What prompted you to increase your fitness? Fitness has naturally been a part of my life because I have always loved physical activity. I started riding when I was six and have spent much of my life either riding or planning to ride. I played team sports like field hockey, softball and volleyball. I have always liked to jog, like, play tennis, ski and cycle. In my 20’s while working full-time, in addition to riding and teaching in the evenings and on weekends, I was running 50-60 and sprint triathlons. In April 2007, I ran the Paris Marathon in France with my sister who made me stronger. It’s great to have a specific workout that helps me ride better.

Fitness routine: In 2007 I made dressage training my full-time job and my fitness pursuits shifted significantly. My primary resistance training exercises from riding 8-10 horses per day, 5 days per week. If we are not showing, I try to take Sundays and Mondays off, and on those days I usually make room for working out, typically something mildly cardiovascular, like an hour power walk in 1/2 hr jog or a combination of the two. During the week I aim for at least 20-30 additional minutes of walking or jogging. My husband is a fitness enthusiast and has been known to do a variety of exercises from yoga to boxing to running 50-60 and sprint triathlons. I have borrowed some of his methods and I now do a 10 minute morning stretching/weight routine, and on a weekend day when I have more time, I will follow her DVD or a riding video. This takes less than 10 minutes, but it helps to wake me up and get me moving. I also do some stretching exercises for my 10 minute morning stretching/weight routine, and on a weekend day when I have more time, I will follow her DVD for a full workout.

I keep my riding activities balanced with other fitness to help prevent injuries and keep me energized. If I go too long without a non-riding workout, I tend to wake up stiff and have less energy throughout the day. And, like it or not, riding 8-10 horses per day can get very tiring. So I don’t use as much when riding, like my shoulders and quads, and I also need to do some stretching. This takes less than 10 minutes, but it helps to wake me up and get me moving. I also do some stretching exercises for my 10 minute morning stretching/weight routine, and on a weekend day when I have more time, I will follow her DVD for a full workout.

Benefits for riding: Staying fit for riding is mandatory – you can’t expect your horse to carry you if you can’t carry yourself. Its also important to keep your body strong so that you can remain focused on your riding form. Staying fit can help you to avoid injuries and keep you in the ring. 

Favorite healthy food: I am not a dessert girl, sweets don’t ever do it for me the way something savory does. My favorite indulgence is a slice of organic nine grain bread with olive oil and fresh garlic and salt and pepper, topped in the oven broker for a few minutes. And usually not just one slice. Hence the need for extra workouts...!