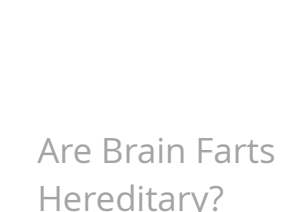


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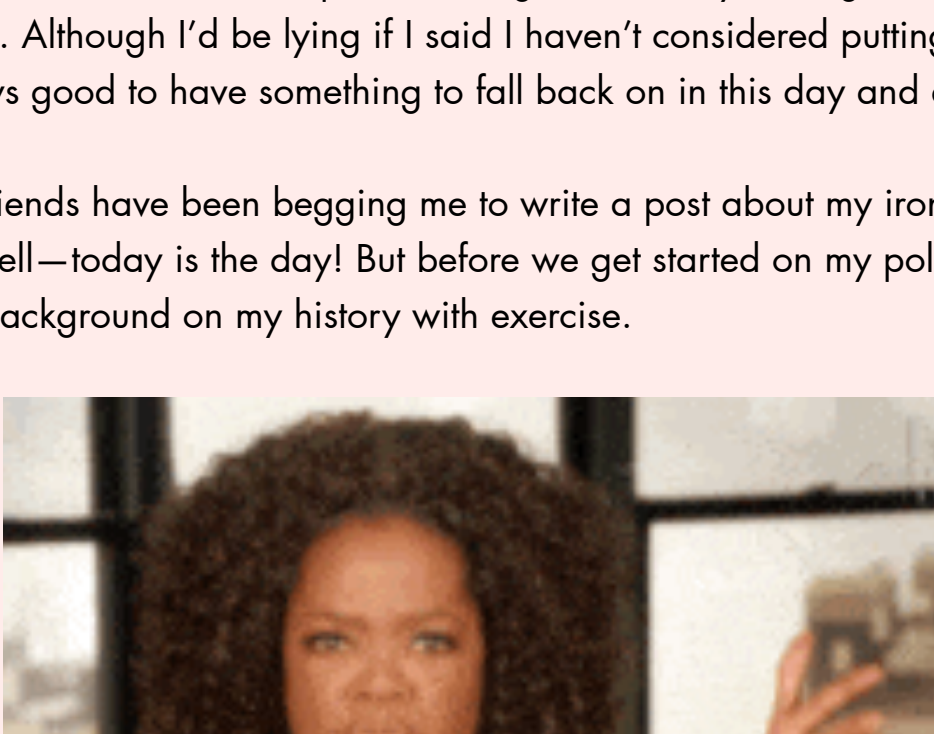
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Big Girls Don't Cry...

My apologies, as I know we've been failing at our weekly blog posts lately. Fernanda has been busy with family visiting from Costa Rica, and I've been distracted by a BOY—plus my best friend from Germany has been in town. But we're officially back in business now, and we promise not to leave you all hanging again; I'm sure it's been hard to go on without us!

