

Profile
Mariyana Marinova

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

Born in 1975 in Sofia, Bulgaria, I currently reside and work in Magdeburg, Sachsen-Anhalt, Germany. Back in Bulgaria I used to work as Attorney-at-law for Sofia College of Barristers and as a legal advisor. Having recently finished my postgraduate education in law at the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg with a LL.M. degree in German and European Law, I currently work as a lawyer, member of the Bar Association of Sachsen-Anhalt. On a separate professional track, I also graduated Science of Health, Exercise and Sport at the German Sport Academy BSA, Leipzig, with a certificate for Personal fitness trainer as well as for Advanced Bodytrainer, and currently I also work part time as a personal fitness trainer at the University gym of Halle. So I have been working as a trainer for some 15 years. I am an international referee in powerlifting and used to work as a member of the W.D.F.P.F. Discipline Committee. On the W.D.F.P.F. Congress 2009 I was elected as a Vice President of the Federation and I am honored to serve as such. Also, I am currently the President of GDFFP which I am proud to represent.

Explain a little about drug-free powerlifting.

Drug Free Powerlifting allows one to compete at the highest level fairly on a really drug-free platform against fair athletes. It consists of three lifts - Squat, Bench Press and Dead Lift, which are - perhaps surprisingly - the most natural movements for the human body. I have been fortunate to meet with, and to receive the support of, W.D.F.P.F. General Secretary Judith Gedney and W.D.F.P.F. President Wim Backelant, both whom are indeed doing so much for the development of the drug-free powerlifting all over the world. By contrast, before I used to compete in another federation, where I had the first-hand experience of being disappointed by the unfair conditions of competing, where actually the lifters "compete" in contriving the best way to cover up the use of doping. I am prepared to go so far as to state that this amounts to nothing short of an affront on human dignity.

What are your best lifts?

Squat 105,5 kg, Bench press 71 kg, Deadlift 160,5 kg. (All un-equipped. Bodyweight 53-55 kg).

Some of my personal records in training:
Deadlift 10 sets of 10 repetition on 110 kg;
Squat 8 sets of 10 reps on 75 kg;
Bench press 10 sets of 6 reps on 60 kg.

What titles do you hold or have held?

W.D.F.P.F. All UNEQUIPPED:

- 1 x German Squat Champion, German Open Single Event (2010)
- 2 x World Powerlifting Titles (2007, 2009)
- 4 x World Single Lift Titles: Squat (2004), Bench press (2004, 2008), Deadlift (2004)
- 1 x World Overall Champion: Deadlift (2004)
- 1 x World Overall Champion Powerlifting (2009)
- 8 x European Single Lift Titles: Squat (2007, 2008), Bench press (2006, 2007, 2008), Deadlift (2006, 2007, 2008)
- 5 x European Overall Champion: Squat (2007, 2008), Deadlift (2006, 2007, 2008)
- 2 x 2nd place World Single Lift: Squat (2008), Deadlift (2008)
- 1 x European Bench Endurance (2008)
- IPF "Donau Cup": 2 x European Champion (1999, 2005), 1 x 2nd place (2003)
- 1999-2005 repeated National Champion Powerlifting and Bench Press (Bulgaria)

What records do you hold or have held?

World records POWERLIFTING UNEQUIPPED (2009):
Category 55, 5 kg, Open: Squat 105,5 kg, Deadlift 160,5 kg, Total 332,5 kg.
World- and European records, SINGLE EVENT, UNEQUIPPED:
Category 53 kg, Open: Squat 102,5 kg (2004), Deadlift 152,5 kg (2004);
Category 55,5 kg, Open: Squat 102,5 kg (2008), Deadlift 147,5 kg (2008);
Category 55,5 kg, Open: Squat 103,5 kg (2010)
Bulgarian national record, UNEQUIPPED: Deadlift 160 kg (2005);

What is your training regime?

Most of the time, I train 5 or 6 days a week - in a four-day split routine: On day 1- Legs, on day 2 - Chest & Triceps and Biceps, on day 3 - Back and Shoulders, and every 4 day is my day off. On days 1 and 3, I do also cardio and abs. Sometimes, time permitting, I would do one-day split routine, (i.e. two different work-outs a day). Off-season, I train as a bodybuilder but always keeping all three Powerlifting disciplines in my routine.

How long have you been powerlifting?

Well, let's do the math: I started training bodybuilding in 1994 at the age of 19, and have, ever since then, been doing the three Powerlifting movements. My first competition in powerlifting took place in 1999.

How important are training partners to you?

I enjoy always, when I get the chance to share my efforts in training both to be mentally supported and physically spotted. In fact, I think that it is very important to have a good spotter, someone who could spot properly, especially for the bench press and the squat, which is not easy to find, as it may seem at first glance. I must point out, however, that most of the time I would train alone.

What made you become a powerlifter?

It was in the first gym I ever joined where I encounter, and eventually befriended, those who first encouraged me to compete, which I did for the first time in 1999, on the Bulgarian national competition. I am still thankful for it to them. Then there was a "small predicament": At that time, and in that competition, no other women competed in powerlifting in Bulgaria. My friends kept saying that I am stronger than many of the guys in my category, so I should enter competition, and compete against those guys. I did just that and won (in category 52 kg.). My achievements in the deadlift balanced out the superiority of the guys in the bench press, so I won the first place in the total. Thereafter, I went on to compete in this way for five more years. I am especially proud that in 2004 I established the first competition in powerlifting for women in Bulgaria, which has been held ever since.

What is your favorite assistance exercise?

I would single out seated front shoulder press. I also enjoy leg press and rowing with T-bar.

