

Teacher shapes up with weight training

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home economics department to "human ecology," because there was too much emphasis on "stitching and stewing" courses, said Mrs. Wells.

Course names have been changed, and the department now includes interior design, home and family living, parenting and consumer education. Mrs. Wells also began incorporating fitness and body-building theories into her teaching.

Last year, Mrs. Wells was named Teacher of the Year by the Michigan Home Economics Education Association, a professional group of home economics teachers.

A course developed by Mrs. Wells is called H.E.A.D. (health, exercise, appearance and diet). It includes dietary tips for reducing fats and sugars.

According to Mrs. Wells, the H.E.A.D. program was developed after students were surveyed as to the types of courses which most interested them.

A couple of days a week, the students exercise and lift weights under supervi-

sion — a program which she describes as "exposure" to body-building. She emphasizes that each person should choose his or her own form of exercise, based on life-style.

Fitness routines can run the gamut from sports to body-building to dancing — as long as it takes place two or three times a week.

"THE TRICK is, it has to be flexible so people can adapt," explains Mrs. Wells. "There's no built-in longevity."

Mrs. Wells believes it's a misconception that training with weights results in huge, rippling muscles. She said heavily muscled body-builders are competing in contests or exhibitions and take male hormones to beef up their muscles. She added that women's bodies contain only small quantities of the male hormone testosterone.

Under normal circumstances, Mrs. Wells works out with weights about an hour, three times a week. The routine includes stretching, flexibility and lifting various weights to build firmness throughout her body.

She keeps her skin moist and smooth by slathering on protective lotions. Also important to her routine is a diet which contains reduced fats (chicken or fish, rather than red meat), fruits, vegetables and grains.

Recently, Mrs. Wells has been working on a physical fitness book, developing seminars and workshops.

Working hard to keep in condition can have many rewards, according to Mrs. Wells.

"I think I looked much, much older when I started this (10 years ago)," says Mrs. Wells.

PHYSICALLY-FIT persons can serve as an example to themselves and others, she believes.

"They should gain an appreciation of themselves as physical beings," added Mrs. Wells. "We have a commitment to our body, as well as the other parts of ourselves."

She advises persons who want to get on a fitness program to first have a physical examination, then to look around for an enjoyable exercise and to

combine that with a well-balanced diet. Start slowly, but be certain to set aside two or three times a week for exercise, she advises.

Activities can include such things as exercise routines, sports, bicycling and dancing.

Mrs. Wells spends some time on aerobics to develop heart, lungs and circulation. She advises beginners who want to lift weights to progress gradually.

Start with about 15 minutes per session, then build the time spent on an exercise, she advises.

For routine maintenance, she lifts barbells weighing 65-70 pounds in an exercise called "squats," which is helpful to thighs and hips.

She recommends, however, that women use only 15 to 20 pounds for this exercise. Weight lifters may find at first that their muscles appear larger, said Mrs. Wells. She said that after a while, body fat begins to burn off and the muscles become smoother and firmer.

Teacher Sharon Wells used to sit in the locker room grading papers while her husband exercised. She began lifting weights to get her body into better shape. It helped her lose 20 pounds as well as making her fit. She now lifts weights three days a week and does aerobic exercises such as riding a bicycle.



Sharon Wells

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