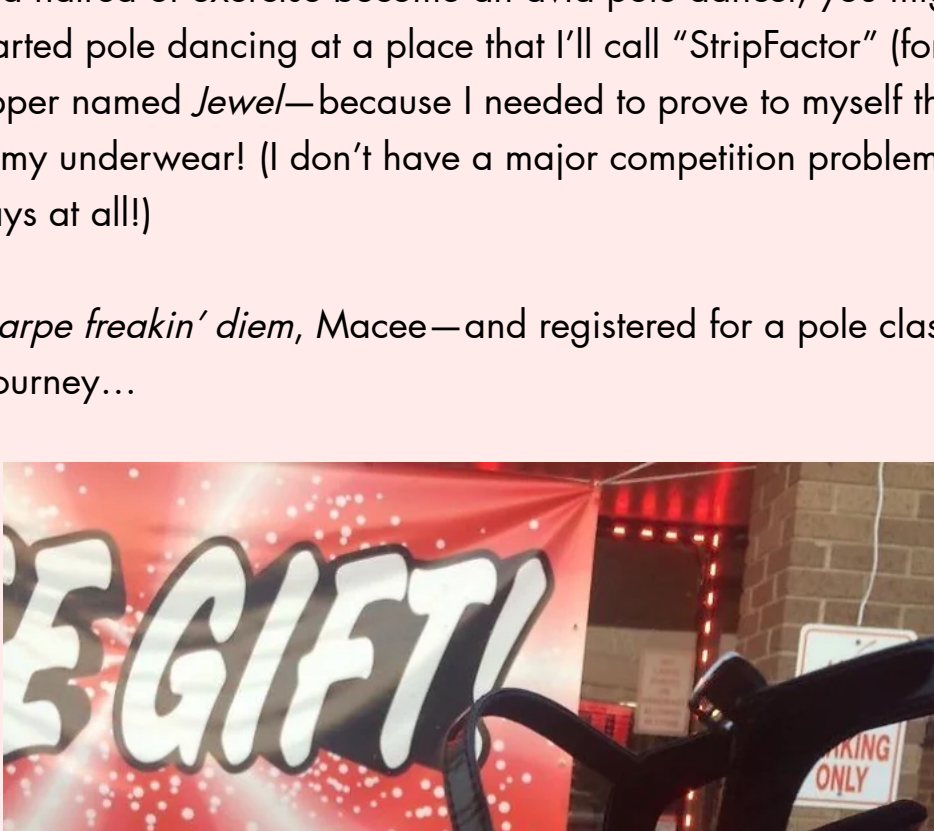


For those of you who don't know... I started pole dancing about two years ago—for fun and exercise, not at a strip club for money. Although I'd be lying if I said I haven't considered putting my newfound skills to monetary use. (It's always good to have something to fall back on in this day and age... am I right?)

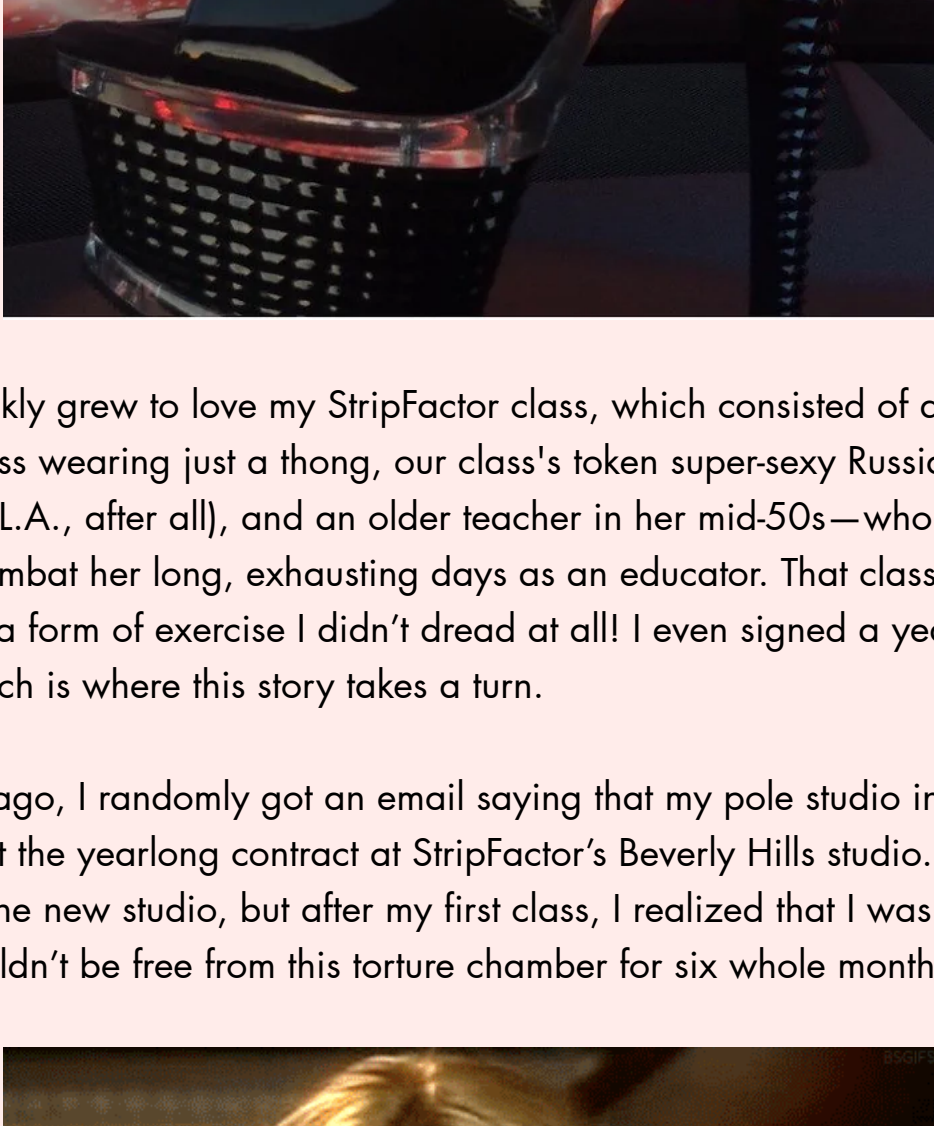
Anyway, a few of my friends have been begging me to write a post about my ironic experiences at pole. So I figured—what the hell—today is the day! But before we get started on my pole class, I feel like I should give you a little background on my history with exercise.



