

Run Your Race: Remembering What's Good for Your Body

We've all done stupid things—things that starkly opposed our better judgment, things that may have been fun and exciting at the time—but in the end simply weren't worth it. And most have us have even done stupid things at the gym, like me recently.

It was a cold and dreary day, not unlike the settings of many an Edgar Allan Poe story. Anyway, I don't know what the temperature was exactly, but to this summer-loving, snow-admiring-but-avoiding Texas girl, it felt like negative infinity. And the workout of the day at our CrossFit gym contained just under a mile of running.

"I'm cold-natured and a big baby when it comes to wintry weather. I will just row inside where it's warm instead of running in the drizzle and wind," reasoned wise Diana.

"But no one else is rowing inside; no one else has any complaints. Better suck it up, buttercup," argued stubborn, stup—ahem—less wise Diana.

You can probably guess which voice was overruled. Yes indeed: that of Wise Diana. Rather than listen to reason, I chose to subject myself to the elements and run like Eric Little in *Chariots of Fire* (not pacing myself by taking it easier than normal was the second dumbest thing I did during that workout).

Consequently, I have had to replace coffee with copious amounts of herbal tea and apple cider-infused water. I have also been blowing my nose so often that it now resembles Rudolph's, taking a week's worth of vitamins A, C and D each day, and sniffing Peppermint oil like there's no tomorrow.

And I've been unable to exercise with the rest of my CrossFit

and Yoga peeps because, given the aforementioned runny nose situation, many movements, such as burpees, push-ups, and downward-facing dogs, are just downright messy. Instead of doing fun workouts with a fun group, I've been doing dumbbell and barbell work all by my lonesome in a dark, dank dungeon (OK, so I've still been in the general vicinity of everyone else, but in my head I'm confined inside a very un-fun isolation chamber).

Perhaps I'm being hard on myself, but I think I need to be. It can be very easy for us to throw caution to the wind when we're faced with a challenge that others are diving headlong into, a challenge that to our peers may not seem that difficult at all (in fact, no one else seemed hesitant to run outside on Friday—one fellow athlete even wore shorts and a t-shirt).

Just because we *want* to attempt something doesn't mean we *should*. In ignoring my inner voice of reason, I violated a well-known, oft-preached exercise commandment:

"Thou shalt listen to thine body."

"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered" (Prov. 28:26).

The next time I'm faced with a never-before-attempted challenge at the gym (running in super cold temps was for me!), I plan to ask myself the questions below, and I encourage you to do the same. Whether it's lifting heavier weights, facing an advanced movement that once seemed impossible or simply exercising for the first time in decades, I believe they will be helpful, and at the very least save you from the sniffles and a coffee-less couple of days!

1. What has prevented me from doing this before?
2. Have I been gradually working toward this so that I am well prepared to try today?
3. What are the advantages of doing this today?

4. What are the disadvantages?
5. Would I encourage someone else in a similar position to do this?
6. Have I asked a professional for their opinion on whether I should do this?
7. Have I prayed about it?

Regarding No. 7, I do believe that even our workouts should be prayed over. First Corinthians 10:31 tells us that “Therefore, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God.”

Lifting weights, running marathons, doing CrossFit, Yoga, Pilates, etc. should all be taken before the Lord in prayer as we ask Him to grant us wisdom on how best to train and fuel our bodies, including when to take it back a notch and rest. Failing to quiet ourselves before our Father and seek His counsel can set us up for all sorts of ailments, both physical and spiritual.

Physically, we can become run down, depressed or sick like I currently am. And spiritually, we run the risk of letting exercise, food, what have you, become an idol in our lives. Any time you feel that you absolutely cannot and will not be satisfied until you go to the gym, tackle that weight, eat that treat, or deprive yourself of a meal, ask yourself this eighth question:

Have I placed (fill in the blank) before God and made it an idol in my life?

If the answer is yes, know that the Lord longs to hear from you and is more than able to help you reprioritize your life with Christ at the top, reorganize your actions with prayer at the center, and refresh your soul with godly wisdom flowing through it.

“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, and I will deliver him and honor him” (Psalms

91:15).

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