

between healthy habits and a hectic schedule.

Lauren Gray, who graduated in May with an undergraduate degree in English, spent the spring of 2016 competing in the Miss Battle Born competition while also pursuing a full course schedule. The swimsuit portion of the competition meant Gray needed to work hard to get the lean, muscular physique expected by the judges.

"It's not everyone's experience, but to get in that kind of shape, school took the back seat," Gray said. "My grades were not good, and I would not recommend that's how anyone prioritize their life."

Gray had a background in fitness already and found working out to be a cathartic way to deal with the stresses of life and school. However, the effort it takes to maintain an Instagram-ready six-pack in college is more demanding than many people realize.

"I was going through a lot at the time, so I think, for me, part of working out was like therapy," Gray said. "But in that kind of phase I was in the gym for at least two hours a day, six days a week. I was eating probably 1200 to 1400 calories a day, kind of depending on the day. And it was literally chicken, broccoli, brown rice, egg whites, broccoli, brown rice, every single meal. And it was three hours of meal prep on Sundays. And I did that for like five months. That's how you look like that."

Gray said that she could see an ultra-motivated student maintaining that kind of schedule, but with her addition of a part time job, she decided that paying her own way and keeping her grades up was more important to her than haunting the gym. **Striving for balance**, she said, helped her reprioritize her schedule with more realistic goals for her situation.

"[I was] shifting my habits to where I'm like, 'This is OK for me right now and I can still get done what I need to get done,'" Gray said. "And so just putting school first and ... understanding, like, lean is not healthy, healthy is healthy."

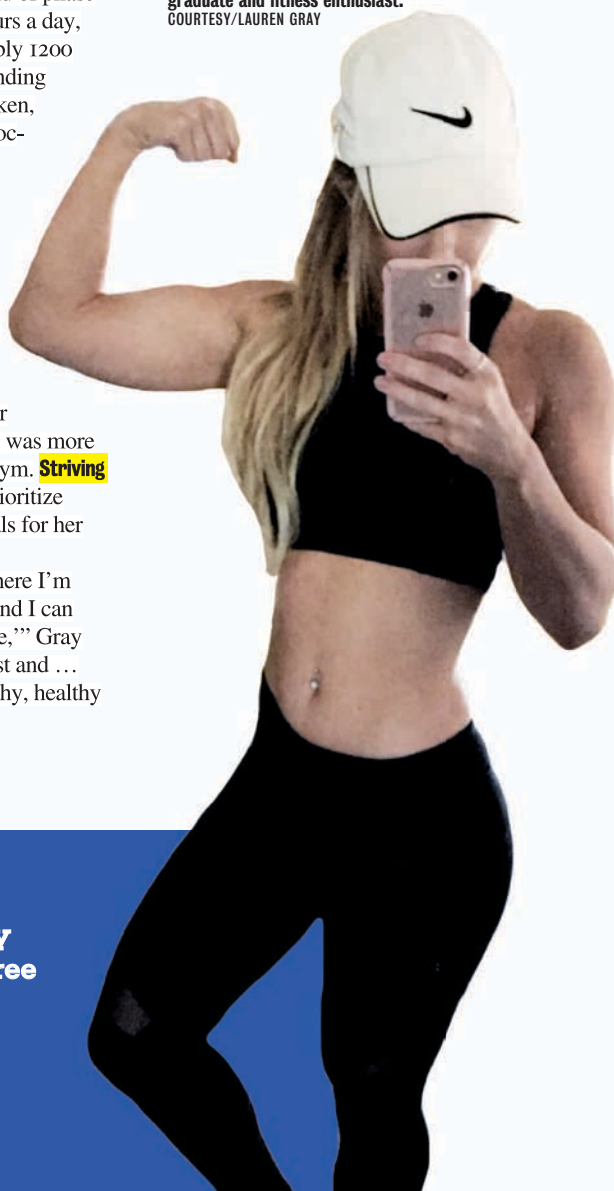
In the absence of her competition-level workout routine, Gray said she found other ways to manage her weight and physique goals, including visiting the **Student Health Center**.

"You can go to the health center and get your body fat tested. You can get a diet plan—there's a nutritionist," Gray said. "They can create a diet plan for you based on your goal. I would assume that even if you were just gonna do like a, 'Hey, I want to eat healthier,' they could make a diet plan for that too."

Managing her nutrition, grades and schedule became as much of a priority to Gray as working out, and to students whose fitness journey might start at the same time as their college career, Gray says: don't sweat it.

"If your goals or if your schedule only allows for like three days at the gym, that's all you can do consistently, because you know you're going to be super packed the rest of the week, then that's OK. Do that," said Gray. □

Lauren Gray is a recent UNR graduate and fitness enthusiast.
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LAUREN GRAY
UNR GRADUATE

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