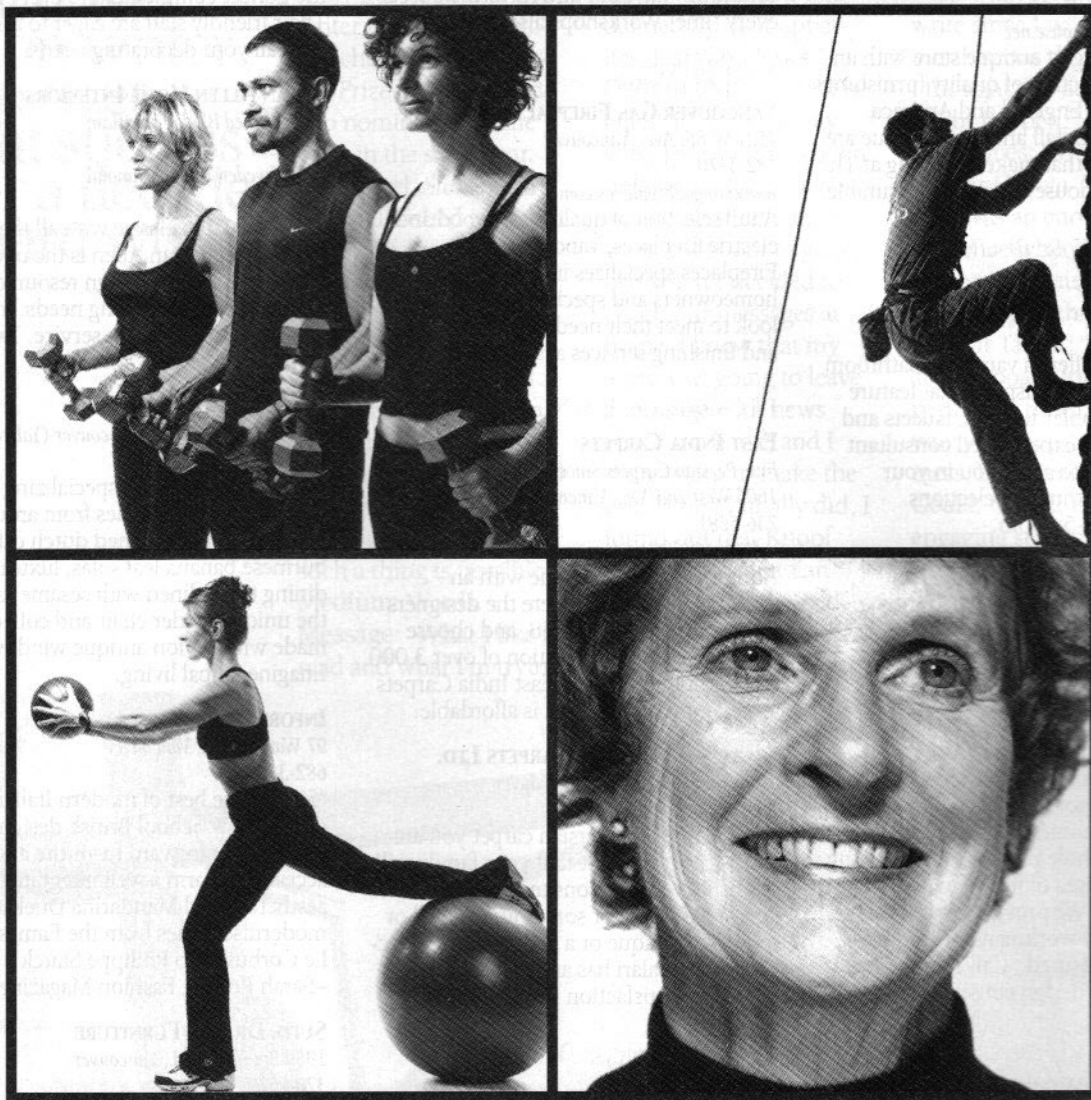


Fit For Life The gym-built bodies of yesteryear are eye candy only to chiropractors. Now there are smarter ways to get in shape.



