

THIS CHICK CAN KICK YOUR ASS, AND YOU MAY LIKE IT!

JEAN FRY

BY MICHELE ATKINSON

PHOTOS BY BRIAN HYRNE/BRIAN MATTHEW PHOTOGRAPHY AND JAMES HAYDEN

1) Who is Jean Fry in 10 words or less? Strong-willed.

2) Where do you train? Every M-W-F-S morning alongside some of world's best at Westside Barbell.

3) Do you have a nickname? Oh yeah — "Mean Jean" seems to be what the guys have latched onto; it's even stitched into my chucks. "Jean Machine" is a close second.

4) How did you get into powerlifting? I was 15, trying to be a track sprinter, and had never worked out. A coworker sent me to Scott Vickery of Ironman II in my hometown of Fremont; I was addicted from my first bench press. He showed me the ropes until I left for OSU, where a group of us got together to form a PL club, and Doug Heath was kind enough to let us train in his basement gym. Then Louie gave me the invite at the first Pro/Am, and I have been at WS since 2007.

5) What is your favorite lift and why? Easy, squat. It provides a very odd sense of security to know my body is capable of holding over 400 lbs.; I love to observe lifters' faces as they get under the bar.

6) What is the typical reaction when people find out that you are a powerlifter? Question No. 1: "What's that?" Followed by, "But you're still tiny!"

7) Do you think you get extra attention because you are a girl? From non-powerlifters who attend meets, yes — just because of the stigma that anything weight-related is a "man's sport." From the PL community, not at all.

8) Do you get hit on a lot at meets? No, at least not in anything other than a joking way. I have worked hard to establish myself and gain respect as a both a solid lifter and an ambassador of sorts for females in the sport. I like to think that's why people approach me in conversation. Plus, I have a husband, and most people know that.

9) What's the most embarrassing thing that's ever happened to you in the gym? Ha! You name it, I've either ran into it, dropped it on my feet, cracked my head on it, or gotten stuck in it.

10) What are your PRs in each lift? I have totaled elite in three weight classes (114, 123, 132), hitting 400 squat, 250 bench, 350 deadlift for a 1,000 total at 123 lbs. in March. A personal achievement was making the WS board with a 230 bench at 114.

11) What is it like to be married to bench press champion Jay Fry? Do inquiring minds want to know? Actually, it's no different than being married to working man Jay Fry. We do normal married people stuff! We train independently of each other and have our

own opinions about our training, but we understand the pre-meet PMS, long hours at the gym and wanting to go to bed early because of a big workout tomorrow. We call it lifter-to-lifter respect between the squatter and the bencher of the family.

12) What do you do for work? I'm a physical therapist servicing a commercial gym in Columbus, but in the beginning stages of launching my online training and nutrition counseling business, JF Personal Training (www.jeanfry.com). I'm extremely passionate about what I do and am so lucky to be in the position to impact lives for the better every day.

13) How has powerlifting benefited you? It's given me an outlet. I have always had a full plate, with multiple jobs, the Air Force and Ohio State, then throw in family and social life — forget about it! Training and competing, although demanding of my time, was what kept me sane.

14) Where do you feel your success in the sport has stemmed from? Everyone I have mentioned so far have contributed to the things I know, and am still learning. I was also an only child, so my parents could have easily said, "No way," from the beginning. I am both lucky and grateful to them that they let me explore. I don't need physical competition to succeed; the discipline the military taught me and self-motivation is plenty. Long-term personal goals drive me, not who is going to do X meet at X weight class.

15) What are your powerlifting goals? PRO total at this year's Pro/Am (1,025 at 123); crack the all-time Top 10 list!

16) Do you have advice for other girls who want to get into powerlifting? If you want to be a powerlifter, be a powerlifter. Be proactive in your own training. Take the time to learn the training methods and history behind the sport; know why you're doing the things your doing, instead of sitting around waiting for someone to tell you what's next. Don't settle for being the "picture girl" at a meet, when you should be helping teammates by spotting or loading plates in the warm-up room. If it's too crowded, be sensible and get out of the way. You'll be respected more. If you're thinking of trying it, do it! Never be afraid of the weight. It's empowering. You must be able to both accept criticism and save social hour for after the meet. The platform is a place for business.

17) Anything else you would like to add? Lift heavy, eat smart, stay injury-free. Work hard, set goals, be patient and check your ego at the door. There are a lot of strong people in the world, but it's mental toughness that will surpass beyond the B.S. Those who don't have it will weed themselves out. **PM**



