
The Punisher

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My spinning instructor got me thinking this morning while we were panting away, scrambling up a level 10 hill, grinding the pedals, and chanting positive mantras to motivate our muscles (well, the chanting was inside my own head anyway). As we climbed our way to the top he said with labored breathing, “too many cookies I guess...” In his typical joking manner, he smirked and hollered at us to go to a Level 11 (if we had it in us!), all images or thoughts of cookies dancing away.

But I couldn't stop thinking about what he had said and how so often we will eat something we know is unhealthy and then punish ourselves either mentally or physically for having done so. We'll call it the cardio confessional that many people like to engage in after their holiday feasts or binges. Hour long treadmill workouts and mental beatings, “I shouldn't have done that! You have absolutely no willpower...” You fill in the blanks. I know you have had similar thoughts.

So we punish ourselves AFTER the fact, but what about the punishing that's taking place DURING the act? Are we not punishing our bodies when we eat the foods which we know are not nourishing? When we look at the nutrition facts, and right there at the top of the ingredients list we see “PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED VEGETABLE OIL” or “HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP” and we choose to eat it anyway, are we not saying to our bodies, “you're not worth taking care of” ?

Partially hydrogenated means trans fats, and trans fats mean lower good cholesterol (HDL), higher bad cholesterol (LDL), and greater risk for heart disease. Less than 1% of your total calories should come from trans fats (that's like 2g of a 2000 calorie diet). How much are you consuming?

Why not stop the punishing all together, before AND after, and remember why you are eating in the first place. Sure, you want to lose weight to look great in your clothes and be happy about what you see in the mirror, but is your HEALTH not the most important aspect of the changes you've made? Think about it.

I've created my own little blacklist of items to avoid so you don't have to worry about punishing yourselves. I'd like you to make a list of the reasons you started making wiser nutrition choices and exercising more. Are the majority of the reasons related to your outer self? Food for thought.

(Look at the nutrition labels to identify whether these items contain trans fats!)

Breads and Bread Products

Biscuits made from mix

Biscuits/rolls made from refrigerated dough

Coating mixes for fish, meat and poultry

Stuffing mixes

Taco shells

White and wheat flour breads

Breakfast Foods

Cinnamon buns
Danishes
Doughnuts
Muffins
Pastries/bakery items with frosting
Toaster tarts/strudels

Candy

Caramels
Chocolates
Fruit chews
Seasonal candy
Taffy-like candy

Desserts

Cake sprinkles, decorations
Baking chips
Cakes and cake mixes
Cakes/cupcakes with icing
Ice cream cakes
Pie crusts
Pound cake
Ready-to-spread frosting
Refrigerated cookie dough