



oxygen

FITPOSIUM CHEAT SHEETS **From the EIC of *Oxygen* Magazine**

Pitching yourself as a writer or model? Here are some things you need to know before jumping in headfirst, as well as some insider tips once you get hired.

PITCHING YOURSELF AS A WRITER

- Always, always, always spell check and use correct grammar. And get your editor's name right! Seems obvious, but I constantly get emails from people saying things like, "Dear Pam..." If you don't bother to check my name, I can pretty much guarantee you won't be writing for me!
- Do your research on the publication you're wanting to pitch. Read as many issues as you can and specifically note the tone, the grammar and the formatting. Each pub has their own style so pay close attention to that.
- Know the demographic of the publication you're pitching. For example, you'd never pitch an article on erectile dysfunction to *Oxygen*... (unless you had a *really* compelling reason!! And if you do, I want to hear it!)
- Make your pitch unique. I see the saaaaaammme workout pitches over and over (*Please* — no more Covid-19 related pitches!) Give your story a unique spin and it is way more likely to get noticed.
- Ask for the mag's editorial calendar — e.g. deadlines, issue releases and the like. Most magazines work way ahead in terms of season and issue, so if you send me a pitch for a sunscreen article in August it's way too late — our summer issue has already been put together and was shipped out to the printer in March.
- Don't send complete articles. This might be unique to *Oxygen* but honestly, it is a lot of work on your end to spend the time writing something that might not pan out. Instead, send a list of detailed pitches with one or two sentences about your idea as well as an expert or a study attached to it to make it credible.
- Along those lines, learn how to find/read/translate research and studies to support your pitches. I always ask ALL my writers — no matter if it's for training, nutrition or health — to source and cite recent, credible studies to support their ideas. You can also use

credible experts, so long as you attach them to the pitch and cite their certifications or other credentials. One good site I personally use all the time is sciencedaily.com.

- Another website is not a credible source. While [mindbodygreen](http://mindbodygreen.com) and [draxe](http://draxe.com) have a lot of good information, they cannot be used as sources to back up a story you are writing for *Oxygen*. Nor can you use the other women's fitness mag websites like *Self*, *Shape* and *Women's Health* as your source of citations.
- Pitch ideas for a department, not a feature, especially if you are a new writer. Departments are regular columns found at the front of the book or at the beginning of a section. For example, in *Oxygen*, departments such as Fast fitness and mobility are found at the beginning of the Move section. These shorter articles always need new, unique pitches.
- Don't pitch ideas that you have already sold to other magazines/websites. This is a conflict of interest and is likely against the terms of the contract you signed with the other magazine/website, so save yourself the legal hassle and be original.
- First-person writing does not fly in editorial. This might be different for online articles, but I never publish first-person accounts or articles in print. This seems to be a common mistake among bloggers who are used to writing this way.
- If you have been published before, send the editor any and all links to your previous work as well as links to you and your background. Articles, social media, PDFs — whatever you have. Make them easy to access and make sure they are clear and easy to read and that *the links actually work* and have not expired.
- Study the masthead. If there are multiple editors such as a managing editor, nutrition editor, fitness editor etc., pitch those people rather than going right to the EIC. In my case, I am currently the only editorial person on staff for *Oxygen* so you don't really have any other options, but unfortunately at the moment, chances are if I don't know your name or writing reputation, I probably won't get back to you. That being said, if you sound legit or have a good idea, I will likely pass you along to Ashlee Moosbrugger, our online editor.
- Along those lines, it is best to start your writing career online. Getting published online is way more likely to happen, due to the sheer volume of content needed for online platforms.
- Pitch smaller, local magazines as your testing ground to hone your writing skills. Once you have some articles under your belt you can work your way up to national/international pubs.

- Look into getting certified. Writers with training/nutrition certifications get my attention way more than those with blogging creds. Not that bloggers don't have writing chops, but they don't always have the proper training or nutrition background to be as precise and specific as I would like for my publication.

