



# IANT SUCCESS

**SUPER BOWL CHAMP AND “LIVE” HOST  
MICHAEL STRAHAN TALKS FITNESS, FAMILY  
AND AFFINITY FOR SOUTH FLORIDA**

BY DIANNA SMITH

Just minutes after his nationally televised ABC morning show, “Live With Kelly and Michael,” ends for the day, Michael Strahan is behind the scenes of the famous New York City set, sipping his favorite green protein smoothie and chatting on the phone with a writer like they’re old pals.

Strahan is just as cordial off camera (and via phone) as he is in front of one, which is why millions of viewers tune in to him every day. This likable football star who’s been described by many as a gentle giant (he’s 6’5 and weighs 240 pounds) quips about how envious he is that South Floridians can bask in the sun while people up north freeze.

But that’s not the only reason he loves it here.

“You’ve got to be in shape to live in South Florida,” says the retired NFL defensive end for the New York Giants. “There are too many opportunities to walk around without a shirt on. The weather makes you want to be healthy. It encourages you to have an active lifestyle.”

Hence, the smoothie. It includes

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spinach, kale and almond milk and he drinks one every day after he’s finished taping the show. It might not sound appetizing but Strahan promises it tastes good. As he’s gotten older, the 42-year-old has traded in junk food for fresh, healthy fare and while he’s not as active as when he was on the field, he makes it a priority to work out for an hour a day, five days a week.

“It’s a great way to relieve stress and tension and it makes you look good,” says Strahan. “When I retired, my back was aching and my shoulders hurt. But for a body that’s been in the NFL for 15 years, I need to keep moving. Now I feel like I’m 25 years old again.”



## BIG GUY, BIG HEART

Strahan has been working out since age 13 and grew up around athletes—so it's no wonder he became one himself.

His father, Gene Strahan, was a boxer and his mother, Louise Strahan, a basketball coach. He's also the nephew of retired pro-football player Arthur Strahan, and though he lived most of his childhood on a military base in Germany because his father was a major in the U.S. Army, he spent his senior year living with his Uncle Arthur in Houston. That year he played his only season of high school football and was so talented he was offered a scholarship to play for Texas Southern University.



Strahan and co-host Kelly Ripa truly like one another and their excellent chemistry has sent "Live" ratings soaring. Dedicated viewers relate to the duo's friendly banter and goofy humor. Strahan's a good sport, often taking one for the team: He's dressed in pink boas, posed as a sumo wrestler, cuddled puppies and for last year's Halloween show, impersonated rapper Kanye West and golf pro Tiger Woods.

"It's changed my life," Strahan says of the show. "Before I would go out and men would say, 'Hey Mike, I

**BASKING IN THE LIMELIGHT:** (Clockwise from Top) Kelly Ripa and Michael Strahan during a quiet moment on the set; the duo toasting their first anniversary "Viewer's Choice" show; Strahan hobnobbing during a "FOX NFL Sunday" broadcast

He played defensive end and quickly made a name for himself, setting records and enticing the NFL. He was drafted by the New York Giants in 1993, where he became a standout player, setting the NFL record for the most sacks in a single season and helping the team win the Super Bowl in 2007, which was his last season.

Retiring from the NFL didn't leave him short of work. His warm personality kept him in front of the cameras even after he left the field. He became a football analyst on "FOX NFL Sunday," a job he still has today, appeared in various TV commercials, and in 2010 made guest appearances on "Live With Regis and Kelly." Those appearances eventually landed him the much-coveted spot as Regis Philbin's replacement in 2012.

Though he's considered a New York Giants legend, these days he's also celebrated for his TV career.



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love you for what you did with the Giants, you're great.' Now the wives are saying, 'Hey Mike, we love you for the morning show!' Some people don't even realize I played football."

