

[IMAGE]

Fit for the Spotlight

By Editorial Staff

Everyone dreams of fame, but the reality of nightly performances, heavy costumes and physical strain has made a healthy lifestyle top priority for many stars. Learn how real-life stage performer and leading lady Elizabeth Loyacano stays fit for the spotlight.

Can you give us an idea of what a day in your life is like?

I wake up in the morning and work out before breakfast, which can involve running, working on the elliptical or lifting weights. I vary it day to day. When I get home, I eat breakfast/lunch, read or run errands and go to the show. I arrive at the theater at 5:30 p.m. for the 7 p.m. show. I put on my makeup, vocalize, do a light workout to wake up my body, and get ready for the show.

Elizabeth Loyacano - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Elizabeth Loyacano, Star of "Phantom: The Las Vegas Spectacular." Photograph by Joan Marcus **What do you normally eat?**

I'll eat an egg-white omelette with spinach, reduced-fat feta and smoked salmon. Sometimes, I'll have egg whites and turkey sausage, or a small salad as a fiber source. The costumes are so tight, so as a singer, I have dinner after the show ends.

Do you take supplements or herbs to take care of your body?

I take a multivitamin every day. I'm 30, so I also take calcium. Mostly, I try to eat well by watching my carb intake and drinking lots of tea and purified water. I eat a lot of salads and vegetables like bell peppers, which have a lot of vitamin C.

You mentioned earlier that you use chiropractic. What has been your experience with chiropractic care?

Brent Barrett and Elizabeth Loyacano. - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark Brent Barrett and Elizabeth Loyacano star as The Phantom and Christine, respectively, in the hit show Phantom: The Las Vegas Spectacular. Photograph By Joan Marcus My experience with chiropractic care has been

unbelievably amazing. I was skeptical until I tried it. I was in "Oklahoma" on Broadway, and had to balance a girl who was built like a horse on my lower back while I danced. I was doing sit-ups to compensate for the weakness in my back. Within 10-15 minutes of standing, I had to sit down or roll over to release my lower back muscles. I had been in physical therapy for a year, but I wanted results and decided to start seeing a chiropractor. My chiropractor did adjustments and after just a few weeks, I felt dramatic relief. I could stand for more than 20 minutes without lower back pain.

When I came to Las Vegas, we had a chiropractor referred to us in the rehearsal process. As Christine in the show, I have three rough falls onto the floor and I want to make it real, so I fall pretty hard. I'm wearing 2-3-inch heels and clothes draped in front of and behind me, and in the final fall, my costume weighs 25 pounds.

Once, I was thrown down when I wasn't ready and I fell with a straight arm, which hurt my shoulder. I was in physical therapy for three to four months, and still hadn't healed. So I went to a chiropractor, who did intense therapy to stretch and mobilize the area. I had dramatic results in a short amount of time.

Chiropractic maintenance is also important to me. In the show, I carry a heavy wig and a microphone pack. If I project my head forward, the neck muscles can be strained. Having my neck adjusted allows me to do a five-show week without any pain or tension.

You mentioned you use massage therapy as well?

I have massages regularly, but it depends on the need. I go at least once a month, sometimes twice a week. I'm a huge proponent of Epsom salt baths, chiropractic care and massage therapy to release the muscles in the back. Since I have scoliosis in my back, a pelvic girdle that is slightly off, and a prior injury, I get pain in my back regularly. I seek out massage therapy for relaxation, but primarily I seek it to break up knots or recurring back problems that I can feel on stage.

Can you summarize your health care philosophy for us?

The most important things are eating healthy, eating a lot of vegetables, taking multivitamins, drinking at least eight glasses of water per day and not overindulging in alcohol.

You should exercise 3-5 times per week to keep your metabolism high and keep your cardiovascular system healthy. Yoga is a great workout, and meditation benefits your spirit and your mental health. All of those

things assist your physical health.

Elizabeth Loyacano and Tim Martin Gleason. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Elizabeth with

fellow actor Tim Martin Gleason as Raoul in a scene from "Phantom. Photograph By Joan Marcus

Chiropractic care has definitely benefited me, not only in my career but also in my daily life. I've learned about my body, how I'm walking and what physical ailments I may suffer from. I'm aware that there are things I can do to ameliorate those problems. My health care philosophy is to do things that are smart - eat well, exercise regularly and do things that diminish stress in your life, from yoga to reading a book.

What advice would you give to younger actors/actresses or people who aspire to follow in your footsteps?

Follow your instincts for what truly drives you and inspires you to be on stage, because it does involve struggle and instability. If you're going to do this job, you have to take extra precautions in taking care of yourself, because those things can only help you reach your goal. Discipline, commitment, dedication, a positive attitude and support are the most important things.

What are your current aspirations?

Elizabeth Loyacano - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Elizabeth Loyacano as Christine in the Las Vegas production. Photograph By Joan Marcus My aspirations involve film and television. In college, I was a film major. I dreamt of filing taxes as a dancer, and I did it. As I became exposed to the career of dancer, I began to see that I had to become a triple threat to go further on Broadway; I had to be able to dance, sing and act. I narrowed my goals to become a lead on Broadway, which I got to do in the role of Mina in "Dracula." I was able to originate the role of Christine in "Phantom: The Las Vegas Spectacular." As I've gained experience, I'm more invested in acting, so I'd like to move into film and television, but also keep my roots and originate a role on Broadway in New York.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with our readership?

I was exposed to a highly inaccurate stigma about chiropractors. Dancing an eight-show week has physical challenges - the stairs we climb every night, the weight of the costumes, being thrown to the floor.

Chiropractic care helped me learn about my body and the importance of, as my chiropractor says, keeping my spine a green twig instead of a brown twig. Keeping my neck from causing me pain after projecting my head forward for hours would be impossible without a chiropractor.

My ignorance prior to this experience was based on unreliable opinions, and it could've prevented me from having the success I've had on stage. Without chiropractic, I would've been in dire straights because of the strain on my neck and back. Instead, I've learned what exercises to do to keep my neck and back flexible.

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