

# Teacher finds that lifting weights drops her own

By Arlene Funke  
staff writer

Weight-lifting women usually turn most men, and women, off. But one look at Sharon Wells and the average person can suddenly see value in women lifting weights.

Mrs. Wells, who lives in Canton Township, looks like she's taken more than a few sips from the legendary Fountain of Youth.

About 10 years ago, Mrs. Wells was 20 pounds overweight and addicted to

rich desserts and in-between-meal sweets.

Not liking the way she looked, and inspired by her husband, Mrs. Wells started lifting weights — reluctantly. She also started following a new food plan that eliminated fatty foods and gooey sweets.

Today, at 36, Mrs. Wells has smooth, clear skin and a taut, well-proportioned body made firm by lifting weights. She's 5-foot-6 and weighs 127 pounds, although she feels best at 125 pounds.

As head of the human ecology department at John Glenn High School in Westland, Mrs. Wells has developed an exercise and dietary course for her teen students.

She promotes weight training for women, and appears on local TV shows to explore the myth that body-building automatically means oversized, rippling muscles.

"WEIGHT-LIFTING came along when I decided I had to do something to get into shape," said Mrs. Wells. "It's very effective (but) I don't try to im-

pose it on anybody."

Mrs. Wells got the idea of lifting weights to improve her health and physique from her husband, Sid, an engineer for Ford Motor Co.

He was a health and exercise enthusiast before she got interested. She accompanied her husband to health spas where there were separate gyms for men and women. While Sid went off to do his exercises, Sharon sat in the women's changing room, correcting students' papers.

He suggested weights for her. Mrs.

Wells gradually learned to enjoy lifting weights, although she was aware of the stigma attached to "the idea of women sweating and getting their hands dirty from barbells."

After a while, the couple switched to a co-ed gym even though "there were days when I couldn't stand the idea of exercising."

She credits her husband with inspiring her. The two grew up in Wayne and attended Wayne Memorial High School before marrying in 1964.

"I attribute a lot of what I am today

to Sid," says Mrs. Wells. "He's a very motivating person."

WHILE Mrs. Wells began developing her body-tone, she also was building a career in education. She had received bachelor's and master's degrees from Eastern Michigan University and was teaching home economics at John Glenn.

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