

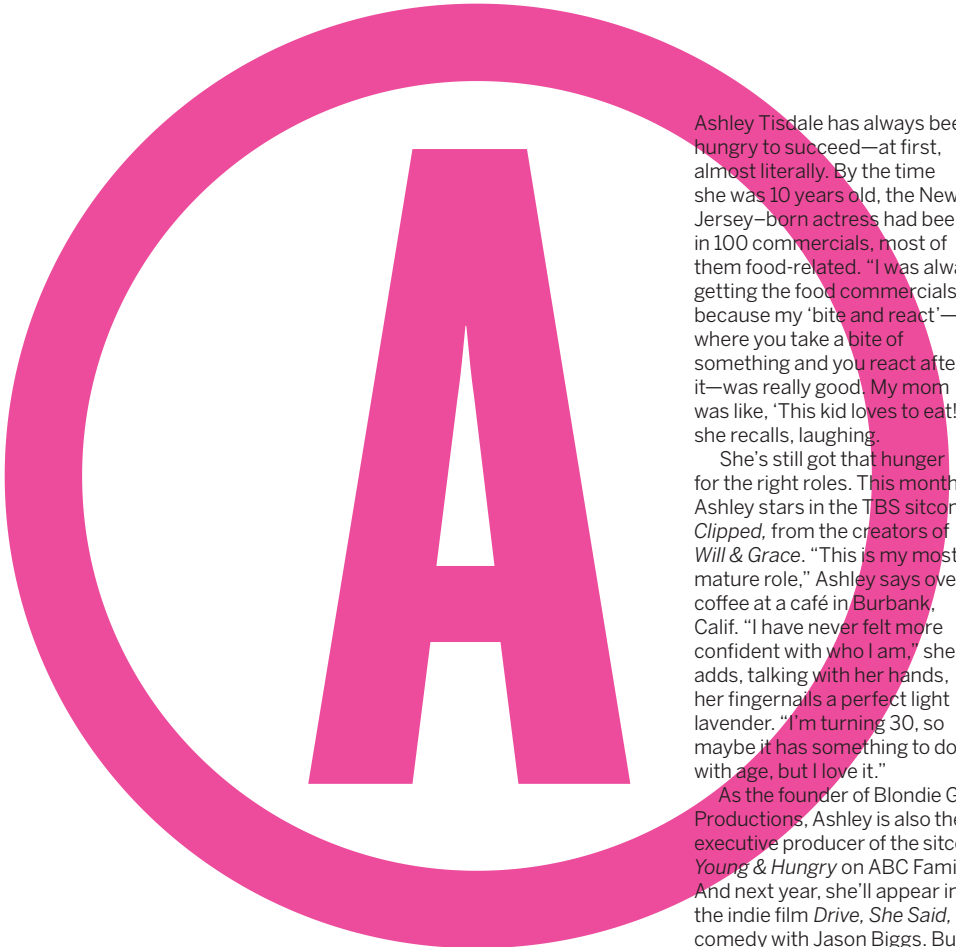
A photograph of Ashley Tisdale standing by a swimming pool. She is wearing a light blue two-piece bikini and high-heeled sandals. She is leaning against a blue mosaic pillar. The pool is in the foreground, and there is a white lounge chair and umbrella in the background. The scene is outdoors with trees and a clear sky.

# ASHLEY TISDALE'S

THE 29-YEAR-OLD HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE GRADUATING FROM HER *HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL* DAYS. NOW ASHLEY IS STARRING IN A NEW SITCOM, LEADING A FEMALE-FRIENDLY PRODUCTION COMPANY AND RULING SOCIAL MEDIA, WITH A 43 MILLION-FOLLOWER FOOTPRINT. AND SHE'S GOT A HOT TIP ABOUT A NEW WORKOUT YOU HAVE TO TRY.

BY AMY SPENCER // PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES WHITE

# BIG NEW LIFE



# A

Ashley Tisdale has always been hungry to succeed—at first, almost literally. By the time she was 10 years old, the New Jersey-born actress had been in 100 commercials, most of them food-related. “I was always getting the food commercials because my ‘bite and react’—where you take a bite of something and you react after it—was really good. My mom was like, ‘This kid loves to eat!’” she recalls, laughing.

She’s still got that hunger for the right roles. This month, Ashley stars in the TBS sitcom *Clipped*, from the creators of *Will & Grace*. “This is my most mature role,” Ashley says over coffee at a café in Burbank, Calif. “I have never felt more confident with who I am,” she adds, talking with her hands, her fingernails a perfect light lavender. “I’m turning 30, so maybe it has something to do with age, but I love it.”

