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# 'Undercover Exercises'

## Or how to turn everyday activities into a physical workout

By Loraine McClellan  
staff writer

Undercover Exercises, fast becoming known as UEs, are just that — exercises that can be done hidden by the clothes you're wearing. You can be exercising while sitting, standing, working, and the person sitting, standing, working next to you would never be the wiser.

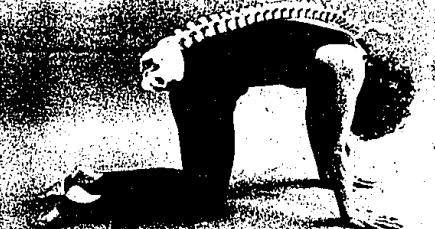
Meanwhile, the exerciser may be getting rid of a headache, easing a backache, increasing circulation, sharpening wit or boosting spirits.

"Everyday activities can be turned into a gold mine of workouts, some even before you get out of bed," said Mardi Erdman, author of "Undercover Exercises," published by Prentice-Hall.

"It's an easy way for busy people to stay healthy and fit because it requires no extra time or special equipment. You can do your UEs brushing your teeth, sitting at a desk, showering, cooking, driving, even attending business meetings. No matter what your profession, you can incorporate them into your daily routine."

Barbara Koplan, who helped develop the UE program, and supplied photographs for the book, described the book as "188 pages of show and tell. If you don't want to read it you can learn all you'll need to know about how the body works, and what you can do with what you've got to work with, just by following the pictures and the diagrams."

ERDMAN'S ENTRY into the world of physical fitness began when she was a mother of very young children, diagnosed as having osteoarthritis of the lower spine.



A mock-up of a spine is laid across the model's back to help the reader understand what is happening to the spine when a person walks, runs or stretches. The photo is one of many in "Undercover Exercises" which aims for an easy lesson in how the body functions.

"I was told to wear a brace, which would give me support but no cure, take aspirin, which I refused because of the possible side effects, sit back and get ready for the wheelchair, which I also refused to do," Erdman said.

Meanwhile she was taking yoga lessons to help relieve her anxiety, and the lessons did do that, but she says she now knows she was being taught incorrectly. Consequently in her tour across the country to publicize her book she makes sure some reference is made to the importance of the book for teachers of any kind of exercise program.

"At the time (of diagnosis) I was very aware of the relationship between stress and disease, but I just never related it to me," she said.

Since that time she has formed Humanics Co., with Koplan, based in Colorado, for workshops, workouts and seminars; the distribution of cassette tapes on tension, yoga and massage; and a great deal of work going into businesses helping employees learn exercises they can do undercover while on their everyday routine.

She also has a once-a-week TV program, broadcast from Denver, and "Undercover Exercises" is now in its third printing.

WHEN ERDMAN and Koplan stopped in Detroit on their publicity tour they were guests in the Farmington Hills home of Alan Korowitz, Koplan's cousin.

"I'm a native of Detroit so I feel like I'm coming home," said the photographer who has made "Undercover Exercises" into what could well be described as a picture essay.

"I was very concerned that all of the

concepts be well understood so there is no question in the reader's mind as to what is causing your pain, or what happens to a muscle that you want to strengthen, what is hurting the bones or the joints and what helps," she said.

In addition to being a photographer, Koplan is a licensed health and physical education instructor, a massage therapist and a licensed paramedic.

It was during her work as a paramedic that her interest was broadened into the physical fitness field.

"I was just carrying too many people from the gym, or from their beds, into the ambulance with thrown out shoulders, necks, backs, ankles, joints. Now we know that 80 percent of the people living today have suffered, are suffering, or will suffer, with some kind of back problem," she said.

A large section of the book concerns itself with back problems, because of the statistics Koplan gave, as well as the fact that Erdman's original concern was for her back.

"ANYTHING YOU do physically is



Whether looking out a bus window, pushing on the overhead light in an airplane or waiting in line, Mardi Erdman has an exercise for busy people to stay healthy and fit that requires no extra time or special equipment.

going to spread itself throughout the whole person," Erdman said. "So visualizations, how you see yourself, and thoughts, how you think about yourself, all manifest themselves on your body. I give a visualization exercise for you to do in bed before you get up in the morning, and understanding that concept will carry with you into all and any parts of your life."

The aim of the book, the two women say, is to make each person an expert on how their own body functions and the body is in, what Erdman calls "good alignment with gravity."

The book can also be used as a textbook for a do-it-yourself physical fitness program, for the athlete, and for the sedentary.

"Especially for the sedentary," Erdman said. "Learn to appreciate your body and what it can do for you. Empty the trash correctly and you'll have a good workout and while you are doing that you can empty the garbage out of your mind."

"Undercover Exercises" is available in local bookstores.

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— Mardi Erdman



## Mid-life offers challenge of self-acceptance

By Sherry Kahan  
special writer

PEOPLE WHO handle growing old gracefully are the people who have a strong sense of self-acceptance," said Dr. Marjorie Peebles-Meyers of Detroit.

"We accept those things about ourselves we can't change and enhance the ones we can. We learn early in life to be comfortable with us."

In a talk on mid-life changes and crises at Women's Health Day arranged by Oakwood Hospital recently, the physician advised her listeners: "Take charge of your life."

She listed a few habits and survival qualities useful to those on their walk over the hill.

"Have the ability to love and express it," she suggested. "In our family, if a lamp-post walked in, we'd kiss it."

Have something outside yourself, like religion, to cling to. Having a well-developed sense of humor is also a big help. Stay healthy by developing good habits of living. Excess tobacco and drugs. Eat nutritious foods even if you live alone. Exercise.

