



The lifestyle choices I've made

Heading into the silly season it's the time of year we all get so incredibly busy. With all of our work functions, bbq's, parties and catch-ups with friends and family, it can mean that looking after your health & fitness can literally be the last thing on your mind. Because we feel so rushed and overwhelmed it's very easy to be tempted to "take some time off and relax" and inadvertently undo all of that hard work you've put in over this year. It can also mean that because you're so busy and tired that you feel like you're the only person struggling to keep up your health and fitness goals (*after all no-one else struggles with those negative voices, impulses to overeat or tells themselves "they can eat that because they deserve time to enjoy it and relax"....- do they?*)

So this month, rather than writing an article on how to survive the party season (if you are after more motivation or ideas jump on the website and read some of our previous articles), I thought it would be more appropriate to share with you some of the changes that I have made in my life and have maintained. Hopefully it will give you the understanding that you're not alone in your struggles and it will give you the extra push to realise that being fit and healthy is about the lifestyle choices you make every day!

So here's the key to the skeleton closet and an insight into some of the 'more interesting choices' I used to make...

Holding back because what if.... What if I like... couldn't complete it...Ugh I'd be such a failure!

That was literally the thought process I used to have and I know many other people do as well. When I was in such a negative headspace, it really is no wonder that I could never make any breakthroughs, lose weight, keep off what I lost or even see dramatic improvements in my fitness. It really is no wonder that I never reached those goals because I always held myself back.

For me my "holding back attitude" was particularly evident each time that I exercised by myself, with a trainer or even in a group fitness class (I'm a cycle/spin freak!) I would always hold something back in reserve at these sessions because "what would happen if"... the instructor threw a big hill at me at the end and I couldn't complete it? What would happen if my PT made me do a push-up and I couldn't do it in correct technique, what would happen if we had to work together as a team at boot camp and I didn't have anything left and then I'd let the team down... what if....



It really took me a long time to look at how detrimental this attitude was and how much I was actually sabotaging my own success. I was always holding something back in reserve so I could come out a "winner" if something was thrown at me, but in reality I was always finishing up the workout/class and feeling unsatisfied. I had more in that tank, I could have pushed myself that little bit harder, I could have found out what I was actually capable of if I hadn't of held back (because believe me when I say you are more capable than you think you are!) So at the end of the session, I'd go home and sit on the couch feeling a bit deflated, eat my Tim Tams and swear that at the next session I wasn't going to hold anything back – I was going to give EVERYTHING! However you know how the story turns out right, at the next class I would hold back because what if...





Thankfully logic kicked in and I realised that it wasn't a really smart way to deal with life. Instead of asking myself what if in a negative, I flipped it around. What if I actually did give everything right from the start of the session? What would happen if I came out all guns blaring and gave it everything...? My answer was extremely complex and took years to develop... you ready for it?

I'll deal with it IF and WHEN it happens!

So with my new attitude I went to that cycle class and went flat out. I powered up the hills, sprinted, jumped and hovered like it was my last ever class. My legs were like jelly, my lungs on fire and then wham, the instructor threw in a horrible and evil hill at the end but you know what... I survived it (*and I didn't even fall off my stationary bike – yay me!*) For the first time ever I walked out of the class knowing that I gave it everything I had.....I felt great AND I'd pushed myself so much more than I thought I was capable of!

So here's the thing guys, you can give everything you've got and when you think you've got nothing left you will ALWAYS be able to find more and get through it. Yes you might have to take some of the resistance off your bike, yes you may have to slow your pace down, and yes you may have to do girly push-ups... but seriously WHO CARES! You gave it absolutely everything you had. No one can accuse you for not giving it everything, no one can accuse you of slacking off or letting the team down if you've given it your all! Instead you come out the champion that everyone admires because you give your all every time!

Also speaking from experience I know that it's so much easier to back off at the end if you're exhausted, than having to try and work double time at the end to "make up that last bit" because you held back. If you hold back, you're only ripping yourself off and got yourself to blame when you don't get those results you really want! So I encourage you, what do you really have to lose if you give it everything?

I'm going to Conquer the World (as long as it only takes a month – otherwise I give up): oh I'm so guilty of



having an all or nothing attitude in the past! I would spend hours upon hours working out my nutrition and exercise plan. I would draw up spreadsheets, diagrams, plot out how much weight each week I was going to lose (*if only I had of actually used all that time and energy for real rather than on "planning what I was going to do"*). I'd then go workout at the gym 7 days a week, eat no carbs, drink weight loss shakes and eat lettuce leaves. I'd be so incredibly diligent.... for about 2 weeks.

For 2 weeks I would be amazing and have the discipline of an athlete, but as we all know and you have probably been there and done it yourself, it just isn't maintainable. By the end of the 2 weeks I would be physically exhausted, mentally fatigued and HUNGRY! So at the end of the stint I would literally throw in the towel because at that point I didn't care anymore. One little slip up or "guilty pleasure" would end up blowing out for a month and then lead into two months and everything that I'd worked so hard for came undone and then compounded because now I was too tired and exhausted to care or get back on the bandwagon.

It's such a ridiculous cycle when you can take a step back and look at it logically. I was literally setting myself up to fail and feel guilty all of the time! How on earth could I expect to get great results (particularly when my body was so hungry, stressed, not recovering from all the exercise etc), whilst still keeping up with work and that doesn't even touch on my family & social commitments. It is just not realistic to juggle all of those





activities. At some point something has to give and time and time again it was my health & fitness that suffered!

