



From **VACATION** to **VOCATION**

Mike and Holly Semanoff believe fitness is about having the ability to do what you want and not as much about how you fit in a pair of pants. Here, Mike paraglides — one of his favorite outdoor activities.

Orem couple's trip to Disneyland launched their careers as body builders and personal trainers

by Greg Bennett | photos courtesy Semanoff family

Most of us feel like we need to do two weeks of toning just to head to a mommy-and-me swimming lesson. But imagine being on a relaxing vacation and deciding — on a whim — to enter a couples fitness contest at one of the largest fitness expos in the country.

That's exactly what happened to Orem's Mike and Holly Semanoff.

It was 2005 and the young couple was visiting Disneyland when they noticed a flier advertising a fitness competition for couples as part of the Fitexpo 2005. Since the competition was located minutes away, the couple drove down and entered. The next day, while riding "It's a Small

World," Mike received a call saying they were Top 10 finalists and that they needed to be on hand for the final competition.

"Neither one of us had done this before so I called a friend of mine and asked him how to pose and what we needed to do to get ready," Mike says.

So with borrowed shorts from his brother and a trip to Target for needed supplies, Mike and Holly headed for what they thought would be a little adventure. The little adventure turned into a big one when the couple won the competition, the prize money and a feature in *Iron Man Magazine*.

"It made our vacation go a little longer

than planned," Holly says. "We never thought we'd win, but we knew we were in good shape and thought it would be fun."

Having fun together is something the Semanoffs have believed in since they met as college students in Provo, and their fun is contagious with the clients they now work with as personal trainers.

Fluid 'fitness'

For Mike and Holly, fitness can't be defined by a magazine, a competition or even a pesky pair of pants.

"My perception of fitness is different than other people," Mike says. "If you can

do everything you want to do without being limited physically, that's fitness."

In other words, "fitness" varies from client to client. Which is why Mike and Holly customize a fitness plan to meet each client's goals. To see optimum results, Mike and Holly like people to set goals that aren't just about pounds, inches and dress sizes.

"We like to make exciting goals," Mike says. "We might say, 'Let's get in shape to hike the Y and then paraglide off.' That's much more fun than just hitting the scale each week."

Awesome outdoors

Hiking the Y, paragliding at the Point of the Mountain and biking up Provo Canyon are all better examples of how the Semanoffs stay in shape than treadmill, stationary bikes or even free weights. The gym-style training is used, but only as a means to the more exciting end.

"You go to the gym so you can do other activities better," Holly says.

In fact, the Semanoffs met in college when Holly approached Mike after noticing his hiking boots. However, Mike didn't reciprocate any interest until he found out Holly went camping by herself.

"When she told me she went by herself, I knew she wasn't just one of those girls who camped with friends," he says. "I knew she loved the outdoors and must be really into it if she'd go alone."

That mutual love for outdoor activities is what leads the

Semanoffs to work hard on being in shape. In fact, their idea of the perfect date might involve mountain biking or paragliding.

"We don't go to movies," Holly says. "We spend our time together doing things outside."

"It helps that we don't have a TV in our house," Mike quips. "You get bored really quickly without a TV, so we'll head outside instead."

Muscular momma

About a year ago, Holly became a mother when she gave birth to Jake. She was determined to quickly regain her form. She set a goal to compete in the 2007 NPC USA Figure Championships and to place in the Top 15. Less than a year after having a baby, she took fourth.

"I wanted to show that mothers can get



Holly Semanoff enjoys being outside more than working out in a gym.

FIT FACTS

HOLLY SEMANOFF

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Certified Ashtanga Vinyasa flow instructor, February 2004
- Certified Advance Ashtanga Vinyasa flow instructor, March 2006
- American Council of Exercise certified fitness instructor, August 2004
- Certified Wilderness Education Association leader, June 2004
- Licensed United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association pilot, July 2005
- Achieved professional status as a natural fitness competitor, September 2005

COMPETITION HISTORY

- NPC USA Figure Championships: 4th place, C Class
- The Fitexpo 2005 Fittest Couple: 1st place, Overall Winners
- NGA Natural Bodybuilding and Figure Championships 2005: 1st place Mixed Pairs
- NW Natural Bodybuilding and Figure Championships 2005: 1st place, Overall Winner
- NGA Natural Mountain States Regional Bodybuilding & Figure Championships: 2nd place
- NGA 7th Annual World Bodybuilding and Figure Championships 2005: 3rd place
- NPC Spring Classic Championships 2005: 3rd place
- NPC Utah Gold Cup 2005: 1st Place, Overall Winner

back in shape and compete," she says.

While not all new moms are ready to sport a bikini and compete in a fitness competition months after their baby is born, mothers — and fathers — can involve their children in fitness instead of avoiding exercise because of them.

"A lot of people use kids as an excuse," Mike says. "We just take Jake with us as we do things outside."

Mountain bike rides and even rock climbs are enhanced when their son is involved.

In addition to it being more fun for mom and dad, taking Jake will make exercise and fitness a part of his life from the beginning.

Change of heart

The Semanoffs recognize that "fitness" doesn't occur overnight, but the attitude that gets you there does.

"We have people set their personal script and then we want them to start liv-

ing that way immediately," Mike says. "It's law of attraction. If you start living how you want to be, then you'll get it."

"'Tomorrow' is a big pitfall for people," Holly says. "It's easy to wait, but you have to live in the now."

Eventually, that struggle that is your new life will become a real new lifestyle, which makes healthy living easier.

"When you have a real change of lifestyle, you won't be tempted by McDonald's," Mike says. "But it takes a change of mindset."

That's when being part of a team — or family — can help.

"It helps to have a spouse involved," Holly says. "We get couples involved with each other. Then, workouts turn into dates and it helps them both stay motivated."

And who knows?

Maybe one of their clients will end up in Iron Man Magazine after a trip to Disneyland.

It's a small world, after all. **UV**

Mike and Holly Semanoff take their son, Jake, on outdoor outings. They want to pass their love of fitness and recreation onto their son.



FIT FACTS

MIKE SEMANOFF

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

- Bachelor of Science in Biology Education, December 2004 UVSC
- Utah Professional Educators License, January 2005
- National Academy of Sports Medicine, Certified Personal Trainer, October 2006
- International Sports Science Association, Certified Personal Trainer, July 2006
- National College of Exercise Professionals, Flexibility Specialist, December 2006
- Graduate of the Army Sapper Leaders Course
- USPA Sigma Tandem Skydive Instructor, July 2007
- USHPA Tandem Paragliding Instructor, August 2007

COMPETITION HISTORY

- The Fitexpo 2005 Fittest Couple: 1st place, Overall Winners
- NGA Natural Bodybuilding and Figure Championships 2005: 1st place Mixed Pairs
- NGA NW Natural Bodybuilding and Figure Championships 2006: 1st place, Overall Winner
- Mr. Utah Natural Bodybuilding Championships 2006: 1st place Heavyweight Division
- NGA NW Natural Bodybuilding and Figure Championships 2005: 1st place
- 2002 Utah Summer Game Triathlon, 10th overall finish
- 2002 NJCAA National Championships Track and Field: 4 x 100 Meter Anchorman