As the founder of Blondie Girl Productions, Ashley is also the executive producer of the sitcom *Young & Hungry* on ABC Family. And next year, she’ll appear in the indie film *Drive, She Said*, a comedy with Jason Biggs. But her favorite production of the past year was her own wedding: In September, she married musician Christopher French.

As for how she keeps up her drive, she credits working out every day. And before she leaves today to meet her trainer, she shares her secret to sticking with workouts, what she regrets most and why being tenacious is her biggest weapon.

#### **What’s the most important thing you do to feel great?**

Dedicate at least an hour every day to something fitness-related. Any physical activity helps your health and is also a good stress reliever. Monday, Wednesday and Friday I work with my trainer, Jason Walsh. I do kickboxing on Thursday. And I’ll squeeze in a sculpt yoga class on, like, Tuesday.

#### **What workouts do you like most and least?**

Yoga is my favorite thing to do because it’s so much more than a workout. It’s a spiritual and mentally-good-for-you experience. Cardio is not my favorite. I usually do the StairMaster, but to be on one machine for a long time? It’s hard for me to just stay there.

My trainer has this amazing class he opened called Rise Nation. It’s a climber, and a great class because you’re doing it to music and not by yourself on a machine. It’s 30 minutes but so hard-core. I’m not a big spin fan.

#### **Why don’t you like to spin?**

I’m going to be the spin hater now. [Laughs] I used to do SoulCycle, but a ton of trainers have told me that spinning is good but you’re not burning as much as you think you are. And it bulks you up in places you probably don’t want. My body started to change for the better when I stopped doing it. I also leaned out so much just by walking. Even if you do 12,000 steps a day, you lose, like, a pound a week. But you have to find the time. It takes so long!

#### **What do you have to work the hardest on to keep fit?**

Diet, because I love food. You can work out as much as you want, but if your diet isn’t where it should be, you’re never going to get to where you want to go. Just because you do an hour of exercise, what about the rest of the hours of the day? [Laughs] An hour is *not* a lot. There are 23 more hours. What are you going to do with them?

#### **What’s your biggest regret?**

Not getting into working out earlier. In my teens, when trying to be comfortable in my body, I wished I was more athletic. I was always pretty skinny. I didn’t have any curves. I remember watching myself in *High School Musical 2*. I had a lot of hair and I was in a bathing suit and I thought, “I just look like a bobblehead!” So when I was 22, I started working out. I also had an upper-back injury that ended up going into my lower back; I would have this horrible pain no matter what I did—even hanging out. An expert said, “You need to build your core so your back won’t hurt as much.” I started working out, and I’ve never felt that pain again. And when we were in concert, I also needed the stamina to sing and dance. I would hit the gym in every city, and I would run while singing at these hotel gyms. People would see me and be like, “What is this chick doing?” [Laughs]

#### **Do you have any health fears?**

My mom has diabetes, so knowing that, I’m more health-



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#### **SCAN TO SHOP!**

SCAN THIS PHOTO TO PURCHASE THE ITEMS IN THIS STORY (LEARN HOW ON PAGE 4).

“IT’S THE HARDER THINGS THAT MAKE YOU WHO YOU ARE.”

conscious. But it also scares me to think about how much time we're on our phones and in front of the TV. When I was younger, we didn't have Twitter. We didn't have Instagram. I catch myself where I've been on it for way too long. It's not OK.

**Last I checked, you have nearly 12.8 million Twitter followers! Do you ever have an "oops" moment, where you type something you regret?**

Yeah. And then I delete it. [Laughs] There have been so many times in the past where I've been like, "I should not have said that."

**Like when?**

Like in my past relationships, I used to passive-aggressively tweet. When I got out of one relationship, I said something like "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." I was like, "I probably shouldn't have shared that with everybody." [Laughs]

**What happened with that relationship?**

We obviously weren't right for each other, but for some reason I thought I needed to be in it. The first time we broke up, it was shattering because I didn't see it coming. So then I built up walls because I didn't want to get hurt again. But I ended up back in it. There was just this one moment where we had broken up again, and I was like, "You know what? This is such a cycle that is not healthy, and it's not OK." I was shooting a movie and I was like, "I love myself, and I love being by myself, so what am I in this for?" And I just ended it. I would go over to that guy now and be like, "Thank you so much because I wouldn't have been ready to be in this relationship [with my husband]." It's the harder things that make you who you are.

