

# Exercise won't prolong life, author says

Many physical fitness enthusiasts believe regular exercise can enable them to achieve a longer, healthier life. But a recent book, "The Exercise Myth" by Dr. Henry A. Solomon, says it just ain't so.

Solomon is a cardiologist and an assistant clinical professor of medicine at Cornell University Medical College. He says Americans have been sold a bill of goods on the benefits of strenuous exercise.

Last week I finally had the opportunity to read this provocative and controversial book.

DR. SOLOMON acknowledges that regular exercise improves the functional capacity for work, that it may be helpful socially, and that it may make you look and feel better.

But he emphatically states that it will neither make you healthier nor

help you live longer.

Unfortunately, many points Dr. Solomon makes are true. Although it's disappointing, scientific research often supports his negativism regarding the overzealous claims that have been made on behalf of exercise.

On the other hand, I found several of his statements still open to debate — others merely reflected common sense.

**SOLOMON'S CLAIMS include:**

- Fitness is simply your functional capacity or ability to perform work. It has nothing to do with your health, the presence or absence of disease, or the state of your arteries or heart.
- Individuals with severe heart disease can still have exceptional levels of physical fitness. Furthermore, persons with heart disease can improve their functional capacity by regular exercise without improving their health.



fitness  
**Barry Franklin**

• Although changes in the heart do occur as a result of regular endurance exercise (e.g., increased heart size, decreased heart rate), they are not inherently "better" or "healthier." Besides, potentially beneficial reductions in heart rate and blood pressure, particularly valuable in heart patients, can be achieved through medications.

• Exercise stress testing, by itself, is limited in its ability to detect hidden or latent heart disease. Some people with normal stress tests have heart disease. Others with abnormal stress tests

may not have heart disease.

Exercise stress test results must be interpreted in light of the patient's age, sex, symptoms, medications and medical history.

• Despite the widespread belief that regular exercise can increase longevity, there is no substantial evidence to prove it.

• A causal relationship between physical inactivity and heart disease is difficult to establish. Reason: People who already have characteristics that affect heart disease may self-select certain occupations.

• Exercise primarily trains and conditions the skeletal muscles, not the heart.

• Exercise does not affect the progression of heart disease, the frequency or severity of heart attacks, the amount of blood flow to the heart, or the development of supplementary

blood vessels to the heart.

• Marathon running — or even the marathon runner's lifestyle, including careful attention to diet, body weight and abstinence from cigarette smoking — does not confer absolute immunity to heart disease.

• Exercise training has only "minor" influence, at best, in reducing select risk factors for heart disease.

• Strenuous exercise in certain persons with known or latent heart disease may actually precipitate cardiovascular complications.

Dr. Solomon contends that "The Exercise Myth" is not an anti-exercise book. As he states, "It's simply the other side of the exercise story, the side few people have heard and some don't want to know."

Barry Franklin of Farmington Hills is a co-director of cardiac rehabilitation at Sinai Hospital.

## '84 business index leaped 13.3 %

The Michigan Business Activity Index, a monthly measure of real private economic activity, grew by 13.3 percent in calendar year 1984, according to Manufacturers Bank.

The 1984 gain was second only to 1959's 15.9-percent expansion.

"National output grew 6.8 percent in 1984, the best since 1951," bank economist Patrick L. Anderson explained. "This strong national growth fueled Michigan's expansion."

"Additionally, the low inflation of 1984 — the lowest since 1957

— helped Michigan's manufacturers invest in new equipment and helped keep consumer purchasing power strong.

"Michigan's economy has long been 'pro-cyclical' as Michigan's industries tend to expand or decline faster than most states' industries. In fact, the rapid growth of the past two years bring the index up to the same level it had in 1978, before the 1979-82 recession dropped it to a low point of 98 in October 1982."

The index averaged 128 for the year. Biggest growth occurred in

the first half. The auto strike and the national slowdown in the second half cut back gains.

**THE MICHIGAN Business Activity Index** is compiled from 11 different economic measures for the state by the economics department of Manufacturers Bank. It is seasonally adjusted, corrected for inflation and based on a 1987 level of 100.

In December, employment, auto production and car sales declined somewhat. Steel production, energy usage and hourly earnings increased.

## MSU 'transitions' seminar in area

Michigan State University's Birmingham Center will sponsor "Coping With Transitions" Saturday, March 2, at the facility in Groves High School, 20500 W. Thirteen Mile, Birmingham. Participants will explore two of three workshops — Identifying the Barriers to Success, Mid-Career Changes and Mid-Life Crises, and How to Manage Stress as a Re-Entry Adult student.

To register call 645-5410.

## Realtors, Bar hold seminar

Oakland County Bar Association's real estate committee has scheduled an attorney/realtor crossfire for 7-10 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, in the Birmingham Community House.

Attorneys and members of the Realtor Board will face-off on selected topics with audience participation encouraged.

Topics will include warranties vs. "as is" and disclaimers in the sale of

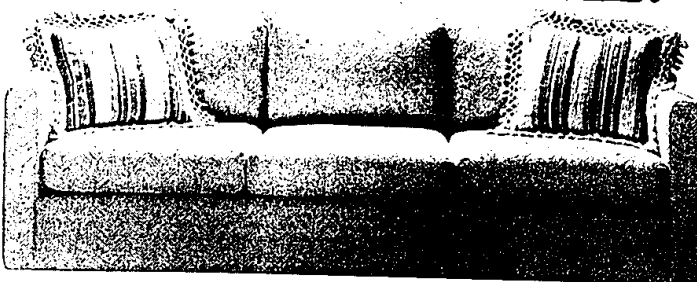
real estate; sale of condominium and cooperatives; handling default of the purchase agreement; real estate malpractice pitfalls; complications of adjustable rate mortgages; and use of land contract, purchase money mortgages and second mortgages.

Open to the public, the seminar is \$1.50 with a cash bar. To make reservations, call the bar office at 338-2100 or 398-3937.

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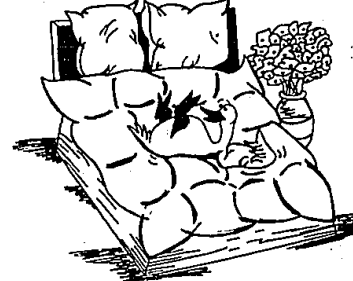
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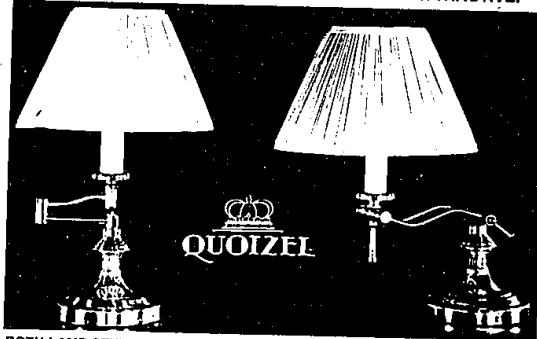
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