So instead of planning for world domination, now I try to plan week by week and day by day. I'm not fanatical about what I plan and I no longer deprive myself of foods or treats. It really is simple and easy to follow and stick to for the long term. It now means that if I know I'm having a big weekend or social function – I'll train harder to burn the extra calories, or I'll eat less during the week. Now I try to always plan my exercise and have it locked in (either locked into my diary or I make an appointment so I have to keep it) because whenever I say "I'll do it tomorrow" it NEVER happens! I only have healthy food in the house so I'm not tempted to pig out when I'm feeling sooky, tired or really hungry. I've also recruited my friends and family to help me out so I'm accountable but also so they can help me too.

For me, it was about changing from all or nothing to focusing instead on the choices that I could consistently make to help me lead a fitter and healthier lifestyle.

They're having some so I can to: Hehe this one still makes me giggle and I'm sure particularly the chicks will get this one. You go to a social function / bbq and there are the plates of canapés being passed around. They smell absolutely delicious and look so scrumptious. You NEEEEEEED one! So you have one and it just disappeared way too quickly! You keep chatting away with your group, even though you're secretly eyeing where the waiter is going with that tray of yummy foods. He comes around again and everyone else grabs one. Even though you know that you probably don't need it (you're not hungry, you know that you're not going to have a chance to exercise this weekend and burn off the extra calories that you've already eaten) but you look at the group and they've all got one so you decide that you can to. After all they had one, why should you deprive yourself?

sigh if only it was that easy hey! However for some strange reason my brain never went the next step to compute that even though they're having another one, the 'extra one' I'm eating is still extra calories that will end up on my hips! Also just because they're having an 'extra one' I can pretty much guarantee that they weren't going to be rocking up at my house at 6am the next day to go for a run with me to burn off all the extra crap I ate that night!

For me the light bulb moment was when I caught my hand in the freddo frog jar going for my third one because my host (who was gorgeous, skinny and size 6) was going for her fifth chockie. I was amazed at myself. I was literally allowing myself to have another chocolate, not because I wanted it - it was simply because it tasted good and she had another one... so why can't I too! I was actually really full, I was content, I'd already had a chockie to finish off the night – so why on earth did I need to overindulge just because someone else was?



(And please remember this article is about the choices I was making, not what I was scoffing down or the quantities. Really 3 Freddo Frogs isn't extremely overindulgent. For me it was about eating the Freddo's when I didn't really want them it was only because they were there in front of me. As you know I'm an advocate of having whatever you want – just remember that there are consequences and you need to be realistic with your expectations.)





Being the victim: Yup been here and done this too. I can't begin to tell you the amount of temper tantrums I've had in my head as to why it is "so unfair that I'm not super skinny and shouldn't ever have to exercise". If I had a dollar for every time I muttered "why can't I have that" or "why shouldn't I have that" or "I shouldn't have to" seriously, I'd be retired and snowboarding right now. I was a constant victim of my circumstances. It wasn't until I actually told myself to "suck it up princess" that I eventually got over it.

The conversation went something like this "Amanda you're not a super model, you're not a size 4 and if you even begin to look at that block of chocolate you go into a calorie overload! So quite simply put, stop whinging about it and find a way that you can be fit and healthy and keep enjoying the things that you love." There was actually a lot more swearing and whinging in the 'harden up conversation' but hey you get the drift.

I'm sorry to tell you this guys but we are all victims to our genetics. We can't alter them, tailor them or change them so we have to learn to live with what we've got. Thankfully I worked out early on that rather than whinge about it I actually need to do something about it – because if I don't, then I'm the only one to blame!

I'll start that when I'm fit: Ahh this was such a stumbling block for me. I couldn't enlist in a boot camp or



Group Training course because I wasn't a super ex-army athlete who could run sub 2hour marathons! What if I joined and I was the slowest? What if I looked silly? What if.... (*Are you getting a sense of déjàvu here? It's a very similar attitude to holding something back!*) So rather than joining, instead I would start out my exercise regime but of course I would never get fit enough to join anything. There were a couple of reasons for it: 1) I didn't enjoy exercising on my own which is why I was unfit in the first place. So realistically how on earth could I ever expect to stick with anything long enough to become "fit" and 2) even when I

started to get fit it was never "fit enough". I always had to wait until that next thing (I can do 10 push-ups, or walk/jog x distance). I always kept setting my sights further and further away because again I had to be Mrs Olympia before I could join.

Thankfully I had someone give me a good dose of reality and pointed out that what I was doing (waiting to get fit) was obviously not working because I'd been "trying" to do it for a long time now and I was still no closer. So in the end I bit the bullet and I joined. You know what happened when I started, I wasn't the person with the least fitness and I wasn't even the slowest. But here is where my biggest revelation came – no one would actually care if I was. People were so supportive and encouraging about me giving it a go and when it came to the tough stuff, they were too busy in their own struggles and pain to be worried about what I was doing.

... And my list could go on and on! This was just a sample of some of the barriers I kept putting up for myself on a daily basis. For me, once I had acknowledged those negative thoughts and made the choice to change them I was able to consistently get great results and maintain my new lifestyle. I hope from this article that you can see that it's the choices that we make EVERY DAY that determine if we are successful or not.

So today are you going to choose to be a winner or a whiner? It's up to you – you are the only one that can make that decision! Don't wait for it to happen – MAKE IT HAPPEN!

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