

A Life in the Day: Anthony Gordon

A model-scout for Premier, Anthony Gordon's top finds include Gabriella Calthorpe and Meghan Collison. Aged 30, he lives in north London with his wife, the dancer Amy Bailey

Depending on the kind of jet lag I have, I wake around 7.30 and drink a cup of warm water with lemon. I immediately exercise for half an hour, using the mantel as a ballet barre. I was a dancer for 10 years, but my muscles still long to flop back to their natural state.

I like to dress neat — jeans, turtlenecks, biker boots. When I can't find something I want to wear, I go into a panic. My clothes are all hung up and I line my shoes up in the exact same spot every day. My wife is less tidy and, funnily enough, we've had to have a talk. It's an aesthetic thing. Mess distresses me. I get joy walking into my bedroom and seeing it's clean and organised.

I just love beauty in everything — in furniture, in clothing, in nature. I grew up in a small town in Canada with six sisters, all raised by a single mom. She put me in touch with my feminine side, matching shoes to my belt, all that stuff. I remember as a child being dazzled by her beauty. My sisters are pretty, but my mom is captivating, and that's the extra something you look for in models.

I eat breakfast on the way out: a protein drink or nut bar. And I carry organic apples and bags of chopped carrots. I'm constantly snacking.

Saturday is a great day for scouting and I try to be at a major shopping centre somewhere in the UK by 10am.

If I'm going abroad the routine is the same. I've got packing down to a T — I don't even take a washbag. I have the smallest camera, a tiny phone, my BlackBerry and my business cards, because you never know when you're going to see someone. I was buying fruit near where I live when out of the corner of my eye I saw Heidi Rock, who's now one of our top models.

You have to assess people really quickly: their age, their height, their bone structure. The ideal age is 16. The last thing you want is to say, "Hi, I'm a model scout", then realise they're not right. Nobody's ever turned me down. Why would they? I'm offering a great opportunity that's theirs for the taking.

When I got to the National Ballet School of Canada a doctor measured my body from my spine to my toes. And that physical scrutiny has helped me as a scout, because there are similar physical requirements. I can spot a girl with an eating disorder just by the way she holds herself. You need to be tall, but not too tall, and naturally thin, because that's what the designers want. If they were

asking for curvier girls, I'd be scouting them. Generally, beauty is about a kind of symmetry of the face and limbs, but beyond that it's impossible to define.

Fashion is a form of entertainment, like music and theatre. It shouldn't be taken so seriously that you look at someone beautiful and feel badly about yourself. When I see beauty, I'm inspired. In nine months I've brought in seven girls and three guys. I discovered Lisa Winkler at a dance class in Toronto. At 15 she was already 5ft 11in. When I approached her she thought I was insane because at school they called her Skeletor. She ended up as the Gucci Envy girl.

Whenever I spot someone special in the street I get an intense physical sensation. My heart beats very fast and I get real nervous. I'm hoping, first, that they'll understand their potential and, second, that they're not with someone else. We reckon anyone over 16 with serious talent in the UK has been scouted three times.

Big money is involved. We don't tend to get excited over bookings that are less than £10,000 a day. Parts of the world are wellsprings for talent, and the Czech Republic is one of them. The girls there are beautiful and tall and healthy. Russia and Brazil are the same. In Panama it's the opposite. The mix of American and mestizo Indian has resulted in a lot of short girls with big bottoms.

The last thing I want to do when I'm scouting is sit in a cafe. I tend to stand on a street corner eating a Subway while people go by. The downside to the job is that I can end up walking round an empty shopping centre in Cardiff all day, dodging the rain. Wherever I am in the world, I talk to Amy six times a day. We've been married 10 years and we're a real team. But when we eat out, I'm so busy looking around me I barely make eye contact. She understands that scouting is about aesthetics — it's not personal.

If I haven't found anyone, I usually give up around 8pm and head home.

I love double-decker buses and I always sit in the top front left-hand seat, because it has the best view of the street. If I see someone I'll leap off and race after them.

It's important to me to carry on supporting our very young models, so I do lots of e-mails and phone calls and texting at night. I'm a BlackBerry addict. We don't own a TV but we might see a movie, which is real relaxation because I can't scout in the dark — though I did find Whitney Coble walking into a movie theatre. Home is very minimal — no clutter ever, because I can't stand it. I've been accused of being a control freak, so I'm trying to ease up — I've resisted colour-coding the books, though I'd like to.

Amy and I are both night birds, a hangover from dancing. We're rarely in bed before midnight. I used to have nightmares, always about my sisters being in trouble, but after sorting out my diet they stopped. Boy, do I love to sleep. It's got to be my greatest luxury.

Interview by Caroline Scott. Portrait by Michael Grieve

[Contact our advertising team](#) for advertising and sponsorship in Times Online, The Times and The Sunday Times. Search globrix.com to buy or rent UK property.

© Copyright 2008 Times Newspapers Ltd.

This service is provided on Times Newspapers' [standard Terms and Conditions](#). Please read our [Privacy Policy](#). To inquire about a licence to reproduce material from Times Online, The Times or The Sunday Times, click [here](#). This website is published by a member of the News International Group. News International Limited, 1 Virginia St, London E98 1XY, is the holding company for the News International group and is registered in England No 81701. VAT number GB 243 8054 69.