

The Grocery Store Gauntlet



By Chris Lytle, Plan Z's VP of Anger Management (and Zola's husband)

Can you run the grocery store gauntlet? Zola and I do it several times a week.

First a little background: British fighting men had a form of corporal punishment in which the accused had to run between two rows of soldiers who whipped and beat him as he passed by. The beatings were severe, and the victims often died as a result. That was called "running the gauntlet."

Isn't it nice that we live in a kinder gentler time?

Or do we?

American grocery stores have rows and rows of soft drinks and processed foods that can kill you. Not kill you right away, of course, but these foods can fatten you, sicken you and ultimately kill you. Processed foods take a huge toll on our bodies. According to Data Check Pro, here are the top ten grocery items in America:

1. Soda

2. Milk
3. Bread
4. Beer
5. Salty snacks
6. Cheese
7. Frozen dinners
8. Cereals
9. Wine
10. Cigarettes

You'd Be Surprised How Many Foods Contain Added Sugar is a New York Times article. Here's an excerpt:

"A team of researchers at the University of North Carolina conducted a detailed survey of the packaged foods and drinks that are purchased in American grocery stores and found that 60 percent of them include some form of added sugar. When they looked at every individual processed food in the store, 68 percent had added sugar. Some of those products are more obvious sugary foods, but not all. The list includes many sauces, soups, fruit juices and even meat products."

See, it's hard to run the grocery store gauntlet. And added sugar is just the beginning. There are foods filled with funny-sounding flavorings, artificial colors, preservatives, soy isolate, soybean oil and much more. None of that is good for you.

Plan Z Dieters know to read labels and avoid the middle aisles of the grocery store. But the temptations don't stop there. In fact, they start the minute you walk in the door.

An online article about grocery store merchandising says, *"Merchandising is the art of staging a store to encourage consumers to purchase more products. Turning over product on the*

shelves is even more important in the grocery environment, as most of the products have a finite shelf life, so how quickly products leave the store can make or break your profits."

Speaking of merchandising, I walked into the grocery store to buy some supplies for a mushroom soup. To get to the produce department I first had to pass the cheese corn and caramel corn popping at the front of the store. That was next to the gelato bar and candy counter. The main part of the store is at the top of the escalator. At the base of the escalator, a merchandiser had placed a small table with nicely wrapped chocolate chip cookies and Rice Krispie Treats. Oh, what childhood memories Rice Krispie treats evoke. I walked right by them, though.

At the top of the escalator, a kindly store employee was passing out samples of orange juice. You're much better off eating an orange than drinking orange juice. Fructose is not good for you. The makeshift juice bar is kitty corner from the real bar which is on the right at the top of the escalator. And all the carts have drink holders, so you can have a beer or a glass of wine or two while you're shopping.

So many tempting things between me and a half pound of mushrooms.

Pay close attention. What do you notice as you walk into your grocery store?

And even if you're not in the grocery store, there are more gauntlets to run. Get off nearly any exit on the Interstate and you'll have to run (drive) the gauntlet of fast food restaurants. And, then, there's the gauntlet you must run just to use the restroom at the place where you fueled your car.



When you're at work, you must run the gauntlet of lunchroom treats or office vending machines.

Forbes Online reported on this recently:

"According to a new study conducted by researchers in the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the food people are eating at work amounts to nearly 1,300 calories a week—70% of which is coming from free, unhealthy food.

The study used data from a U.S. Department of Agriculture survey, which looked at purchases made by 5,000 employees from vending machines or cafeterias, as well as food given for free in the workplace."

Believe me when I tell you no one brings free donuts to work at

Plan Z.

It takes courage not to stop and partake of the all bad foods placed in your path all day long. If not courage, then it takes anger at the fact that ultimately these foods will fatten, sicken and “torture” you slowly. At least the British soldiers got their torture over within minutes.

Courage? Anger? Fear? Food companies see you as a profit center, not as someone to nourish.

Remember the wise words of Mark Hyman, MD.

One more great idea from the grocery store merchandising article:

“Place destination purchases, such as milk, eggs and bread, in the furthest corners of the store. The more products consumers must walk by to get to them, the better the chance for them to purchase additional goods. Always place impulse purchases, such as magazines and candy, near the cash register. As consumers wait to pay for their purchases, these displays may attract them to buy more.”

No kidding? Now you know what they’re trying to do to you. They’re making you run their gauntlet every time you walk in the door. Will you let them succeed?

Stay angry and aware.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris Lyle". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Caramel Sauce

An easy-to-make, low-carb caramel sauce. Wowza!