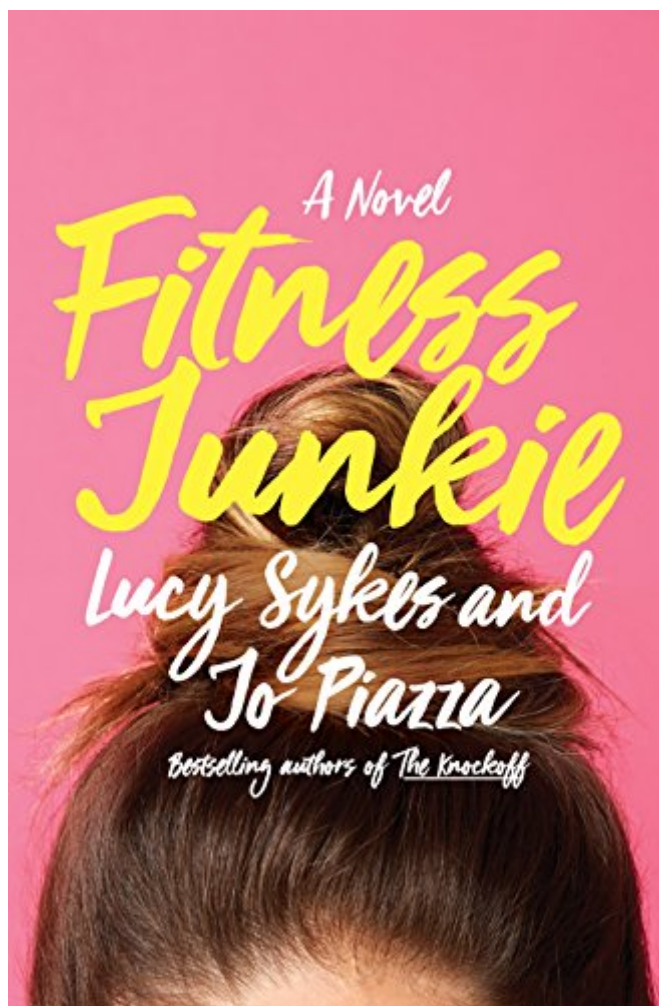




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Fitness Junkie: A Novel



Synopsis

A Good Morning America Summer Must-Read! — From the bestselling authors of *The Knockoff*, an outrageously funny novel about one woman's attempt — through clay diets, naked yoga, green juice, and cultish workout classes — to win back her career, save her best friend, and lose thirty pounds. When Janey Sweet, CEO of a couture wedding dress company, is photographed in the front row of a fashion show eating a bruffin — the delicious lovechild of a brioche and a muffin — her best friend and business partner, Beau, gives her an ultimatum: Lose thirty pounds or lose your job. Sure, Janey has gained some weight since her divorce, and no, her beautifully cut trousers don't fit like they used to, so Janey throws herself headlong into the world of the fitness revolution, signing up for a shockingly expensive workout pass, baring it all for Free the Nipple yoga, sweating through boot camp classes run by Sri Lankan militants and spinning to the screams of a Lycra-clad instructor with rage issues. At a juice shop she meets Jacob, a cute young guy who takes her dumpster-diving outside Whole Foods on their first date. At a shaman's tea ceremony she meets Hugh, a silver fox who holds her hand through an ayahuasca hallucination. And at a secret exercise studio Janey meets Sara Strong, the wildly popular workout guru whose special dance routine has starlets and wealthy women flocking to her for results that seem too good to be true. As Janey eschews delicious carbs, pays thousands of dollars to charlatans, and is harassed by her very own fitness bracelet, she can't help but wonder: Did she really need to lose weight in the first place? A hilarious send-up of the health and wellness industry, *Fitness Junkie* is a glorious romp through the absurd landscape of our weight-obsessed culture.

