

# Mind/Body – History

written by Holly

March 18, 2005

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The history that provides the explanation for why I've chosen the approach I have.

(Of interest to people who have fought or are fighting the weight battle).

I was a thin kid, and very active. Plus, my mother lived on a diet and believed in small portions for everyone, so I never had to think about my weight until I got into nursing school. Then, along with my classmates, I ate a lot of fast food, and for the first time in my life, I put on a few pounds. At that point, I went from 118 lbs to 125 lbs.. I'm 5'6 1/2", so it was probably the first time I ever didn't look like a stick, but my jeans got too tight, so I didn't see it that way. I exercised and cut down on what I ate, the weight came off, and I stopped worrying.

When I got married, I married someone who nearly fainted at what I thought were appropriate portions. I learned to cook more, and since more was there, I ate more. And gained weight – but only a little, and I was working, and a fellow nurse was selling this liquid. Bought a couple of cans, lost twenty pounds in a very short time, stopped worrying.

Got pregnant, and all of a sudden gave myself the green light to eat anything. And shot up to 215 lbs by the end of the pregnancy. I was sure this weight would just fall off after I had the baby. It didn't.

I weighed 170 lbs six weeks later when I returned to the hospital, and I was horrified with myself. So I bought a weight machine, and five days a week I lifted weights, and

exercised. Cut myself down to 600 calories a day. Got back down to 118 lbs. and maintained that weight, only to find out that I was pregnant again. 20 months after the birth of my first child, I had my second. I hadn't let myself gain much weight with the second pregnancy, and six hours after delivery, I was back in my larger jeans. I was stupidly proud of this. Never mind that my minimal weight gain probably hadn't been great for the second baby.

I went back to work almost immediately, and for a few years, the weight was fine. Dieting would work for a while, but there were problems – I did Adkins until I was ready to kill for a piece of bread, and until I developed PVCs and intermittent atrial flutters (at the age of 25), and realized that eating that way was genuinely unhealthy. Low-fat didn't work fast enough to suit me. But I'd exercise, and the weight would come off, so I figured I was fine.

Then I left my first husband. And suddenly, I just did not care. I ate whatever I wanted, blew off exercise, and was up to 170 lbs in record time.

This time to lose the weight, I joined a hardcore bodybuilders' gym, and instead of the little weight machine in my office, I was suddenly surrounded by men working with massive amounts of weight. I was the only woman there most of the time – and I was comparing what I was doing to what the men around me were doing.

I got a little crazy. By the time I was down to 120 lbs, I was benching 125 lbs. Reasonable for a woman. But – HA! – I wrapped my knees, worked my way up to 425 lbs of iron doing leg presses on the incline sled, was doing over 500lbs on seated calf raises, doing a hundred roman chair sit-ups at a pop, and splits and other stretches as cool downs. (I wrote SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL based on this period in my life – the workout Dayne did was mine.)

But I was being stupid with the barbells. I was doing 40 lb. preacher curls and 50 lb reverse incline bench flyes, and one day I hurt myself. Left arm had a sudden sharp pain in the elbow. I grabbed my favorite orthopedist at work, showed him the arm, explained how I'd hurt it, and he told me I was inches away from ripping the tendon from the bone because I'd overbuilt my bicep before the tendon strength could catch up.

Having ripped a tendon from the bone when I was in 7th grade (sartorius muscle, doing a split in gym), I knew how bad that was. I took a break from the weights to wait for the injury to heal. Only it didn't. I still have pain in that arm, and I can no longer fully extend it.

My weight started back up again. And this time, between aerobics (which I loathe), running (which hurt my back and my knees), vegan eating (lost a bunch of weight, but got depressed following my second miscarriage and quit following the rigid dietary restriction), I couldn't find something I could stick to.

I've gained 70 lbs since 1999. It's already coming off with the "stop eating when you're 80% full" rule, but as I noted before, I'm not interested in being thin. I want to be strong and healthy. That means exercise. I liked my body when I was working out with weights – I liked what I could do, and the confidence I felt. But I'm not willing to hurt myself with weights again. Nor running, which doesn't build strength. And as noted, I loathe aerobics.

The combat conditioning course looks like it will fit my needs.

Baseline, I can do 35 Hindu squats, 5 Hindu pushups, and no bridges, though I did get close.

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