



## Lose Weight Safely - In Ballet Shoes and Pointe Shoes



"Ballet is anatomically incorrect". Quote from - William Forsythe, in a wonderful movie about his company.

I had a weight problem when I was a teenager. At the National Ballet School of Canada we were weighed once a week. Our weight was posted publicly in the lunch room, from week to week. On Fridays when my class got weighed, we skipped

breakfast but drank a lot of coffee - so as to stimulate urination, water loss, and loss of weight. So we went into ballet class at 9:00 with no nutrition, and dehydrated. Not recommended for a good lifestyle..

The funny thing is, I had no weight problem before I went to the school. I was so thin as a child that my mother had all kinds of tricks and punishments to make me eat.

Unfortunately at the time, little was known about metabolism, and good diet. I know the school has corrected that now.

The absolutely most incredibly talented dancer in our school at the time also had a weight problem. She was chosen for a solo by a visiting Russian teacher. She lost tons of weight and danced brilliantly. People were riveted when she stepped onto the stage in the school show. Time and space stopped when she danced.

But after he left for Russia she gained weight again. Then a few months later she was supposed to go into the National Ballet Company. She didn't. We heard that she ended up in the hospital with a "tropical disease". Huh? Looking back, I don't believe it. I think she starved herself. Too much. Just my theory.

About a year later I met her on the street. I was going through a "I'll never dance again" period. She was working at a phone company and actually helped me get a job there. (I lasted three months).

After I severed all ties with my school, I mysteriously lost weight. My mother called me "the skull", I was so thin.

A famous ballet story that deals with weight is "Dancing On My Grave" by Gelsey Kirkland. It's a thriller for a ballet bio, very engrossing.

What does this all mean? Firstly, it means our teachers knew little about being thin and being healthy. No one's fault at the time.

But we do now! So how do you fit into that size zero tutu?

I remember an amazing moment after I'd just finished my Cecchetti teacher's exam. My examiner was Margaret Saul, much feared at the time. (and somewhere in her eighties). My exam was the last of the day - and after my exam partner and I left the studio, Ms. Saul came out. She smiled at me and said "You have plump arms - like Karsavina. They make the right line". (Cecchetti's pupil and partner to Nijinsky).

I don't think I heard that correctly for about two weeks. Karsavina? Tamara?

So, it's just a matter of perspective.

And - to the point - fat does not make you fat. Carbohydrates make you fat. Except for Ezekial or some other brand of FLOURLESS bread, forget the bread. "Empty calories" means no nutrition. People who are wheat sensitive or gluten sensitive tend to gain weight and be bloated with fluids. It is easy now to find gluten free and wheat free products.

Proteins, vitamins, and minerals are found in meats, fish, eggs, dairy products, vegetables, legumes, nuts, salads and fruits. Not enough for you? For essential fatty acids, a little flaxseed oil and a little ultra purified fish oil daily supplements your omega 3 intake.

Unfortunately our culture is tuned to the billion dollar diet industry and the processed foods industry. This often leads to the loss of muscle, whereas a healthy diet will help the ballet dancer in building muscle mass.

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