



US-medium

**Summer is almost here**, the days are getting warmer, and I'm nervous because unless I win the lottery and can buy my own Caribbean island, I might soon have to appear in public in a bathing suit. Time to take action.

The ads for my local fitness center promised me I could "Get in shape fast!". OK, it can't hurt, I thought. But I was wrong. In fact, not only can it hurt; it does hurt — in places I didn't even know I had.

After joining the health center, I was told to return the following Tuesday at noon for an "entry-level test." I was told not to consume any alcohol or cigarettes for 24 hours before the test, no coffee or tea on the day of the test, and no food for six hours before the test. I was also told to bring a towel and "wear something loose-fitting and comfortable." Yeah, right! The reason I had decided to join the club in the first place was because everything I owned had become tight-fitting and uncomfortable.

**Tuesday arrived**, and I was up early eating breakfast. I'd rather lose a few hours of sleep than not have a meal, and as long as I finished breakfast by 5 a.m., I'd be OK. I got to the fitness center and was greeted by my trainer, Joe, who tested my fat and muscle levels and then designed a program of exercises aimed at attacking the problem zones of my body. In my case, these tend to start just below my head and end at my feet. I was shown machines for the chest and for the back, a machine for the upper arms, machines for the

waist, the stomach, the hips and the rear end, machines for the inner thighs, the outer thighs, the backs and fronts of the thighs and the calves. "And once you've finished exercising on the machines," Joe said, "then you do at least 20 minutes of cardiovascular training on the stair-walker, the treadmill or the bicycle."

At this point, the cancellation clause in the membership contract was starting to look pretty good. But these fitness clubs know how to make people keep coming back. They install special mirrors on every wall that make everyone look 20 pounds fatter. Seeing myself in those mirrors made me realize that I had better do the exercises on the machines Joe had shown me. By the way, I think the same company also builds mirrors that make people look thinner.

**I know, for example**, that whenever I try on a dress at a department store, I always think I look thinner than I actually am — and I buy the dress.

After learning about all the exercise machines, I decided to try out one of the exercise classes. I chose one called the "P class." The "P," I was told, is for "problem zones" such as the waist and hips. But if

## "I'd rather lose a few hours of sleep than not eat"

you ask me, "P" is for "pain class." There were sit-ups with your feet in the air, sit-ups with your legs wrapped around your neck, sit-ups with your knees tucked behind your ears and then, without a moment's rest, 500 leg exercises (on each side!) with weights balanced on your outer thigh. After doing all this, I decided that the "P" class was not for me. I was already in pain and knew I wouldn't be able to move the next day.

What an exhausting experience this fitness routine is! I really need to think about whether it's all worth it. But first, isn't it time for lunch? ☺

<b>calf</b> (pl. <b>calves</b> )	Wade
<b>cancellation clause</b>	Kündigungsklausel
<b>cardiovascular</b> [ˌkɑːrdiəvæsˈkjələr]	Herz- und Gefäß-
<b>Caribbean</b>	Karibik-
<b>contract</b>	Vertrag
<b>department store</b>	Kaufhaus
<b>entry-level test</b>	Einstufungstest
<b>exercise</b>	Trainingsübung
<b>exhausting</b> [ɪgˈzɔːstɪŋ]	anstrengend
<b>hip</b>	Hüfte
<b>loose-fitting</b>	locker (sitzend)
<b>mirror</b> [ˈmɪrər]	Spiegel
<b>rear end</b> [rɪər]	Po
<b>sit-up</b>	Bauchmuskelübung
<b>stairwalker</b>	Stepper
<b>stomach</b>	hier: Bauch
<b>thigh</b> [θaɪ]	Oberschenkel
<b>treadmill</b> [ˈtredmɪl]	Laufband
<b>tuck sth.</b>	etw. klemmen
<b>waist</b> [weɪst]	Taille
<b>weight</b>	hier: Hantel
<b>wrap sth.</b> [ræp]	etw. wickeln