Remember “spot toning,” Assorted Body Parts of Steel, the quest for the frameable bicep? Well, forget them again because isolationist policies are a thing of the past in the world of physical fitness. At the start of the 21st century, the keyword is integration.

The population that fuelled the fitness-for-the-sake-of-fitness boom in the late '70s is getting older, and the older they get, the more sense they have. That means eschewing the extreme, the merely visual, the punitive and the self-

segregating for more meaningful matters: how we feel, emotionally and physically; how well we move; how we can prevent injuries; what fitness can do to improve our health. (No wonder formerly New Age-y exercises such as yoga have become so completely mainstream.)

What are the latest signs of intelligent life in the fitness universe? We're embracing recreational sports as fitness, group strength training, core-stabilizing exercises, such as Pilates and the “functional fitness” approach. It all makes so much more sense. Who needs nostrils of steel anyway?

ROBERT KENNEY MODELS: GAIL KONANTZ OF WWW.EVERESTTREKING.COM (BOTTOM RIGHT); FITNESS INSTRUCTORS FROM SWEAT CO. (TOP LEFT AND BOTTOM LEFT)

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What's Your HQ? You've heard of IQ and EQ. Now you can test your health quotient.

■ A new book, *HQ: An Intelligent Approach to Personal Health* by Vancouver physician and scientist Dr. Wah Jun Tze, provides a system for assessing your overall health and taking steps to improve it. The first step is a questionnaire to help you examine your health and lifestyle. We've excerpted some sample questions so you can try it out.

Beside each of the following questions, write the number corresponding to the answer that best describes you: Never (0) Almost never (1) Seldom (2) Sometimes (3) Usually (4) Almost always (5) Always (6)

Self-care

- 1 When practising self-care, I am willing to try new and emerging approaches/techniques to maintain my good health. ☐
- 2 I control my weight, do self-examination and am alert for the early signs of illness as disease-prevention measures. ☐
- 3 I actively participate in decision making when dealing with my own health-care needs. ☐
- 4 I enjoy good health. ☐
- 5 I am able to prioritize my work. ☐

TOTAL _____
FOR HQ, DIVIDE BY 3 _____

Knowledge of Health

- 1 I make careful use of health information resources. ☐
- 2 I keep myself updated about new techniques/approaches to health and wellness. ☐
- 3 I can tell when my behaviour or lifestyle is having a major impact on my health. ☐
- 4 I keep up to date on screening methods for disease. ☐
- 5 I make a point of using good health information in monitoring my health. ☐

TOTAL _____
FOR HQ, DIVIDE BY 3 _____

Lifestyle

- 1 I avoid smoking cigarettes, cigars or a pipe, or ingesting tobacco in another form. ☐
- 2 I pay attention to the label directions when using prescribed and over-the-counter drugs. ☐
- 3 I eat a variety of foods. ☐
- 4 I take part in family or team activities that can increase my level of fitness. ☐
- 5 I am able to cope with the stress generated by my usual daily work and activities. ☐

TOTAL _____
FOR HQ, DIVIDE BY 3 _____

The Mind

- 1 I have positive feelings and am optimistic about life and the future. ☐
- 2 I enjoy social interactions. ☐
- 3 My personal and spiritual beliefs give me a general sense of well-being. ☐
- 4 I can relax and freely express my feelings. ☐
- 5 When I need help or wish to discuss personal matters, I have friends and relatives on whom I can call. ☐

TOTAL _____
FOR HQ, DIVIDE BY 3 _____

Life Skills

- 1 I use creative thinking to solve my problems. ☐
- 2 I do a good job of balancing work demands and the need to spend time with friends and family. ☐
- 3 My financial resources enable me to enjoy life to the fullest. ☐
- 4 I can withstand peer pressure, such as the pressure to take drugs or to drink alcohol to excess. ☐
- 5 I have feelings of loneliness. ☐

TOTAL _____
FOR HQ, DIVIDE BY 3 _____

For what your HQ scores mean to you, see SOURCES.

