoke song?

JW: I’m a big fan of Calvin Harris so maybe a bit of *We Found Love*.

WH: If you could have dinner with any one person, living or dead, who would it be and why?

JW: Mark Cavendish. I met him recently, and I know they say never meet your heroes, but he was honestly one of the nicest people I’ve ever met. I’d love to hang out with him.

WH: What do you prefer: Staying in vs. going out?

JW: I love going out on a big night out once a month, but if I want to stay lean, I’ve got to say staying in mostly! Cook myself a nice meal and watch a film, can’t beat it. ■