



Confessions of a Personal Trainer... Trainers are Human Too

I'm always astounded when others are surprised that I eat (gasp!) French fries. Mouths will drop open, puzzled looks will come my way, and some will actually say what everyone is thinking, "What kind of personal trainer are you – eating FRIES???" When given the choice at a restaurant, I will often have salad (because I like salad) but sometimes I feel like French fries – so why shouldn't I enjoy them from time to time?



Yes, it is true, I am a personal trainer but that doesn't exclude me from the temptations and vices that plague us all. It seems that many people are under the false notion that personal trainers are rare specimens that only eat perfectly sized portions of fruits, veggies, and lean meats (with a cup of skim milk) and work out every day (from 5 to 7am AND from 9 to 11pm).

In fact, just recently I was accused by someone at the gym of 'not being human' while I was executing one of my favorite Swiss ball exercises. Surprise! I was not born with the ability to do that exercise. I had to build my strength and improve my balance just like anybody else. I worked at it by doing a series of progressions over a long period of time and was eventually able to perform the exercise at hand.

While there may be some superhuman trainers out there, I (and many other trainers, I'm sure) am far from perfect.

I eat well, most of the time, and I like to exercise. I enjoy feeling healthy and helping others to feel the same way but that does not mean that I am ALWAYS a picture-perfect example of fitness. Or maybe that does make me an ideal picture – a realistic and wholesome idea of what health really is...

Rather than striving for the impossible and encouraging others to wish for the same by following a very strict diet or spending hours a day on the treadmill, I try to lead a more balanced lifestyle – one that includes the occasional piece of cheesecake or hitting the snooze button from time to time.

I believe that one of the most important things we can model as trainers is balance. Clients need to know that health is more about the big picture – missing the odd workout or indulging in your favourite food is not the end of the world. Some suggest following the 90-10 rule as a guideline whereby the goal is to eat well and exercise faithfully 90% of the time. To me, this is a much more realistic and healthy approach which also allows good habits to be developed and maintained over the long term and helps to avoid the inevitable failure that comes with the pursuit of perfection.

So go ahead, order the fries from time to time, live a little. Life is supposed to be fun – even for personal trainers.

Kathryn McKenzie B.H.Kin, B.Ed

Kathryn McKenzie is a Personal Trainer and Sport Conditioning Specialist who owns Surefire Fitness in Winnipeg, MB. She enjoys playing a variety of sports and helping others to feel healthy and strong. She also dreams of the day when chocolate is considered an actual food group.

Learn more about her and Surefire Fitness at www.surefirefitness.ca