To be completely honest...working out is my own personal version of hell! There, I said it. You see, I can only fake that I enjoy physical activity for so long, because the truth is... I hate running! And I hate that I hate running. Runners just seem like superior people, and I wish I could join their ranks, but unfortunately, my disdain for that level of physical exertion won't allow it. Just in case you're wondering... SPORTS BRAS—they're not comfortable. And I have to wear two. Yes, TWO! I have to double-bag it so right that I can barely breathe, just to keep these babies from bouncing me off the treadmill.



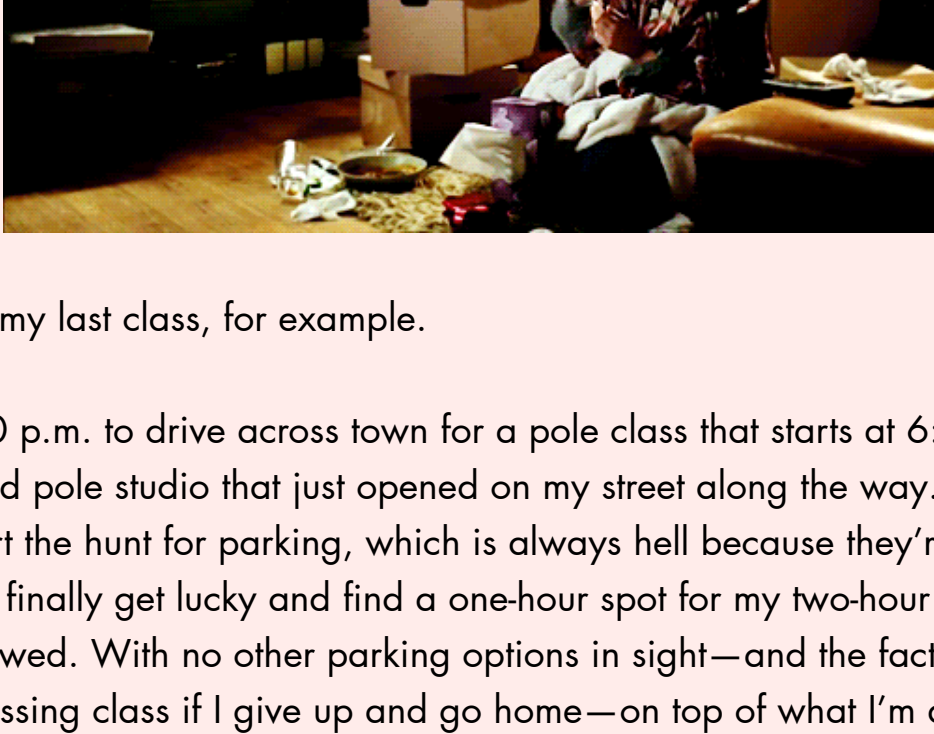
Expectations versus real life.



