



# ERIKA HEYNATZ TURNS LEGALLY BLONDE

SELF-CONFESSED FITNESS JUNKIE ERIKA HEYNATZ TELLS US HOW THE CAST FOR *LEGALLY BLONDE THE MUSICAL* GETS FIT FOR ACTION.

**B**ased on the 2001 movie of the same name where Reese Witherspoon played leading lady Elle Woods, the musical follows the same storyline but oozes with energy and glitz, in a show that will have you heading home with a smile on your dial. Winner of seven major international awards including the coveted Best New Musical 2011 (Olivier Awards®), *Legally Blonde The Musical* opened to rave reviews in early October and after wowing Sydney audiences, hopes to shine its light on other capitals across the country.





When it comes to musicals, the number one thing we expect from the cast is their ability to sing and shake their groove thing when the need arises. In *Legally Blonde The Musical* there's all of that and more. Now we all know how difficult it is having a conversation whilst running on the treadmill, or just ask any group fitness instructor what it's like teaching a high intensity class like BODYATTACK®. But what about skipping and singing at the same time?

Erika Heynatz pulls this off brilliantly in the production. Playing the role of Brooke Wyndam, an exercise queen who owns her own fitness empire, Erika portrays the role with such conviction



that you'd think she was the master of the skipping program, Cardio Whip 5000, herself. While in jail for allegedly killing her husband, she and a criminal cast perform a spectacular dance and singing routine with skipping ropes. 'Skipping is such a strong cardiovascular activity, your heart rate shoots through the roof, and then we have to sing as well,' she says of her role.

Erika says that during rehearsals because so many of the cast members are involved in the skipping routine, other cast members were encouraged to join in regardless of whether or not they skip in the show. 'It's fantastic for general fitness and as everyone watched they wanted to join in anyway – It's a really joyous activity,' she says.

During the early stages of rehearsing for the skipping rope scene, 'Whipped Into Shape', cast members started out doing daily intensive skipping drills for an hour incorporating jogging and faster and faster skipping routines. 'The whole cast was doing this [skipping] together to live drums and piano, and people burst into song singing anything from Michael Jackson to Stevie Wonder. It was so exhilarating and so much fun. All of us would fall to the floor absolutely heaving for breath; it was like something out of a movie,' says Erika.

'I've had to develop a routine to really build my stamina, making sure I am super hydrated and also doing lots of stretching, working on good recovery and building up my flexibility.' To improve her flexibility, Erika does lots of yoga. To aid her stamina she does soft sand running and she mentions also that the weighted Olympic ropes

**I'M GETTING FIT AS A FIDDLE AND I'M LEARNING LOTS OF GREAT NEW SKILLS'. 'SKIPPING IS THE BEST FORM OF INTERVAL TRAINING YOU CAN POSSIBLY IMAGINE.'**

they use in the show gives the arms, shoulders and back a great workout every performance.

With four weeks of rehearsals that last from 10am to 6pm everyday, and an additional week of preparation that sees them rehearse from 1.30pm to 11.30pm at the theatre, it's hardly a walk in the park. 'A lot of people have said to me that it's a fantastic gig – it's going to be really challenging and you're going to need to be really physically fit.'

Of course if you've seen the film then you'll know that an integral part of the storyline is Bruiser the Chihuahua and Rufus the Bulldog. In this live show, while these two don't sing or dance, they are definitely two stars among the cast who never fail to elicit thunderous applause from the audience every time they appear.

If *Legally Blonde The Musical* doesn't get you chuckling at its witty one-liners or impressed by the physicality and sensational performances from the talented cast, then if nothing else we think it will have you itching to get to the gym in an attempt to create your own set of Erika Heynatz-style abs!

*Legally Blonde The Musical* is currently playing at the Sydney Lyric Theatre with national tour dates being released soon. For full details visit [legallyblonde.com.au](http://legallyblonde.com.au)

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