

## **A Perfectly UN-Healthy Week... And How to Handle It**

This is The TD Fitness Podcast with Coach T., episode number 79.

Welcome to The TD Fitness Podcast, giving you ways to live a healthy lifestyle, without giving up the things that make life worth living, and now your host, certified health coach and personal trainer, Coach T..

Hey, what's up, guys? Coach T. here from TD Fitness, and this week, the topic is a perfectly unhealthy week and how to handle it. On the podcast, I talk a lot about what to do and what not to do when it comes to health and fitness, but what about when we don't have many options on healthy choices, and this could be because of travel, or busy schedules, or just a lack of availability of healthy food options, or better yet, what about when we do have choices, and they're just harder to make? It's harder to make those good, healthy choices because of added stress in our lives or whatever, and we just choose poorly. It can be difficult to accept sometimes, even when we know about it beforehand and even when we have enough time to plan for it.

What I'm talking about here, I'm going to actually give you a personal example, a glimpse into my life over the past couple of weeks, and I want to give you some of my thought process, some things I did poorly, what I did well, and what I chose to accept along the lines of unhealthy options. Many of you may remember that just a few weeks ago, I completed a long distance triathlon. That was a significant achievement for me, and always is when I do these things, and I feel pretty good about myself, but there are also a couple of other feelings that come along with the race completion, if you will. I think those feelings are perfectly normal, but I want to highlight them because we don't always think about them, and we don't always recognize these feelings when they come about. They're not just feelings associated with long races.

You could feel this way after you accomplish any of your healthy goals that you've maybe been working towards for a little while, and I'm talking about the feeling of entitlement and feeling like you deserve a reward for all of the hard work that you've put in. After a big fitness event like this, I usually take a week off. That's a week without exercise, and that's intended to give my body some time to recover because as a trainer, I know that rest and recovery are important. Even when you feel like you're ready to get back into your workout routine, for example, the body is actually still recovering and it needs that time, so I typically take a week off from exercise. Because I worked so hard and exerted so much effort during the race, I think I burned about, I don't know, 5,000 calories or so over the course of that seven and a half hours.

I really feel like I can take a few days to relax on my diet, right? It's not so bad if I eat those foods that are high in calories. After all, I just burned 5,000 calories, so it's easy to fall into that trap of, "I'm entitled to take a break now," but you have to be careful with that mentality, particularly if you're not used to stepping away from your regimen for a period of time and if you have a history of kind of falling off the wagon, if you will, because before you know it, that week off can turn into two weeks, and then it can turn into a month, and it can just snowball from there, so it's important to know yourself in that instance. Just like I advise you to be intentional with the breaks, the breaks away from exercise and breaks away from strict nutrition, I think those things are important, but you do have to keep those breaks limited so that they don't become the majority of your habit patterns, because if you're breaking, if you're taking a break from healthy living or break from healthy nutrition, and

break from exercise more than you're actually eating healthy and more than you're actually exercising, then you no longer have a healthy lifestyle, right? You're more unhealthy than you are healthy because we are what we repeatedly do, so it's important to keep that into perspective.

That's just one thing to remember. Now, I know myself well enough to know that although my body did need a physical break from the toll I put over it, over the course of that eight hours or so of straight exercise, I knew that I needed some recovery help too, so I did get a 900-minute full body massage. I scheduled that before, well before the race, and during that week ... I did that massage after the race and a couple of days after the race, and I stayed pretty consistent with stretching during that week as well. Again, that's all part of the recovery process.

While I didn't exercise after the race for that week, that was intentional, but I did indeed take care of my body. That's something that I felt like I did a good job at, but here's what else was going on that week. I had to pack up just about half of everything that we own in our house, and get it loaded onto a big U-haul truck, the largest truck that you can rent, the 26-footer, and then drive that truck about 1,000 miles to my new military assignment, and then start a new job. Now, you know I have talked about the impacts of stress on maintaining healthy habits, right? Well, that week was pretty stressful, so you can imagine that it was a lot harder to eat well, so I didn't try to be perfect.

I did get in some quality healthy foods when I could, but I also wanted to take that time, that last week there with the family to enjoy some of our more indulgent and favorite meals with the family during that last week there, before literally being separated from them for about a six-week period, so that was intentional that I did that. Now, I mentioned that I drove that big U-haul truck with about seven or 8,000 pounds of stuff in the back for about 1,000 miles. I didn't mention yet that I also towed a vehicle trailer behind that truck, and that trailer had my wife's car on it. Now, I've often wondered what it would be like to be a truck driver. I mean, you see them on the highway all the time, and honestly, there's a part of me that is very intrigued by that lifestyle.