Every time I look around at the sea of fitness enthusiasts that are always at the L.A. gyms in their little matching workout outfits—with their hair and makeup perfectly done as if they're going to prom—I want to slap them! I mean, do they not realize how awful this is? They must be aliens. I don't understand how these bitches exercise for hours with nothing more than a light sweat glistening across their completely stationary chests. While I look like something that just crawled out of a slasher movie—gasping for air, with mascara smeared all over my face—and I don't give a shit! Judge me all you want, aliens. I'm just trying to survive the daily torture chamber that is the gym!

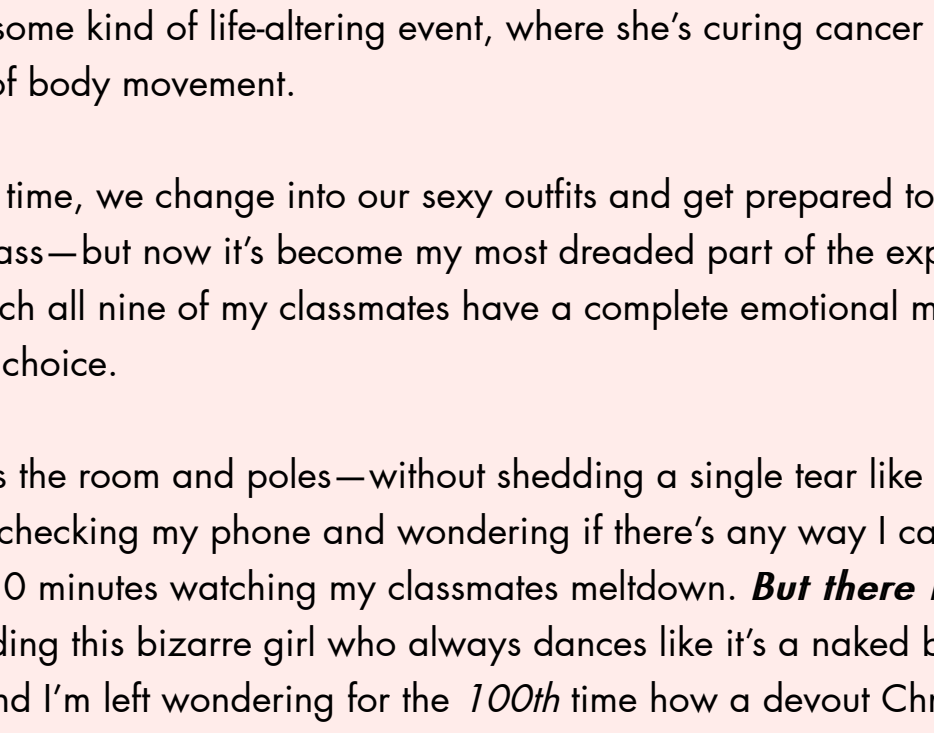
So how does a girl with a hatred of exercise become an avid pole dancer, you might ask? Well, to put it bluntly... a breakup. I started pole dancing at a place that I'll call "StripFactor" (for anonymity's sake) after being dumped for a stripper named *Jewel*—because I needed to prove to myself that I, too, can be sexy and flip upside down in my underwear! (I don't have a major competition problem that dates all the way back to my preschool days at all!)

Anyway, so I thought: *Carpe freakin' diem*, Macee—and registered for a pole class! Buying outfits and shoes like these for the journey...