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Customer Reviews

Fun story, fun characters! You need sixteen words. Here they are. You want a review yet have a minimum word requirement

Janey Sweet is the CEO of B, a high-end bridal boutique catering to the extremely wealthy and extremely starving: no women bigger than a size 4 allowed, as customers or employees. When her longtime best friend Beau, the "B" designer, places Janey on a forced hiatus for the crime of being a size 8, she enters into the world of insane fitness, desperate to win back her childhood friend. Of course, anyone who's ever read a book can see where this is going: Janey sees the error of her ways and the insanity of her world, and comes to her senses. There are the ingredients for a really good book here -- a timely hook (our obsession with fitness and insane fitness trends), sharp writing, and a good sense of humor. Ms. Sykes and Ms. Piazza can write. But this book never really develops, beyond the initial premise. It's a tour through ridiculous fitness trends - abusive spin instructors, dumpster diving behind the Whole Foods, diets of clay, secret invite-only cult-like workout groups, and at the core, a very transparent Gwyneth Paltrow/Tracy Anderson storyline, with Sara Strong, the fitness guru who had a falling out with Kate Wells, the rich privileged actress divorced from a rock star who runs a lifestyle web site called Lovely that promotes insanely expensive fitness and health solutions, including vaginal rejuvenation. Janey gets sucked into their world and discovers - shock! - all is not as it seems. I love celebrity style exposes, satire, and a good "woman sees the error of her ways" storyline. But this one just didn't have the depth that turned it from premise into true story. Everyone, including Janey, is exactly as they appear to be; everything unfolds exactly as predicted, and after a while, reading a series of vignettes about how superficial and crazy our fitness obsession is just gets tiring. So, if you feel like a light read that's well written and taps into our frustration with fitness insanity, this will fit the bill. But it won't deliver anything unique, or particularly nutritious. (Mild spoiler: the happily-ever-after ending is a bit irritating as well, with Mr. Right showing up out of the blue and Janey solving every one of her life's problems, from

professional to personal to physical, in about 3 pages at the end. Like fitness itself, happy endings are better when we work for them.)

This novel is hysterical but much more substantive than I had anticipated. The main character, Janey, is infinitely likeable (although initially a little too willing to believe the best in people, to her detriment). The story mocks the ridiculous lengths people will go to get or stay thin, but the entire book constantly reinforces the idea that it's important to be healthy, not skinny. (After all, meth heads are skinny, not healthy.) Before you begin reading the book, there is a letter from the editor that says that the writers, Lucy Sykes and Jo Piazza, discovered that the ridiculous exercise classes and diets they write about are in fact real. The authors sometimes began to fabricate something outlandish only to find that this exercise or food fad actually exists (which is often painfully hard to believe). The novel begins with Janey's business partner and lifelong friend, Beau, telling her she needs to drop thirty pounds because she's an embarrassment to their brand's supremely expensive wedding dresses for only the thinnest of women. One thing that's wonderful is that Janey has never worried about her weight. She doesn't necessarily pig out, but she eats waffles if she's in the mood and doesn't beat herself up over it (how refreshing!). Because Janey owns only 49 percent of the company, she doesn't see what choice she has but to take the enforced sabbatical and drop the weight. And after all, maybe her tummy has gotten a little rounder than it once was and maybe her forty-year-old chin isn't quite as tight as it had been. The foil to Janey is her girlfriend CJ, who IS obsessed about her weight, and therefore gung ho to try these various ridiculous activities along with her. CJ even obsesses about whether her young twin boys look too chubby for Facebook. (!) So together, they discover a world where women spend outrageous sums of money to be screamed at about how fat and worthless they are. They eat clay. The words "artisanal," "organic," and "journé" are used frequently about everything. This book actually did inspire me to get back into my fitness routine one that costs almost nothing, like going on walks and eating more vegetables. Ivy, Janey, and a few others are likeable and the villains are perfect folks you love to hate. I highly recommend this fun book. It has hints of romance, but you know Janey will be fine on her own, with or without a man (also refreshing!) Thanks so much to Netgalley for the opportunity to review this book.

Unlike the other people who work in fashion, Janey Sweet enjoys eating and she is not afraid to admit it. But when her business partner and best friend, Beau, tells her that she needs to lose weight or she will lose her job, Janey has no choice but to go on a diet and hit all the gyms, yoga classes and juice bars that New York has to offer – including the Free the Nipple Yoga that, as the title implies, is practised topless. Along with old and new friends, Janey embarks on weeks of diets and exercise but at what price? In the meantime, Janey's cousin, Ivy, is having her own problems as she finds herself working for a gym where people pay lots of money to be insulted during the workout. I loved the author's first book, *The Knockoff*, so I was very excited about this new book and I wasn't disappointed. *Fitness Junkie* is a hilarious, charming and terrific read. Some of the yoga and gym classes that Janey attends are ridiculous and seem so unrealistic that I was surprised to find out they really exist. Janey's adventures as she tries class after class made me laugh out loud and I felt for her as throughout the novel she evaluates her relationship with Beau and finally discovers his true character. Janey, her best friend CJ, and her cousin Ivy are likable and honest.

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