I don't mind driving long distances at all. In fact, I enjoy it. It gives me a lot of time to think, and I'm somewhat of an introvert anyway, but although, I wouldn't say that me driving that big truck and the trailer that I was towing, which I believe measured just under about 50 feet in length, I won't say that that's like driving an 18-wheeler, but to me, it absolutely was, and I found myself having to think about things that we just don't usually have to consider when we're driving our normal cars or trucks around, right? I mean, things like looking for places to stop and eat or get gas where you can pull straight in, and then pull straight out without having a backup in a congested area around a bunch of people who aren't used to driving around big trucks like that, or checking the height of the overhangs at the gas pumps now that I'm in a truck that required 12 feet of vertical clearance, or constantly checking your mirrors just to make sure that there was adequate clearance. I even got a flat tire on the ...

I had a flat tire on the trailer at one point, so having to deal with that was also a concern for me. Now, all told though, I will say that that three-day and two-night trip went pretty well, so that was a blessing, but here's the thing. I'm sitting for most of the day while driving that big truck, and as you can imagine, the places that are conducive to big trucks or larger vehicles like that aren't usually the places with the healthiest eating options, okay? I mean, at one point, when I was waiting, I think for about two hours for the spare trailer tire to be delivered, my meal consisted of, I'm not kidding you, two hotdogs, a bag of potato chips, a candy bar and a Coke. Now, could I have chosen something a little bit healthier at that gas station?

Absolutely. Did I want to? Absolutely not, because that was my comfort food at the time. That's just what I wanted, right? Not the healthiest week to say the least, but what did I do well? Well, I did try to stay hydrated throughout the trip, and I did a pretty good job of that, and I tried not to go overboard on the unhealthy food, despite the two hotdog, chips and the candy bar meal, right? Then, I get to my destination, and literally, I'm living out of a hotel.

In fact, I'm recording this right now from temporary living, a hotel basically, and I don't have the option to cook here in the room. I'm working slightly longer days as I learned this new job, and I'm separated from my family at the moment. Again, all of these are stressors, maybe minor stresses, but things that can make it hard to stay healthy, especially when you're someone who does well with routines, and I am someone who does well with routines. I need stability. I need a little bit of prediction in my life in order to, just to kind of feel at ease, right?

When I'm in a regular routine, it's a lot easier to practice healthy habits, but when there are a lot of unknowns or when I have yet to establish a routine, then I have a harder time with it, and that's something that I know about myself, so I have to work to stay healthy in that regard. What am I doing to counter that? Well, now that the trip itself is over, I am starting to build a new routine. I'm up early at the same time every morning, which starts with going to bed by the same time every night, right? I've been getting about seven hours of sleep and waking up before my alarm goes off at 5:30 each morning.

I plan about 30 to 60 minutes of time in the morning to exercise or stretch. I try to stay hydrated throughout the day. I'm back to fasting for 14 hours through the night and into the next morning. The only thing that I'm still struggling with on the nutrition side of the house is really finding a convenient and relatively quick option for a healthy lunch. There were a lot of options like that up in the D.C. area where I moved from, but for now, I'm just kind of doing what I can.

I know that the next couple of months are still going to be a little bit stressful as we unpack all of the things that we've moved to the new residence, and as we meet new friends and get a new routine going, and get the little girls settled, but right now, I have to create and establish my routine of healthy habits. I can't wait to get settled in the job and at home before starting those habits. That's kind of been a snapshot of the past a couple of weeks for me. How would I sum all of this up, and what's the bottom line? Well, I think the bottom line is that there will be times in your life where trying to maintain what you normally do for health and fitness can really just cause more stress when you're not able to maintain those habits, and it becomes counterproductive at that point.

What you have to do is recognize that first of all and accept it, okay, and understand that it's only going to be temporary. Yes, I was pretty unhealthy for that two-week period and I'm still getting back to the point where I can kind of find my groove, but outside of that two weeks, there are 50 other weeks in the year where I can strive to do well, so it's all about perspective. In the grand scheme of things, are two weeks really going to set you back? The answer is no, unless you let two weeks turn into 20 weeks, okay? Then, the second thing I'd tell you is that when you don't have a stable routine established in your life because of some kind of transition, whether it's a move, a new job, a new family, unforeseen events, if you wait for things to settle down before you start your healthy habits again, then you may be waiting for a very long time, and your health will suffer throughout that time, so use your healthy habits like exercise, like adequate rest and like good eating, good nutrition to actually start that stable routine.

What you'll find is that you can cope with the stresses of life a lot better, and you'll be in a much better place with regards to your health. Those are the two takeaways I had for you. As

always, I appreciate you guys lending me your ear or if you're watching this, I appreciate your views here. You can find the show notes for this episode at [tdfitness.net/079](http://tdfitness.net/079). Again, thank you for listening.

I wish you all a very blessed week, and I look forward to bring in more information to you next week. Have a good one. Coach T., out.