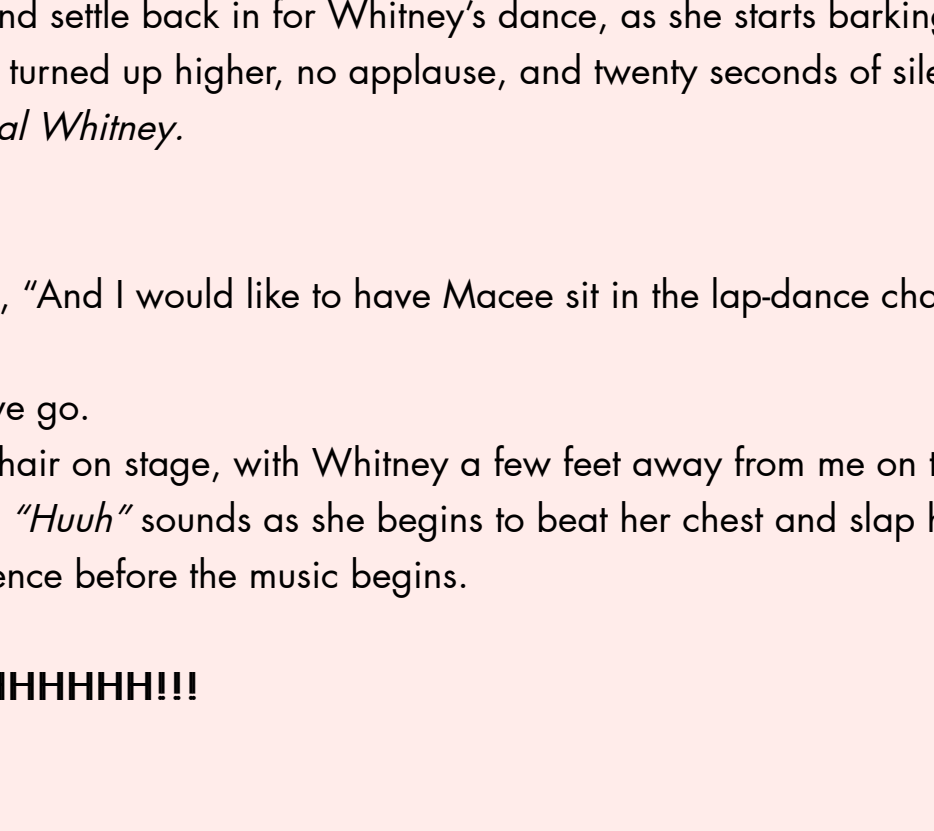
But to my surprise, I quickly grew to love my StripFactor class, which consisted of a fabulous plus-sized girl who always came to class wearing just a thong, our class's token super-sexy Russian, a young, pretty actress (Surprise! This is L.A., after all), and an older teacher in her mid-50s—who danced with us as a form of stress relief to combat her long, exhausting days as an educator. That class became my workout heaven! Finally, I found a form of exercise I didn't dread at all! I even signed a yearlong contract to keep dancing with them—which is where this story takes a turn.

One night a few weeks ago, I randomly got an email saying that my pole studio in Encino was closing, and I'd have to finish out the yearlong contract at StripFactor's Beverly Hills studio. I tried to keep an open mind about dancing at the new studio, but after my first class, I realized that I was once again trapped in workout hell—and I wouldn't be free from this torture chamber for six whole months!



All of the girls in my new class look like they just crawled out of the vegan version of *The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. But to make matters worse, instead of using class time as a form of exercise and a chance to bump and grind in their underwear like my old class did, these girls view "stripper time" as an intense form of emotional release, complete with a full-blown tsunami of tears.

So now, every Monday and Wednesday night, I make the hour-long trek to Beverly Hills during rush hour to attend a two-hour sobbing therapy session. Give me a break!



Let me take you through my last class, for example.

I leave my house at 5:00 p.m. to drive across town for a pole class that starts at 6:00, passing a brand-new, conveniently located pole studio that just opened on my street along the way. After fighting traffic for a solid 45 minutes, I start the hunt for parking, which is always hell because they're building a new metro line right by the studio. I finally get lucky and find a one-hour spot for my two-hour class and cross my fingers that I don't get towed. With no other parking options in sight—and the fact that StripFactor charges me a \$20 penalty for missing class if I give up and go home—on top of what I'm already paying monthly, I decide that risking a ticket is worth it out of principle alone.

