

Jump-Start Your Fitness

A new generation of Terminator tells you how to build a (literally) killer body. Meet the girl behind the glutes: Summer Glau, of Fox's sci-fi hit "The Sarah Connor Chronicles."

By Diane Clehane, Women's Health



True, she doesn't look like she could kick a guy's butt. But make no mistake, Summer Glau—all 5-foot-6 of her—can, and does. The actress is tearing up the small screen on the Fox action series "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles," playing a robot whose job is to preserve the future of mankind. "I get to throw people around and work with guns," Glau says. "It's fun."

It's also kind of unexpected. The 27-year-old classically trained ballerina turned to acting at age 19 after an ankle injury ended her dancing career. She left her hometown of San Antonio, Texas, "with no backup plan" and decided to try her luck in Hollywood. When Glau got to Los Angeles, she took an assertiveness training course to get over the intense shyness that had plagued her since childhood. "I think that's why I liked dancing," she says. "It was a way for me to communicate and show how I really felt without having to connect with anyone."

Clearly, the classes worked. Glau landed a bit part—as a ballerina—on Joss Whedon's edgy vampire drama "Angel." The director liked her work so much that he rehired her as a high-kicking telepath for his 2002 sci-fi series "Firefly" and for the 2005 film version, "Serenity," in which Glau did most of her own stunts, including plenty of martial arts. "It was probably the hardest thing I've ever done in my life," she says. "It was very aggressive, which wasn't natural for me. I was hurt, exhausted, and pushed to the point of tears every day during those workouts, and had to psyche myself up to do them. But I wanted to do the fight scenes myself."

In the process, she's transformed her lithe dancer's body. She's an insanely buff fighting machine—and that serves her well onscreen and off. "I'm very physical," she says. "It's an important part of being a woman—feeling good about yourself and really being in tune with your personality." Absolutely. The butt-kicking part is pretty sweet too.

10 Tips For a Hot Bod*

Chow down in the a.m.

"To boost my energy, I have to," Glau says. "For breakfast, I always have eggs—whole eggs. I think the fats are really important. I also like turkey bacon and really hearty whole-grain bread. I'm very picky about it. You need bread that's high in fiber and low in carbs. It's hard to find, but it's worth it. I order mine from this little bakery outside L.A."

Mix it up

"As I've gotten older, I've come to realize how important it is to vary your workouts," says Glau, whose days as a dancer were filled with repetitious rehearsals. "I did the same movements every day, and that really wears your body down! Your muscles stop responding and you get in a rut." These days, the actress bans boredom by alternating between dance classes, spinning, weight training and hiking.

Belly up to the barre

Glau is a fan of the new Cardio Barre classes at gyms. "It's a fantastic workout, designed by a dancer, which uses a traditional ballet barre for balance but also incorporates cardio, stretching, and light weights," she explains. "It's aerobic, and you're definitely toning your muscles the way a dancer would." Best of all: No pointe shoes or dorky leotard required.

Dive right in

"When I stopped doing ballet, I started training in the pool. I would do my barre exercises in the water, because that prevents injuries." The best underwater move, according to Glau: "Take an inner tube into the deep end of the pool and do slow stretches while pushing down on it. This really works your hips and butt."

Give yourself a break, okay?

"You don't have to work out all day to get fit," says the actress, who slots in an hour for exercise whenever she can. "Playing a robot, I should be in the best shape of my life, but I also work 16 hours a day." Her advice for the time-crunched: "If 20 minutes is all you've got, don't beat yourself up about it. Just do three different exercises until you're exhausted. The important thing is to get your heart rate up." Glau also makes sure there's a cardio component to each session: "If I don't get sweaty, I don't feel like I've worked out."

Rely on creativity, not just crunches

Glau loves exercises that work her whole body. "If you do a lot of moves from your core, you're working more than one muscle group at a time, so it's much more efficient," she says. "I do a lot with medicine balls, lunges with upper-body movements, and plank workouts." One to try: the Gliding Disc workout. "You put your feet on discs [find them at glidingdiscs.com] and slide across the carpet," Glau says. "It works your whole body at once, and it's really effective if you're in a hurry."

Whip out the Gloria Gaynor

Just because you can't get to the gym doesn't mean you have an excuse to miss a workout. Glau keeps weights (from two to eight pounds) in her closet. "Sometimes when I get home after a long day, I'll turn on music—I love Latin, disco, and pop—and

do my own workout, even if it's a short one," she says. "Know a good song to work out to? 'I Will Survive.'"

Take a hike

"It's painful to make myself exercise when I'm really tired, but I feel alive afterward, so I make the effort. Sometimes my best friend and I just go for a walk until we're exhausted. It feels great. It doesn't have to be killer. Just get moving."

Recharge those batteries

"I love bath time," says Glau, who makes time to relax with candlelight baths in her whirlpool tub. She also loves to cook; she even records her favorite Food Network shows. "I was a dancer for so many years, and food was kind of the enemy. When I stopped dancing, I realized that eating doesn't make you gain weight if you eat right. Now I find those food shows very relaxing."

Cut out Conan

Glau needs seven hours of shut-eye a night. "Sleep is the most important thing you can do for yourself," she says. "People tend to gain weight when they don't get enough rest. Plus, your body doesn't get the repair time it needs."

Provided by *Women's Health*

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