

# Aoife's business *shapes up*

Model Aoife Cogan trades fashion for fitness... *Aoibhinn McBride reports*

**FESTIVE FOOD**  
— Aoife says it will everything in moderation for her  
**RIGHT:** With Gordon on their wedding day



She's a model, he's a sports star. So far, so predictable. But when you begin to chat to Aoife Cogan about her brand new business venture with husband, Ireland and Leinster rugby star Gordon D'arcy, you realise the willowy brunette's vision for the future is anything but ordinary.

Form School, which has been a year in the making, is located on Dublin's Grattan Street and aims to offer a stylish alternative to the regular personal training studios and gyms clustered around the area.

And, as well as being able to brag that they've already had the Irish rugby team in to train with them.

"Both myself and Gordon have practiced Reformer Pilates for a long time and have done it throughout our careers," explains Aoife.

"At Form School we focus on Reformer Pilates, Ballet Barre and Yoga classes that bring a new concept of health and fitness to men and women. It's so amazing for toning and posture," Aoife adds. "There's a reason all the Victoria's Secret models do it!"

Both she and Gordon were determined to create a space that clients would look forward to visiting, much like they do when choosing a restaurant or pub.

"Gordon is involved with The Exchequer [a trendy gastropub in Dublin 2] and so much thought went into getting the best chefs and creating the right aesthetic, and we wondered why the same way of thinking never goes into a workout space."

The couple teamed up with Gild and Cage, a husband and wife design duo, to bring their vision to life and the result ("a kind of industrial New York feel with really quirky, unusual touches") also reflects Aoife's artistic background — in fact much of her own artwork adorns the walls.

"Both myself and Gordon are really into art and I've been immersed in such an artistic, creative world through modelling that I wanted to create a place where I could workout in style. So many gyms are so clinical; it makes working out feel like a chore."

And how do the couple, who married in 2012, feel about working together so closely?

"Gordon is still playing professional rugby but when he's not training or playing he's working with me.





**ON FORM** — The studio in Aoife's brand new venture, Form School and (left) she strikes a leggy pose during a modelling photoshoot

The transition from husband and wife into business partners has been really good because we've always had the same vision and we work really well together. There haven't been any big bust ups yet," she jokes.

The 30-year-old had enjoyed a full-time modelling career for 14 years, one which has been showing no signs of slowing down, so why make the transition from fashion to fitness now?

"Modelling can be a short-lived career so I'm really proud that I was able to do it for that long," says Aoife.

"I love modelling and it's an amazing industry to work in, but for me it's always been a business. It's not a social life and it's hard work, and if you forget that you can ruin your career."

And it's this switched-on attitude and ability to see the bigger picture that has undoubtedly influenced Aoife's plans for the future. "I want to bring all my knowledge to women and give style talks and advice on how to dress to build their confidence.

"We'll also be bringing the best nutritionists Gordon's had access to over the years to our clients, so they won't just be coming to us for exercise."

But there's one area of her life that Aoife's determined to keep private.

"You won't see me posing for selfies in a bikini and putting them on Twitter," she laughs. "I'm really private like that. I'm not even on Facebook!"

So, have the busy couple set aside any time for themselves over the Christmas break?

"It's my favourite time of year but with the new business I've been very busy, so I haven't even had time to buy presents," she reveals. "But I'm really looking forward to taking a few days off and spending it with my family. I have two little nephews so that brings back the fun side of Christmas for everyone."

And she's just as relaxed when it comes to her diet over the break.

"I believe in everything in moderation, so for me it's all about sensible eating and eating as clean as possible.

"I don't buy into restrictive diets and think that a good, balanced diet combined with exercise is enough. People are curious and women want to know what I eat as a model. But there's no secret and I'm happy to share that."

For more information on Form School, visit [www.formschool.ie](http://www.formschool.ie)