A GRADUATE of Howard University Medical School and a Detroit practitioner for 40 years, Meyers is in charge of the medical unit at Ford World Headquarters.

She wants women to understand that there is more to middle age than menopause. They should look upon it as a normal, natural phenomenon rather than a period when they get "all tense, tired and crazy."

"If you have a sense of self all along, the fact that you stop menstruating is no big deal," she said.

Nonetheless, women in mid-life should watch their health. "Thank God," she declared, "medicine is finally realizing that women need to be followed even more carefully after menopause."

Mid-life crises don't suddenly come on at mid-life, she stressed. They have been building for years. What she calls the single-life syndrome prompts one of these crises.

SHE FOCUSED on an example of a single woman who was self-sufficient and had a good job as a teacher. She spent her summers vacationing in Wisconsin where her mother, her brothers and their families live.

One day she came to Meyers with serious diarrhea.

"She had begun to notice subtle changes in her relationship with her family," said the physician. The brothers began to talk about what to do about their mother who lived alone.

They hinted that Meyers' patient might have to think about retiring early to come home and look after their mother.

Meyers could see that assumptions made by the brothers, and often made by others, were tearing her patient apart emotionally. They assumed that as a single woman, she had no private life and no use for her time and money, according to the speaker.

The care of the elderly parent, in Meyers' view, is a "corporate decision" — a family responsibility — which can be solved by relatives who sit down and make plans.

Then she turned her attention to the elderly parent who has just become a widow or widower.

"MAY I BEG YOU," she said, "to let the situation be as it is and don't report the survivor unless he or she is incompetent. All of us, whether middle-aged or old, do better in our own environment."

Another woman who can find herself in a mid-life mess is the unmarried woman who works but never had the courage to leave her parents. She finds it comfortable to be with them.

"But she may pay for this," Meyers said. "Suddenly she meets a man she wants to marry. Then Dad has a stroke, and her mind becomes a battlefield in which the new love struggles against her sense of responsibility for her father. Should she leave him?"

"Next thing she's at on the psychiatrist's couch with feelings of hostility toward her parents."

The "empty woman" faces a crisis when her husband decides to retire and

live on a lower income. She is a selfish female, who doesn't work, isolates herself and never participates in much. She spends her time rearranging the furniture and buying new pieces which she doesn't need.

Like the other cases described by the speaker, this was based on a real situation. When the woman was told she and her husband could get by on less money, she answered her husband with a

chilly: "You don't think you are going to change my lifestyle, do you?"

The kind of woman Meyers appreciates is the one who doesn't spend so much time with her children and furniture that she fails to see her husband is under stress or not feeling well. This woman would step in and do what she could to help his problem.

One of the biggest crises in life is the loss of a mate through death or divorce, she explained, asking "What are

our resources at a time like this?"

A good support system of close and understanding friends and relatives was her reply. After such a loss, the survivor can't help asking, why did this happen to me?

"The only answer," Meyers said, "is to look at the mirror and say, 'Who do you think you are that you should be spared completely any of the pain and sorrow that comes to human beings?'"

## Jaycees begin sale of Christmas trees

Farmington Area Jaycees revive an old tradition with a sale of Christmas trees that will continue each evening until the supply is sold out. The trees will be sold from a lot on Halsted, north of 12 Mile, the same site where Jaycees used for their Haunted House

In October.

Al DeDecker, chairman for the sale, chose the site for its proximity to 12 Oaks Mall.

"We expect that people will be using 12 Mile while travelling to and from

Novi and the mall. From our location, they can pull off the road a short way north, find the tree they want and be on their way in just a few minutes," DeDecker said.

Coupons, good for \$5 off the ticket

price of the trees, were printed in the Nov. 19 issue of the Farmington Observer.

Proceeds from the sale all revert back into the community through the Jaycees many and varied projects.

## Barbershoppers join for cabaret evening

Three medal-winning groups come together for two evenings of four-part barbershop harmony Friday and Saturday, Dec. 7-8, in Southfield's Divine Providence Lithuanian Hall. A cash bar opens at 7 p.m. and the curtain rises at 8 p.m. for "Everything Old is New Again."

On stage will be Farmington Hills Sweet Adelines, Top Priority, and Ivy League for a cabaret-style show.

Sweet Adelines will be wearing the medals they won in 1984 regional competition while they sing music from the '30s through the '60s.

Top Priority took the fifth-place spot in international competition among barbershop quartets. Ivy League is the youngest men's barbershop quartet in the area. The foursome has been named "Official Barbershop Quartet" for Cedar Point Amusement Park. The group is winner of the 1983 Pioneer

District Novice Quartet Championship, and champion of the 1984 Boyce City Bush League Quartet.

Tickets are \$10, or \$8 for senior adults and students, purchased by writing to Gloria Pollard, 15019 Farmington, Livonia 48154.

## Workshoppers to create fresh evergreen wreaths

Maggie Doll and Ruth McKinnon will teach how to make a holiday wreath from fresh balsam in four classes Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 6-8, in First Presbyterian Church of Farmington's barn on Farmington and 11 Mile Road. Registrations are being tak-

en for classes that begin at 7 p.m. Thursday, at 9 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Friday and at 9 a.m. Saturday morning.

The instructors also will teach how to decorate and make centerpieces using fresh evergreens.

The classes are given as a communi-

ty service so the only charge is \$12, for the cost of the materials used in the balsam wreath that will be ready to take home at the end of the 2½-hour workshop.

Fresh Oregon Holly and other materials will be available for purchase.

The Christmas wreath symbolizes the circle of love and loving with no beginning and no end.

Reservations are necessary because each class size is limited. Doll will take reservations at 626-7300; McKinnon at 661-4911.