ONCE YOU GET HIRED

- Get all the details about the article you're going to be writing. What is the deadline, what is the word count and, if it is a paid commission, what is the fee?
- Be clear on what you're writing. Most editors will send out an assignment letter that outlines what they are expecting from the article you've been assigned. This will also include all the details you would need (see above) about deadlines and etc. If anything is unclear with this letter, tell your editor immediately so you are certain to turn in the article they had in mind.
- Be prepared for rewrites. Several of them. And don't take it personally. Often articles go through several drafts, depending on the spin the editor wants it to take and/or the clarity of the content. Typically, I do an initial edit on a piece and send it back for revisions if there are things that are vague, unsupported or incomplete.
- Turn in your work early, if possible (early writers are my *favorite* people on the planet because they make my job so much easier!) But most importantly never be late, no matter what your reason. You know what they say about excuses...
- Don't argue with your editor, even if you don't like their edits. There is always a reason for an edit, be it for space, clarity, tone or grammar. You won't win that argument and likely will kill your chances of being rehired.
- For paid commissions, send your invoice upon article completion and acceptance. Make sure it includes all the needed information such as your SS# or EIN, address, full name as it appears on your check, issue and the fee. If you don't know what is needed to complete your invoice, make sure you ask. Otherwise you might end up in the vortex that is the AP department and will be waiting forever to get paid...
- Ask your editor for a PDF of your article once it has been published. (Note: I *never* have extra hard copies to send but can always generate a PDF.) This is useful when you want to expand your reach to more magazines to continue your career.

PITCHING YOURSELF AS A MODEL

- Look in the credits to see which photographers regularly shoot for the magazine you're pitching. Contact them directly, send them some images and offer yourself as a model, either for a test shoot or for an upcoming editorial shoot they may have on their books. Quite often I get recommendations for models from my photogs, and sometimes from my hair and makeup artists, so it behooves you to do that research.
- Know where our photogs and editors live and shoot, and alert them/us if you are going to be in that area and are available to model. Right now, I only use three photogs: Cory Sorensen based in Utah, Ian Spanier based in LA and Ian Travis Barnard based in Rhode Island.
- Enumerate your physical skills and/or expertise. And don't lie — if you get hired it will be obvious from frame one if you do or do not know how to do a move or use a piece of equipment. To model for *Oxygen*, you HAVE to be able to do pretty much any move I could throw at you. Literally any move.
- Mind your social media. (This also goes for those wanting to write for me). The first thing I do when someone pitches herself as a model and/or an expert is to go to her Instagram page. If you are naked, nearly naked or if the bulk of your images are of your rear end, you are probably not representative of our brand. Feeds that impress me are those with rich and valuable content — workouts, nutrition, recipes — useful information that tells me something about you as a human being, or that teaches me something I might not have known before.
- And yes, everyone wants to know how to get on the cover, but for *Oxygen* we only have four total issues per year right now. Three of those covers are reserved for our online ed coaches to promote our courses and the fourth is for that year's Oxygen Challenge cover winner. So unless you participate in the Oxygen Challenge, chances of landing a cover are pretty slim.

ONCE YOU GET HIRED

- Ask for a copy of the article or the moves you will be shooting ahead of time so you can prepare. If there is any accompanying video demoing the moves, look it over carefully so you know exactly what the shoot will entail.
- Make sure you know the location and call time for yourself and the staff. Map it ahead of time so you know exactly where you're going.

- Be on time. Period.
- Come to the shoot with clean hair, nails and skin. No crazy neon green nail polish or last night's club makeup.
- Bring several of your own *clean* outfits that are free of large logos (e.g. huge Nike swoosh on your chest), as well as several pairs of shoes and socks. Often, we have wardrobe for you at the shoot, but some things might not fit properly, and we will need more options. If you have a clothing sponsor, do not promise said sponsor we will use their items in your shoot. It might happen, but then again it might not.
- Don't get a brand new tattoo or have cupping performed on you the days leading up to your shoot. Also, if in the pictures you sent us for consideration you were a brunette and you are now a blonde, let us know ahead of time! Send us a quick pic of yourself so we know what to expect and what sort of clothing, HMU and lighting we might need. (And yes, all of these situations have happened before...We've seen it all!)
- If you legit don't know how to do a move, own it. Like I said before, it will be totally obvious from frame one if you have no idea what you're doing. Admitting you don't know and being open to learning something on the fly is way better than trying to fake it.
- Have fun! It absolutely comes through on film if you are terrified or intimidated. We are just human beings like you and are all pretty easygoing people on set at *Oxygen*. Yes, I want you to be correct with your form and to listen to and take direction, I also want you to look comfortable and happy. This is another good reason to use smaller, local pubs as guinea pigs to get some shooting hours under your belt.