I then make the three-block trek to the studio, whilst lugging my heavy bag of pole clothes, shoes, and gear, and take a seat next to a group of girls chatting about their latest chemical peels. Class finally begins, and I awkwardly strip down to my underwear, taking my place on the mat. The class starts with a pep talk about discovering our "erotic creatures" and tapping into our feminine beauty—which I don't exactly buy into like the rest of the class. Don't get me wrong—I'm all about artistic expression, whether it's in 9-inch stripper heels or not. But these girls take things to a whole new level that I simply can not comprehend while we go through the hour-long workout, complete with many more words of feminine encouragement and some freestyle improv group dancing as the floor workout comes to an end.

Then it's on to pole time. I'm making a mental note that I've survived the first hour and only have one more to go, when I discover that my *least favorite* teacher-in-training has joined the class—and I know that the evening has just taken a hard left turn.

Let's call this teacher-in-training... *Whitney*.

Whitney is clearly starving for attention—and she's the kind of eco-friendly hipster who, I'm sure, reuses the same square of hemp toilet paper at least three times before flushing it down the john. Worst of all, she treats pole class like it's some kind of life-altering event, where she's curing cancer and saving the world all through her unique use of body movement.

After 30 minutes of pole time, we change into our sexy outfits and get prepared to solo dance. This used to be my favorite part of class—but now it's become my most dreaded part of the experience, as I now have to sit in rotation and watch all nine of my classmates have a complete emotional meltdown while they dance to a song of their choice.

I go first, grinding across the room and poles—without shedding a single tear like a normal human. Then I settle into the audience, checking my phone and wondering if there's any way I can sneak out before I have to spend the next 30 minutes watching my classmates meltdown. **But there isn't.** So I watch as the other girls dance—including this bizarre girl who always dances like it's a naked ballet to Christian rock music... while crying. And I'm left wondering for the 100th time how a devout Christian like herself ended up choosing pole dancing as a half-naked form of expression. Just doesn't seem to fit...

Just as class is about to end, and I start gathering my things to make a beeline for the door, Whitney announces that she's decided she would like to dance before we leave.

Fuck Whitney. It's already 8:10 p.m. I have shit to do, And I'm in 1 hour parking!!

So I put my bag down and settle back in for Whitney's dance, as she starts barking off instructions about how she wants the lights turned up higher, no applause, and twenty seconds of silence BEFORE they start playing her music. *Typical Whitney.* Just...typical.

Then I hear Whitney say, "And I would like to have Macee sit in the lap-dance chair."

Fuck. My. Life. Here we go. So I sit in the giant armchair on stage, with Whitney a few feet away from me on the poles, and she starts making these animalistic "*Huuh*" sounds as she begins to beat her chest and slap her body during the 20 seconds of requested silence before the music begins.

HHHHHHHHUUUUUUHHHHHHH!!!

Hu uh... Hu uh!

I'm sitting there uncomfortably thinking: *Please, Whitney, for the love of God, keep your dancing to the poles and leave me alone over here to watch in peace. But of course—no such luck!*

As Whitney's music begins, she slowly starts to peel off her clothing and makes her way over to me in the lap-dance chair. She mounts me as I sit, still grunting with her animal noises two inches from my face—and that's when I see the tears starting to build.

Then Whitney openly weeps on me as she continues to dance, eventually sliding down me onto the floor, where she sobs hysterically on the ground for the entire rest of the song.

As she lays on the ground right below my feet—hysterically crying and making sounds of emotional release eerily similar to what one might hear when a cat is dying—I'm just sitting there thinking:

Do I just leave her there?
Do I try to comfort this half-naked, crying stranger?

Shit like this didn't go down in my old pole class! **I DON'T KNOW HOW TO REACT!** I'm not up to speed on the protocol.

But none-the-less, Whitney weeping on me has become my regular Monday night occurrence.

I guess I just have a face that looks like it should be cried on...

And I'll be enduring this every Monday and Wednesday from now until mid July!

Tags: exerciseveganspole dancingstripperfitnesscryingBeverly Hills

Fitness



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