**Congratulations on your marriage, by the way. What do you most appreciate about your life with Christopher?**

We are best friends. We completely balance each other out. He's a very good listener. And he's the most patient man I have ever met. I'm not very patient. I'm such an energetic person. I'll get into these "Wanna dance?" moments. I think it's the kid in me. But he allows me to be who I am.

**You've been a public figure for so long. Is there something people still get wrong or misunderstand about you?**

Oh, yeah. I think people have a perspective of me that I'm this blonde and I just like to shop. I'm deeper than what people expect. Even with my production company, people think I have somebody else running it, but then they start to see, "Wow, she *does* do it."

**Do you feel that when you go into meetings you have to prove yourself a little bit more? How do you do it?**

Work really hard. In anything I've ever gotten, if something comes easy, it's probably not going to be as good. Even with *Clipped*, I kept having to go in to prove that I was this character. I was like, "I can do this." I'm used to playing sarcastic characters with the snippy little lines, and this is more of the girl that everyone wants to hang out with. From *Hellcats* to *High School Musical*—for every single one of those projects, I had to go back in more than usual just to prove I could do it.

**How do you keep confident in those big career moments?**

That's what excites me. I will work my hardest to prove to you that I am this character. And that's the most rewarding because it's that much better when you actually get it.

**Do you feel women in Hollywood are embracing their power more these days?**

It's a really exciting time for women. A couple of months ago, I had dinner with my girlfriends. One of my friends had booked an episode of something. I had booked this indie movie and Vanessa Hudgens was starting *Gigi* on Broadway. So it became a celebration that all of our friends were kicking ass. I feel like it's so important to support other women and their dreams. My production company—Blondie Girl Productions—is me and my sister, and every time I meet a female producer, I'm like, "Yeah, let's do this" because usually it's a lot of dudes! It's a hard business to break into. It's hard to tell women's stories because they don't know where the audience is for female-driven movies. But it's like, look at *Bridesmaids*! We are there!

**Is that your goal with the production company—to tell female-driven stories?**

Oh, it's been that from the very start. It's always been about women. That's what we're interested in; that's what the brand is. It's cool. That is so important to cheer on.

**You once said that Robin Williams was an inspiration to you, and then you guest-starred with him on *The Crazy Ones*. Did you get to know him?**

He was one of the nicest people. Whenever I was around Robin, I just wanted to hug him the entire time. He was just a humble, nice man. And for how many years he'd been doing this, he was the most professional person. He was the first one on his mark—he would be waiting for everybody else. It was funny because at the first table read, I was so nervous because Robin Williams was sitting at the table. And he laughed out loud at one of my lines. I remember telling my friends, "You know you've had a good day when you've made Robin Williams laugh."

**Who else has been an inspiration?**

I also looked up to Brittany Murphy, growing up. I met her backstage at a Kids' Choice Awards. I was doing pilots, but they weren't getting picked up. You kind of get to this point where you've done it for so long where you're like, "Is this what I'm supposed to be doing?" I was just like, "I am your biggest fan." She said, "Are you an actress? OK, you gotta keep going. Whatever you do, never give up." She pinkie-promised me, and it was such a boost of confidence. I always want to be that person for others, but I am very shy.

**Really?**

Whenever I'm meeting somebody, I'm very quiet. People think I'm super outgoing, but I'm a private person. And I'm definitely shy.

**With all you have going on, what is your biggest goal for this year?**

I'm so excited to be back on television. One of my main goals is to win an Emmy for best actress. I guess I've always loved just making people laugh. ■

## ASHLEY'S TOP TIPS FOR HEALTHY SUMMER HAIR

1

"If I'm going to work out or go to the beach, I'll spray argan oil in and tie it up in a knot. It's so good for your ends because that's where you want it more hydrated."

2

"Because I'm always coloring my hair, sometimes I'll comb coconut oil through and part it down the middle with a low bun. That way, you're conditioning *and* have a cute style!"

3

"I take vitamins for my hair, skin and nails: Perricone MD Hair & Nails Formula."

4

"Dry shampoo is my best friend. When you're constantly working out, you don't want to completely rewash your hair every time; it's not good—especially for color-treated hair. I just spray dry shampoo in and I'm able to style it, too."

5

"For beachy waves, I'll wash it at night and let it kind of air-dry. Then the next day I'll put more heat on it because it's not as abrasive on the hair as going from wet to dry. If you use beach spray (I like Bumble and Bumble's), you can mold your hair."

"I REMEMBER TELLING MY FRIENDS, 'YOU KNOW YOU'VE HAD A GOOD DAY WHEN YOU'VE MADE ROBIN WILLIAMS LAUGH.'"

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