



Fighting fit & breaking down the fat

It is comforting to know that even the healthiest person still succumbs to cravings, and it is particularly encouraging to hear on the eve of swimsuit season. Tiffany Hall, the terrifyingly toned taekwondo black belt who became famous training on *The Biggest Loser*, is on a mission to promote healthy eating. But she is realistic.

“It’s all about not depriving yourself – any sort of deprivation encourages bingeing,” Hall says, admitting she does succumb every now and then to a chocolate binge. “Nothing beats that milk chocolate Cadburys.”

The 28-year-old has just released a new book *Tiffany’s Lighten Up Cookbook* and gushes as she talks about her favourite recipe inside: raspberry fluff slice.

“Every slice is under 30 calories,” she says, before confessing that she likes to “make it naughty” by dipping each slice into melted chocolate or hundreds and thousands.

“You can eat too clean as well,” she says.

Hall is proof that it is possible to have abs of steel without giving up everything, as long as you keep your life in balance.

“The trick is not to get hungry. When you’re hungry it sets you up for a binge.”

It seems Tiffany Hall inherited the healthy gene – both of her parents were devoted athletes, her mother one of the first female taekwondo black belts ever and her father an Olympic Taekwondo coach.

“I was born into this culture of health and fitness,” Hall says. “My parents

were really into health . . . I was blessed to have it, it was a privilege.”

Hall first became a taekwondo instructor at the age of 12 and by the time she was 24 was showing off her athletic prowess on TV as “Angel” in the

reboot of *Gladiators*.

After that show was axed she secured a regular spot on Channel Ten’s *The Circle* and made guest appearances on *The Project*. Then she was lured to *The Biggest Loser*.

It was there that the “Health Ninja” really got noticed.

Hall’s holistic approach to health empowered her contestants to lose weight and also build their self-esteem.

Hall believes people should not be concentrating on their looks and weight but rather focusing on keeping the body functional.

“The only diet I stick to is consistency. Set yourself limits and stay to them,” she says.

“I don’t drink soft drink, I eat naked and I eat three meals and three snacks a day.”

That doesn’t mean Hall eats with no clothes on, she chooses to eat food as fresh and pure as possible – think fresh strawberries with just a swig of balsamic vinegar or brown rice with lean grilled kangaroo.

“It’s not eating anything packaged or processed and trying to cook most of your food yourself . . . Eating naked is not just about looking good, feeling good, it’s also about cancer prevention.”

Hall believes “nude foods” will “harmonise your hormones” and speed up your metabolism while cleansing your body.

Lighten Up is full of simple recipes involving “nude foods” while avoiding trans fats – or unsaturated fats – and sugar.

“Sugar is toxic, trans fat is just the devil,” she says.

Hall substitutes sugar with other sweeteners, such as agave nectar which is derived from the same plant as tequila.

Her recipe for ‘‘delicious’’ meringues with mango and kiwi fruit uses one and a half tablespoons of agave nectar rather than hundreds of grams of castor sugar.

‘‘They’re ninja meringues,’’ she says.

But as the silly season approaches it’s hard for most people to avoid fatty, sugary foods and drinks and Hall is mindful of this.

She warns weight watchers to stick to one or two drinks at Christmas parties rather than getting stuck into the tequila.

‘‘Christmas is fantastic but if you’re going out, watch your alcohol and always go for fatty foods rather than sugary foods.’’

It’s a strange concept, being told by a fitness guru to eat fat, but Hall believes sugary foods are ‘‘the ultimate stealthy enemy’’, far worse than the alternative.

She stresses again that eating should not be about guilt, and if you do ‘‘surrender’’ to the naughty stuff, move on.

‘‘Every meal is a separate event,’’ she says.

Exercise is an integral part of Hall’s life even though she believes a great physique starts in the kitchen.

In *Lighten Up* Hall says 80 per cent of weightloss is attributed to nutrition, with just 20 per cent put down to movement, but she believes exercise is still an important part of any weightloss program.

For beginners, she recommends starting out walking every day and then progressing to jogging and then running.

‘‘The most important thing is movement, for at least 30 minutes per day,’’ she says.

‘‘It’s all about passion and finding the best

fitness for you. For me it’s martial arts because it’s fun and social.’’

Hall does at least three black-belt taekwondo classes a week, three strength classes and fits in running around that.

‘‘I believe exercise is addictive, it stimulates your endorphins.’’

She ensures she is up exercising by 7am each day ‘‘because it makes me feel better, it’s a habit and has become automatic’’ and she actually schedules in exercise appointments in her own diary so she feels obliged to work out.

But for now Hall’s ‘‘real passion’’ has shifted to writing and this cookbook is just the tip of the iceberg.

The journalism graduate has already written two books on weight-loss as well as a novel *White Ninja* and has been commissioned to write three more novels.

That’s what lured her away from the glitz and glam of television.

‘‘[*The Biggest Loser*] conflicted with my publishing schedule and I’m not one to do anything half-hearted.’’

She says the discipline involved in writing is quite different from that needed for her fitness and health regime, but adjusting to that discipline not hard.

‘‘I don’t find it like a job – you can’t be too disciplined with writing, as long as I keep my mind and body healthy it keeps flowing,’’ Hall says.

■ *Tiffany’s Lighten Up Cookbook*. By Tiffany Hall. Hardie Grant. \$29.95.

This ‘food ninja’ warns **Kate Corbett** of the dangers of sweet stuff

“
The only diet I stick to is consistency. Set yourself limits and stay to them . . . Every meal is a separate event.
”



Tiffany Hall shares
some recipes
on page **30-31**