

Being a comedian is bad for your health

THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL STRESSES OF COMEDY BY JOEL DOMMETT

A comedian's lifestyle takes its toll on the body. It's hard to stay fit, and you can't just head to the gym...

After 11pm, service stations just serve Ginsters pasties. I deserve better than that. My *body* deserves better than that. I stock up on M&S during the day if I know there's a sh*tty service station on my route.

Service stations are so, so bad. You soon realise where the good ones are and you attach yourself to them. Comedians are *obsessed* with service stations. There's a couple of favourites I like: the M20 Oxford one is an absolute blast. The Gloucester service station is almost legendarily good now – it's got a sort of farm shop on-site.

At parties, I surround myself with people who don't expect me to be funny. Otherwise, when people hear you're a comedian they say, "Tell us a joke, then." And I immediately hate those people. You'd be amazed how many people say that, how many people basically want proof that I'm funny. It says a lot about someone. Asking me to tell a joke is an utter waste of a conversation.

My problem is that I try to keep everyone happy. My comedy is about being upbeat and happy, because I am, but that means I make a real conscious effort to spin plates for everyone. When I feel like someone doesn't 'like' it, it's really horrible.

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You should see my star rating on Uber. The amount of effort I put in to be liked by Uber drivers is unbelievable. It's things like that, sometimes caring about random people at the detriment of the people who are close to you, that take their toll on you as a comedian.

A bad gig is always horrible. You're never really prepared for it; you think you are, but it still takes you by surprise. We always think we can deal with any situation, then one day you'll do a gig and nothing connects. You just die so hard up there. The moment you feel confident? That's the moment when you're going to just get absolutely destroyed.

You can 'sense' situations going badly in the pit of your stomach. If it's a big gig I won't be making eye contact with the crowd, but smaller places you can see their faces.

But I'd rather have a bad gig than a 'fine' gig. There's something weirdly cathartic about a bad gig. It's nice to just get it off your back. I don't really have bad ones any more, but there's something quite enjoyable about a room full of people

hating you. A nice sort of feeling. It's quite masochistic.

I do get heckles. I talk quickly, so people rarely get a chance to interject. But once, I had a lady on the second row stand up – which is a bold move – and say, "Look, why don't you just read out the raffle instead?" It was brutal.

Touring is tiring. It interrupts any kind of routine – staying in different places, hanging around the same bunch of people. The solution is to be productive – I write while I'm away. You can't just waste your spare time sitting in your hotel looking at Instagram.

Joel is currently on tour;
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