Functional Fitness

WHAT IT IS: A fitness approach based on the novel idea that a plumber might benefit from different exercises than,



say, a computer programmer. Our hour in the gym can be structured around what we do the other 23 hours of the day—and

unless what we do is stand around in tight clothes and make wisecracks, we really don't need triceps like Jennifer Aniston's. (Tip: Neither does Jennifer Aniston.)

WHY IT IS: Would anyone expect a sprinter to train in the same way as a shot-putter? Not hardly. It's about time our fitness pros figured out we non-Olympians need a plebe's version of sport-specific training. Functional fitness is especially appropriate for sedentary people and seniors, who've been left in the lurch by traditional fitness routes.

HOW IT WORKS: Hiring a personal trainer is the most expedient way to take advantage of functional fitness. Tell one you spend most of your day moving pianos, and you'll probably be assigned to a program of back-strengthening exercises. If you're a couch potato inspired by beer ads to take to the slopes, a program targeting your quads and glutes could save you a lot of grief. "People have really forgotten how to start," says Jody Sandler of In Grand Form in North Vancouver. For 25 years, Sandler has held gym classes for overweight or underactive people who can't find truly entry-level fitness classes.

WHERE TO TAKE IT: Contact Sandler at In Grand Form, 604-984-9435.

Recreational Fitness

WHAT IT IS: Basically this means mountain running, Grouse Grinding, kayaking—whatever turns your crank—as a way to get fit, have fun and acquire skills at the same time.

WHY IT IS: Because gyms are boring.



HOW IT WORKS: One way to go about it is simply to figure out what activities you like, find clubs, classes or friends to do them with and, well, make like a Nike ad and just do it. In addition, clubs and personal trainers are realizing that they don't have to compete with nature for people's free time or shoehorn the latest trend from Toronto into the west coast lifestyle. Many now offer adventures and fresh-air exercising along with (or instead of) gym routines.

"Being outdoors can inspire people to find their strengths, new ways of being," says Catherine D'Aoust of Gaia Adventures, who takes stressed-out professional women in their forties, fifties and sixties rock climbing, kayaking and hiking.

WHO TO TAKE IT FROM: Gaia Adventures, 604-875-0066, or try Sport B.C., 604-737-3000, and community centres.

Group Strength Training

WHAT IT IS: Just like doing strength training by yourself, except with other people (and music!). While trademarked programs such as BodyPump with their special weights and prescribed routines are all the rage, many non-trademarked classes are just as effective and less expensive (buying the licence to run trademarked programs costs gyms a small fortune).

WHY IT IS: One, weight-bearing exercise slows the loss in bone density and muscle mass associated with aging (i.e., being over 30). Two, no section of the gym is as intimidating as the Nautilus/bar-weight corner, where muscle monkeys watch you fumble with the equipment.

HOW IT WORKS: Maureen Wilson's Ultimate Sculpt classes at Sweat Co. typify this kind of workout: clients lift hand-held weights and pull at rubber tubing, while aerobics steps provide a platform to lie on, an anchor for the tubing and some cardio preliminaries.

WHO TO TAKE IT FROM: Sweat Co.,



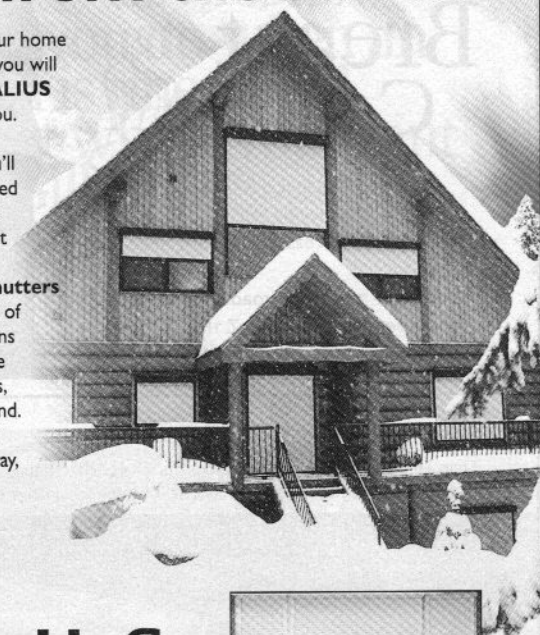
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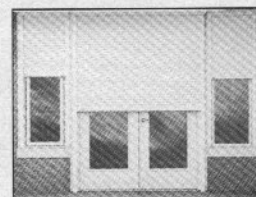