Why have viewers embraced him? It's simple: He's a nice guy with a huge heart. It's evident in his dedication to charity work. After the September 11 World Trade Center attacks, Strahan led the charge requesting that the NFL cancel games in the days that followed, and pushed the NFL Players Association to require that all players donate one week's pay to charity. These days, he volunteers with the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the Fresh Air Fund, and the Cedars-Sinai Sports Spectacular, for which he appears on the nonprofit group's website and touts its invaluable research for genetic disorders. He can also be seen on TV commercials for St. Jude Children's Hospital.

It was likely this generosity,



Photo courtesy of Disney-ABC Domestic TV

NFL photo courtesy of REUTERS/Mike Segar

Photo by David Russell/Disney-ABC Domestic TV



thoughtfulness—and of course, his style and good looks—that appealed to fiancée Nicole Murphy, a model, actress and ex-wife of comedian Eddie Murphy.

The two met at a dinner with mutual friends, Strahan explains.

"I thought she was beautiful and really nice, but wasn't sure if she was for me," he admits of his initial impression.

Evidently, she was. He popped the question not long ago, and their marriage will create a family that makes "The Brady Bunch" seem tiny. Nicole, 45, has five children from her first marriage; Strahan has four kids (two from his first marriage and twin girls from his second). Four of the nine kids still live at home, and the entire family visits South Florida—and Miami Beach in particular—at least three times a year.

"I have a lot of friends down there and it's one of our favorite places to spend a week with the kids," says Strahan, whose restaurant hangouts include Prime Italian, Prime One Twelve, Yardbird Southern Table & Bar and Lure Fishbar in the Loews Miami Beach Hotel, where the family often stays.

"The weather is perfect and Nicole loves the humidity. Nicole and I always talk about how when our kids are out of the house, we'd love to make that one of our residences."

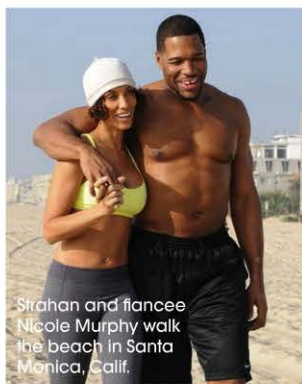
He says they love the area because, "You kind of just walk and discover something new."

And, it provides more incentive to maintain that beach body of his.

## EXERCISES HIS OPTIONS

So how does Strahan maintain his long, lean shape?

For one thing, he no longer works out like a football player. No heavy weights and grunting and pushing. Rather, he runs on a treadmill (10 mph at a 10-degree incline for 10 20-second intervals) and sprints on a stationary bike (10 20-second high-intensity intervals, followed by 10 40-second medium-intensity intervals). He rarely does more than 10-15 minutes of cardio during a one-hour



Strahan and fiancée Nicole Murphy walk the beach in Santa Monica, Calif.

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workout. His newest love is rowing because it works the entire body.

"I do different things to keep myself from getting bored," says Strahan.

Latreal Mitchell, a body builder and Strahan's personal trainer for three years, keeps his workouts interesting by incorporating kettle bells, TRX suspension training and other elements. She insists that he not exercise for more than an hour a day.

"There's no need to be in a gym

longer than that," explains Mitchell, who's currently filming "Body Blitz," a fitness video slated for release early this year. Strahan is featured in the video and his testimony should help convince even ardent couch potatoes that Mitchell can whip them into shape.

"Michael couldn't squat deep when we started training but now he's the best squatter in the world," she says. "What I do with Michael at home is on the video."

Mitchell, by the way, is also Strahan's Manhattan neighbor and personal chef. She does his grocery shopping and prepares his meals. Consequently, his diet is much cleaner than it used to be, consisting of organic fresh foods (Mitchell doesn't let her clients eat processed foods or even dairy). Strahan doesn't eat excessively, but he does eat often and doesn't deprive himself of everything. Like cookies, for example. He loves them loaded with chocolate chips.

The key to Strahan's success, Mitchell explains, is simple: Eat right and exercise. "I believe if you aren't putting appropriate fuel in a body, it's like putting bad gas in a car," she explains. "The car isn't going to run the way it should."

