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# When Exercise Becomes Everything

DOES THE THOUGHT OF NOT BEING ABLE TO EXERCISE SCARE YOU TO DEATH? HOW WOULD YOU COPE? WOULD YOU GAIN WEIGHT? DOES THIS FEAR DRIVE YOU TO EXERCISE EVEN WHEN YOU REALLY NEED TO REST AND RECOVER? HAS EXERCISING BECOME EVERYTHING?

By Jill Edmonds

**F**or many exercise enthusiasts it's a fine line between a healthy passion to be fit and obsession. For us, exercise is not just about being fit and maintaining a healthy weight, it has become a means to relax and unwind and a chance to challenge ourselves physically.

What happens if your ability to exercise is threatened by unexpected injury or change in lifestyle? What would you do? How would you cope?

When faced with a restriction or a limitation to your daily exercise regime, two signature responses often surface.

The first, which often occurs initially, is what I call the 'all or nothing' response. This response means throwing in the towel and

giving up on exercise. Often what I see is that these people then let go of their clean-eating plan and throw all their discipline to the wind, letting themselves eat whatever they like - and they gain weight.

A client of mine was a committed athlete. She had been training for marathons for years and running was her passion. It was nothing for her to throw on a pair of runners and clock up 20-25km in the blink of an eye. But she developed osteitis pubis, a condition whereby her pelvis was inflamed from the constant rubbing of running.

She was told to stop running, full-stop, end of story. For a committed and diligent athlete, this was a bitter pill to take. Her response to this prognosis was "if I

can't exercise, I'll just eat." So she did. She gained a good 10-15 kilos and struggled to lose weight from that point on.

Her approach was very black and white. Have you noticed yourself taking this 'all or nothing' response in your life when you have been faced with a restriction or limitation?

So where does the thinking go that drives us from being highly diligent, focused exercise enthusiasts to someone who eats everything in sight and doesn't seem to care any more about looking and feeling good? Is there not a middle ground mentality that we can develop and adhere to?

Another client of mine came to me the moment she got injured. She had injured

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her back, training at the gym, and was advised to do no weight training for six weeks. The level of injury meant that core stability and breathing were really all that could be focused on during that time. This client was very much into body sculpting and weight training was her first love! She was aware that she needed to think differently about herself, her body, training and eating if she was going to give herself the opportunity to get truly well and strong again without gaining weight in the process.

She knew that despairing and giving up was not the way she wanted to cope with this challenge of injury. She knew there had to be another way to cope. She just didn't know what it was.

Both these clients I took through what I call my 'middle ground' mindset response to setbacks.

**Step 1** is to ask yourself what you can do differently that will help you to gain the overall results that you want to while you are limited.

**Step 2** is to allow your mind to open to ideas and possibilities that will assist you to get ahead in the short and long term whilst honouring your momentary step back. You will not gain weight with this mentality as you find a way to keep moving forward that assists your recovery and helps you to get well overall.

**Step 3** is to embrace the setback rather than fight it and use the break to relax and return to your training refreshed and ready to take it to greater heights.

As a result of thinking differently about her setback, my first client embraced a new way of exercising that worked well for her and was able to curb her eating. She is now in the process of losing the weight she gained seven years ago. My second client was able to take control of her eating and found that, as a result of the rest period, she naturally did not feel like overeating. As a result, she did not gain weight during her recovery and is now back training.

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Both clients took a 'middle ground' approach and as a result one started to lose weight and the other did not gain weight at all.

It is possible to transform your mindset to one which can work for you and not against you.

When you are put in a situation of not being able to exercise and train like normal you don't have to worry about gaining weight. You will not lose control or lose your sanity because you can cope with disaster.

If life throws you a curve-ball, be willing to not completely throw in the towel. Make wise and sane choices and you will recover, not put on weight and ultimately look and feel great for life. ☉

Joanne M Prior is Director of 'Think Yourself... Successful.' Through a step-by-step process of looking at mindset, eating and weight loss, Joanne's clients are provided with the confidence, skills and abilities to never battle with food and weight gain again. For further information about Joanne's work, please visit her at [www.joanneprior.com](http://www.joanneprior.com) or email her at [jo@joanneprior.com](mailto:jo@joanneprior.com).



**“YOU CAN COPE WITH DISASTER.”**