

Get in gear for the New Year

One of your New Year's resolutions was to get in shape and your resolve is already weakening, then maybe, just maybe, you might want to consider hiring a personal (exercise) trainer.

After all, it's worked for Oprah Winfrey and countless other stars.

Granted, it's not an inexpensive option. But if you're having trouble staying motivated, then it's an investment in your health that you just might want to make.

What should you look for in a personal trainer? How much do they charge per hour? What do they do and where can you find one?

For answers, I turned to Susan Kerwin and Audrey Hazekamp. Kerwin is president and founder of TheraFit Network, a company in West Bloomfield that specializes in worksite wellness and personal training programs. She's been a nurse for 10 years, was president of the board of the American Heart Association's South Central Division last year, and is a certified medical exercise specialist at the Power House Gym in West Bloomfield.

Hazekamp is an exercise physiologist in the preventive cardiology department at the University of Michigan Medical Center in Ann Arbor. She has a master's degree in exercise physiology, as well as degrees in physical education and biology, and she works as a certified, clinical personal trainer on the side.

The most important thing to look for in a personal trainer, they said, is certification. Many agencies and companies offer certification in personal training or fitness, but some are better than others.

Two of the most highly respected and demanding certifying bodies, Kerwin and Hazekamp said, are the American Council on Exercise (ACE), and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).

There are also different levels of certification. In general, personal trainers can work only with healthy people. Medical exercise specialists can work with healthy people and those who have certain medical conditions, such as diabetes and orthopedic problems. Clinical exercise specialists, meanwhile, can work with just about everybody, including people who have major medical conditions, such as cardiac problems, Kerwin said.

In addition to certification, she and Hazekamp said, it's important to look for a trainer who is compatible with your personality and fitness goals.

Some personal trainers make house calls; some only work with clients in a health club or gym (in which case you'd have to pay a membership fee as well as the trainer's hourly fee).

Trainers' fees can be anywhere from \$30-\$40 and up for an hour, Kerwin said. Hazekamp said they might be \$50-\$85 per hour in a home setting and \$30-\$50 per hour in a club setting. Some trainers offer the first session free, so don't be afraid to ask, Kerwin said.

A trainer will spend the first session talking with you, asking you questions about your medical history and fitness goals. Based on that, the trainer will create an exercise plan for you and will teach you how to do each exercise properly. A trainer also may give you tips on nutrition and will expect you to exercise on your own between sessions.

If a trainer spends most of each session (not counting the first one) talking instead of having you work out, doesn't have you stop when you're in pain, or doesn't add variety to your workout, then look for a new trainer, Kerwin said.

Ideally, a client should work with a trainer at least once a week at first and then gradually taper off to once every three months, Hazekamp said. Like a good parent, "My goal as a trainer is to work myself out of a job," she said.

To find a personal trainer, they said, ask for referrals from your local health club or YMCA (even if you're not a member), your physician or dietitian, or even your local hospital's community outreach department. In addition, you can find a registry of ACE professionals by city on its Web site at www.acefitness.org.

Thrills in, chills out

All the newest trends in ski equipment and apparel for 1999

BY LINDA BACHRACK

Finally, it's time to hit the slopes. For lots of folks, skiing and snowboarding are the ultimate in winter sports fun. Like tennis or golf, skiing is an industry that depends on high-tech innovations, with equipment that evolves from year to year. But skis and bindings aren't the only things on image-conscious skiers' minds. Looking good also is key, as well as staying warm and dry. So what's hot and cool for downhill daredevils and novices this year? We've got the lowdown on the goods that will send shivers through your insulated undies.

Frost-free Fashion

Skiwear is divided into two classifications—the fashion oriented and the technical. Of course, techies also can look high-style in jackets like the Mt. Shuksan from The North Face. This board or ski jacket has it all—a diagonal front chest vent with dual zipper, Cordura reinforced forearm inside panel to prevent edge cut, new proprietary ripstop that is breathable and waterproof, and Cordura reinforced backpack zones. As technically advanced as The North Face collection is, devoted fans wear the jackets and Gore-Tex parkas around town and on college campuses. The North Face E.G. Tech Parka is currently a hit on the European slopes, and the design is sure to follow suit around the world.

