

Written by John Crumlish  
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International Gymnast Online's annual series of holiday-themed features concludes with this update from three-time Egyptian Olympian Sherine El Zeiny, who, despite an injury that hindered her at this fall's world championships in Montreal, celebrated another successful year in her lengthy career.

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"Putting the competitions of 2017 aside, one of the best feelings I had was reaching my best physical form in all my athletic career," said El Zeiny, who was born in the Netherlands and trains there at SV Pax Haarlemmermeer under coaches **Patrick Kiens** and **Daymon Montaigne-Jones**



El Zeiny, pictured at the 2004 Junior European Championships in Amsterdam, began her international career as a member of the Dutch team.

El Zeiny, who will turn 27 on February 23, said the highlights of her year were winning her first Egyptian national all-around title and gamely finishing qualifications at Worlds on an injured knee.

"In March I participated in the Egyptian nationals for the first time since I started competing for Egypt, and won the all-around gold as well as helped win the team gold with my new club, Wadi Degla," said El Zeiny, whose training partners at SV Pax Haarlemmermeer include Dutch star **Eythora Thorsdottir**

. "It felt really nice performing in front of a home crowd and having everyone cheering for me without even knowing them or seeing them before."

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El Zeiny finished 36th all-around in qualifications in Montreal, where a knee injury contributed to her two falls on balance beam. Although her performance there was less than ideal, she said the overall experience was meaningful.

"The most satisfying result for me was being ranked 20th all-around at worlds after three apparatus and knowing I had a very big chance of making the all-around final if I hadn't injured my knee before the last event," she said. "I am also very proud of being number 22 in the world on uneven bars with a score of 13.533, even with a bad landing."

Aiming for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, El Zeiny will enjoy a brief training break to ring in the new year.

"I usually celebrate New Year's in Egypt with my family because we get five days or a week off from training, depending on the competition schedule," El Zeiny told IG. "But since I have already been to Egypt last month due to my injury, I am staying in Holland this year and I am planning on spending New Year's Eve with my parents. We usually watch a show on the French channel TV 5 and then go out to watch the fireworks, since fireworks are one of the things I really love. Maybe my teammates and I will meet up after the fireworks."