She also believes in acupuncture because it moves energy through the body and prevents stress. For this reason, Strahan receives acupuncture treatments as well as massages.

"You've only got one body so you have to take care of it," he says.

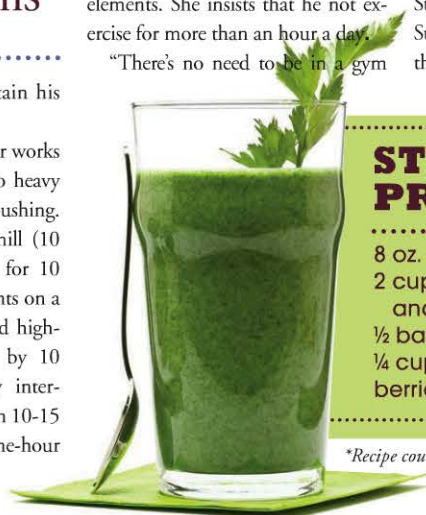
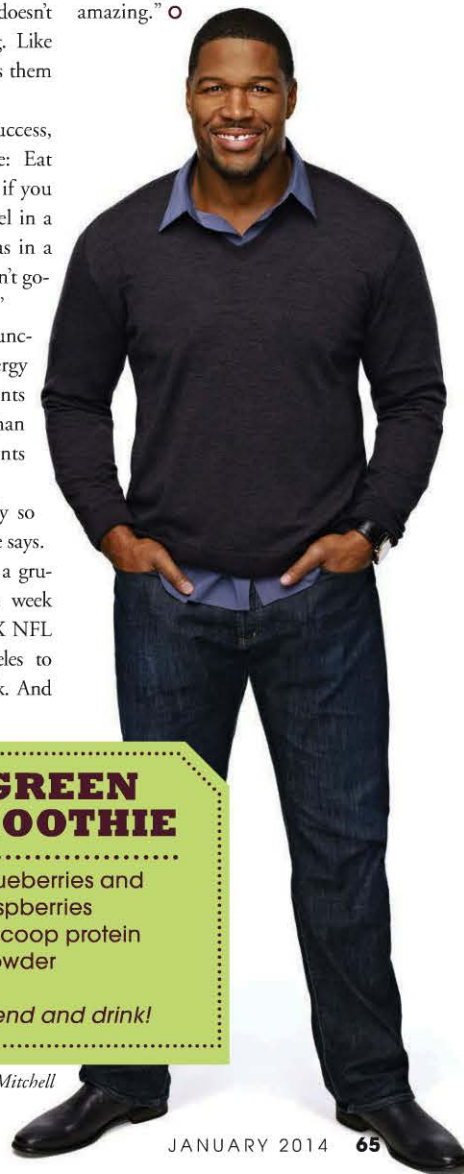
Especially when you've got a grueling schedule like his. Each week Strahan travels from the "FOX NFL Sunday" studio in Los Angeles to the "Live" studio in New York. And

recently, he partnered with longtime friends to launch SMAC Entertainment, a management, branding and production company. In the works is an untitled show about boxer Arturo Gatti, and plans for "The Outlaws," a new Amazon Studios TV series about the ins and outs of pro-football teams.

While his demanding schedule might overwhelm some people, Strahan takes it in stride. He says the pace doesn't affect him very often, but when it does he takes a break. Whether that means relaxing at home with his family or walking along the waters of Miami Beach, he allows his body the rest it needs.

And once he's re-energized, he looks forward to diving back into his fast-paced world.

"I love what I do," he says. "It's amazing." ○



## STRAHAN'S GREEN PROTEIN SMOOTHIE

8 oz. almond milk  
2 cups spinach  
and kale  
½ banana  
¼ cup mixed  
berries such as

blueberries and  
raspberries  
1 scoop protein  
powder

*Blend and drink!*

*\*Recipe courtesy of personal trainer Latreal Mitchell*