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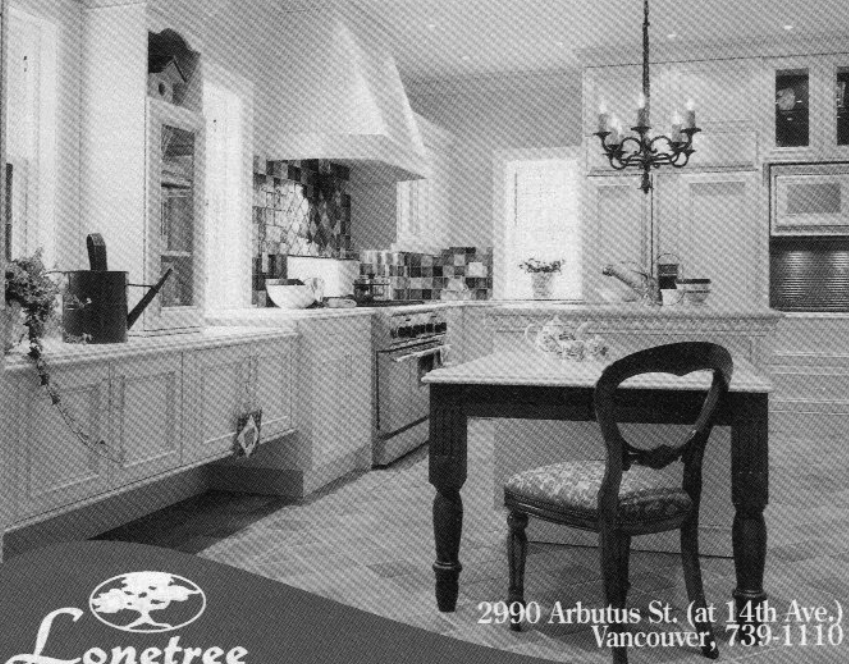
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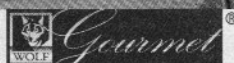
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604-683-7938. Penny Cardas's Total Body Conditioning class at Denman Fitness, 604-688-2484, and Krista Popowych's classes at Fitness Group, 604-654-1725.

Core Stabilizing

WHAT IT IS: Exercise forms that strengthen the body trunk—the mid-frontal region and muscles along the spine and through the pelvic girdle.

WHY IT IS: What's the point of having perfectly defined calf muscles if we're going



to throw out our backs picking up a grocery bag? Virtually every move we make relies on the muscles in the centre of our bodies: if these are weak, we carry out motions inefficiently at best and injure ourselves at worst.

HOW IT WORKS: Several lines of exercise—including Pilates, Swiss balls and wobble-boards—address the core-stabilizing muscles. Of these, balls and wobble-boards are the least demanding and the most fun. Since any position that puts the body out of equilibrium calls on the core-stabilizing muscles, just bouncing on a ball or standing on a wobbly plank will strengthen the obliques, transverse abdominals and back: not for nothing do skateboarders have torsos to die for!

Pilates, a combination of breathing, body alignment and fluid movements, is sort of like a modern-dance class done mostly in horizontal position. It is perhaps the most thorough method of core stabilizing, but also the most mentally rigorous.

Finally, many gyms offer core-stabilizer classes in an aerobics-style format. Pick a level suitable to your core strength, rather than your muscular and cardiovascular fitness, or you'll find yourself using your neck, your tongue, everything short of your eyelid muscles to stabilize yourself.

WHO TO TAKE IT FROM: Heather Low of Meridian Pilates Studio, 604-730-4094. Rachel Kennedy of Vital Core, 604-721-5226. Classes are offered at Sweat Co., Kitsilano Workout, 604-734-3481, and Fitness Group. **W**