What is the biggest mistake that beginners make?

Perhaps that they would focus on the weight. But trying to use too much weight leads to bad technique and, through it, to injuries. The frequency of training and the consistency in training should by far be more important. The intensity should be the last to increase. Also, another big mistake is being impatient, for it takes a really long time, patience and dedication for one to develop and improve oneself.

What is your advice for beginners?

To learn more about the scientific basis of the training process and to read more, to search all kinds of information about new methods, without copying them automatically and without applying them absolutely. To set achievable targets, while not giving up the unattainable. To learn correct technique even if this would mean to reduce the weight is very important for

beginners. And to arrange cyclically their training in order to minimize plateauing and maximize progressing.

What are some of your most memorable powerlifting experiences?

I would mention two special ones. My first competition on W.D.F.P.F. at the World Championships 2004, Antwerp, Belgium. Also the 6th March 2005 competition in Bulgaria when I deadlifted 160 kg for the first time.

What is the craziest thing you ever seen in powerlifting?

It is not unusual to hear competitors scream while making their attempts, right. But once I witnessed something that struck me as quite crazy, though not necessarily in a bad way: in a competition, a German duo - a trainer and his lifter - would always in every lift scream loudly and continuously, as if in concert. Many found it strange and funny. Me too; as you can see, I still remember it.

What are your future goals?

Most of all, staying healthy and continuing to train and improve. Already many of my personal goals lie outside competitive powerlifting and have more to do with intellectual development, which includes, among other things, the science of sport and human body.

What do you think is the most important factor when it comes to upping your lifts?

This is very difficult to pin-point. Let me put it this way: there are, I think, a conventional and a deep aspect to lifting. I don't think that the controlling motivation for one should be to lift more than anyone else, or certainly not only this - which is the conventional aspect - for this leads one away from the opportunity to encounter the world of weights as a kind and domain of experience in a profound sense, which obviously would be the deep aspect. There is the danger in the conventional way for weightlifting to become just a means to the goal of showing up one's own ego, so the deeper experience remains closed off. This is why I, for one, am motivated by the desire to get deeper into this world, which opens up only in an attunement of respect to this world. From this deep place, one can summon force and motivation for various derivative objectives, including better results. I hope this would make sense to you.

Do you think powerlifting should become an Olympic sport?

Why not?! I see no good reason for keeping it out of the Olympic movement. But, needless to say, this would require a very strict drug control policy, which I welcome wholeheartedly.

How do you see the future of powerlifting?

I say very bright. To be sure, more publicity would not hurt. We could also wish ourselves to get more countries to join us. More education is important, too: Powerlifting gives the opportunity to live in an intimate involvement with the sport not only through the young years, nor even for the most part of the life, but through the whole life, which gives nourishment not only to the body, but also to the spirit, the possibility to have constant and firm fulcrum for life. Clearly, this goes beyond the limits of sport alone. Importantly, there are many examples in this regard, but I would like to mention a well-known name to the members of our Federation – Pat Reeves.

What does your diet consist of?

I like tuna with rice, despite the lingering environmental concern with the tuna, so well publicized. Also I eat and recommend all the usual bodybuilding type foods, such as chicken, pasta, vegetables, potatoes.

What makes the difference between an average lifter and a champion?

In order to answer this question, I would like to ask and answer another question: What does it mean to be a "champion"? Well, it is easy: the one who receives the golden medal at the

end of competition, but I submit that there is more to it than just that. As already intimated earlier, I think that the underlying condition about it is the devoted and respectful attitude to the sport, viewing it as something greater than „me“, which already transcends the competition and begins to inform a way of life. The championship for me resides most of all in this dimension and is about a constant effort. In this sense, a powerlifter, average in competition, is not always so far away from the idea of the champion as it may seem. Now, let me quickly stipulate that this does not eliminate the competitive moment, the sense of competition, and the medal standard, but rather broadens it in a fundamental way. In fact, I can testify and also confess that a medal in a true, and fair competition always brings enormous satisfaction. Yet, those focused on the medal only, are prone to consider the medal as a mere symbol of their own victory and a personal merit, but this kind of champion isolates himself/herself in an illusive world of superiority over the sport. So, I see two kinds of attitudes here, and I recommend to the true devotees of the sport to seek the option of fusion here.

What training style do you think works best?

Everyone has to learn how to listen to one's body. The individual training and the instinctive principle is the style that could work best. But to avoid misunderstanding, I should immediately point out that what I mean by "instinctive principle" is far from the arbitrariness of the individual, who does not pay attention to scientific achievements. Rather conversely - extending this knowledge so far as to make it individualized and customized for himself/herself alone. So, this is more like putting into concrete practice the knowledge attained.

Do you think bodybuilding exercises should be in a powerlifters' routine?

Definitely, as far as I am concerned! I deem myself a believer in the Bodybuilding way of training. Through it, I have personally achieved good results with performing such exercises and methods of increasing strength, endurance and increased hypertrophy. But this works both ways, I would argue that powerlifting exercises are, in my view, the most important in bodybuilding.

What are your favorite supplements?

I take multi vitamins and protein powder. Sometimes also creatine.

What has powerlifting taught you?

Powerlifting has taught me how to concentrate on whatever I do. This goes a long way, for with hard work and dedication you can achieve all your goals.

What does powerlifting mean to you?

It means the world to me. Powerlifting gave the chance to be healthy and strong as well as to make friends around the world. Now, what more can you ask for?! In fact, health, strength and concentration, developed through powerlifting, have been helping me in all of my other initiatives. I hope I can pass these values on to others.

My best regards to all powerlifters: Keep up the good work, and make it as "heavy" as possible !!!

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