



# How important is **YOUR FITNESS?**

DO YOU EVER EXERCISE, EVEN WHEN YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD PROBABLY BE RECOVERING? JOANNE PRIOR EXPLORES WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FITNESS BECOMES TOO IMPORTANT.

**FOR MANY EXERCISE ENTHUSIASTS** it is a fine line between a healthy passion to be fit and well and an obsession to be lean, trim and taught. For many of us exercise is not just about being healthy and maintaining a healthy weight; it has become 'time to ourselves', a means to relax and unwind, and a chance to challenge ourselves physically to see what we can achieve. So, our daily exercise actually meets many needs beyond just the obvious health benefits.

What I have noticed in my work with men and women and their quest for weight management, is that if faced with a barrier to their daily exercise regime, two typical responses often emerge.

The first, which often occurs initially, is what I call the 'all or nothing' response. The 'all or nothing' response would be akin to someone throwing up their arms in metaphorical despair and saying 'That's it. I can't exercise. I give up.' Often what happens then, is they 'let go' in their eating, throw all their discipline to the wind, eat whatever they like and gain weight.

A client of mine, for example, was a committed athlete. She had been marathon training for years; running was her passion. It was nothing for her to throw on a pair of runners and clock up 20 to 25kms in a blink of an eye. But she developed osteitis pubis, which is a condition where her pelvis was inflamed from the constant 'rubbing' of running. She was told she had to stop running. Full-stop. End of story. For a committed and diligent athlete this was a bitter pill to swallow, and her response to this prognosis was 'If I can't exercise I'll just eat'.



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So she did. She gained a good 10 to 15kg and struggled to lose weight from that point on.

Another client of mine came to me the moment she got injured. She had injured her back during training 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 this six weeks. This client was into body sculpting and weight training was her first love; but she was aware that she needed to think differently about herself, her body, training and eating if she was going to recover and regain her strength again, and without gaining weight in the process.

She knew she could be 'all or nothing' in her mentality because all her training up until that point encompassed the attitude that if it wasn't intense and full on every workout, then it just wasn't 'good enough'. She knew that throwing her hands up and giving up on her goals was not the way she wanted to cope with this injury and the challenges it brought with it; she knew there had to be another way to cope. She just didn't know what it was!

I introduced both these clients to what I call a 'middle ground' mindset response to their setback. And this method of response is one that you can adapt in your own life, to those situations where you may feel tempted to give up or give in to adversity or a challenge.

### Step 1

Ask yourself 'What can I do differently here that will help me to gain my end goal, even though right now I am experiencing a limitation?'

### Step 2

Open your mind to ideas and possibilities that will assist you to get ahead in the short and long term, while still honouring the momentary step back and the processes you need to adopt to recover. For example, with this mentality you would find a way to keep exercising which will complement your recovery; you would adjust your eating in accordance with your body's needs; and as such, you will not feel fearful of gaining weight.

### Step 3

Embrace the setback. There are always silver linings; for example, one of the benefits to taking a break from your usual routine is that

you 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 she was able to curb her eating and 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 her forced rest and lack of training she did not feel like over-eating. As a result she did not gain weight during her recovery and is now back and training well.

Both clients took on this 'middle ground' approach and, as a result, one began to lose the weight she wanted to, and the other avoided the weight gain she didn't want. So, when you find yourself in a situation of not being able to exercise like you might usually do, don't worry! Instead, adapt a 'middle ground' mindset and you will continue to make wise choices that will ensure you fully recover and, ultimately, look and feel great for life.

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**Master** Joanne's mission is to help people get their minds and emotions around 'how to' lose weight successfully. Through a step-by-step process of looking at mindset and how to apply new learning around self, eating and weight Joanne's clients are provided with the confidence, skills and abilities to end the battle with food and weight. She is director of Think Yourself... Successful, author of the *Think Yourself Thin* eBook and a contributing author to Australia's leading health and fitness magazines. For further information contact Joanne by visiting [www.joanneprior.com](http://www.joanneprior.com)

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