Impress them at the apres-ski hangout in Bogner's chestnut brown ultrasuede outerwear. Descente, Spyder and Nike ACG also make high-end fashion-forward skiwear.

Three-quarter parkas are in this year for men and women, according to Hans Erni at Bavarian Village. "Eighty percent of the jackets we're selling are the longer length," he says. "When it covers your butt, you stay warmer and it's great for cold, wet chairlifts."

Dressing lighter with more layers is all the rage. "Layering is key," says Erni, "and fleece is the layer of choice." Fleece comes in all different weights and styles from mock turt to vests, jackets and undergarments. If you layer a shell over a fleece jacket and polypropylene underwear, you'll be warm, protected and unnumbered by bulk.

■ Snowboarding attire is a little baggier and boxier than traditional skiwear, but this year find "cross-over" apparel that can be worn for either skiing or boarding. With snowboarding's surge in popularity, the manufacturers are appealing to a broader market. Young boarders, however, will want Burton's hip line of clothing with its longer tails, boxy shapes, padded knees and rear.

■ What's new with hue? It's back to bright, vivid colors for skiwear. Look for neon yellow and lime green or multi-colored jackets with splashes of red and royal blue. "Colors are constantly recycled," says Erni. "We've returned to brights."

■ When it comes to accessorizing for the slopes, think attitude—hologram goggles, Oakley glasses, cool Beeri helmets, component gloves.

Glacial Gear

There has been a revolution in the ski industry, and virtually all skis today are "shaped." A technological advance this good doesn't come along often, according to *Skiing Magazine*, so when it does, it deserves to be understood. Many skiers are still confused over the definition of a super-sidecut or "shaped" ski. And more important, why they work.

In the magazine's ski review, the authors explain: "The new sidecuts have brought true carved turns down into the realm of mere mortals. With these new skis, all that's required to carve is to tip the ski on edge, stay balanced over its center, and let the sidecut do the work. The shaped ski's wider tip aggressively engages the snow, and the skier's centered weight bends the ski into a curve. The wider tail helps the ski curve through the turn. You'll be more in control and able to ski longer, with less effort."

The new-generation shaped ski is more moderately shaped," says Bavarian Village's Erni. Narrower skis excel on ice and hard snow (think hockey skates), while wider skis tend to be more stable and buoyant, and excel in powder and soft snow. *Skiing Magazine* recommends your shaped ski be 10-15 centimeters shorter than your conventional



model. Erni touts the Elan ski, a pioneer of shaped skis.

Ski makers today are rolling out an amazing array of shapes to up the fun factor for weekend warriors. Carving trenches from trail edge to trail edge, heading into the woods, floating through powder, plowing through crud, jumping into chutes, snaking through the bumps and using the whole mountain as if it were one giant terrain park—this is skiing in the late '90s. And ski companies are responding with a model for every use and every desire. The trick is finding the right gear for the situations you get into.

Erni and the other ski experts at Bavarian Village can help. Erni recommends, for example, the midfat ski, or free-ride series, for his clientele who head out West for powder skiing. He also can advise on boots and bindings to go with the new shaped skis. New boots are a little higher in the sole, he says, and bindings have built-in lifters. Still a fast-growing segment, snowboarding continues to evolve and boards are better designed with different shapes for half-pipes, racing and free rides. Buy a snowboard according to your weight. Best-known manufacturers are Burton and K2. K2's new Fatty skiboard is an all-mountain utility tool aimed at the youth market or "anybody who aspires to feel young." I'll put a little zip into your next run down the slopes.

"If you really want to have a blast, try snowblades," says Erni. Snowblading is an add-on to skiing, a fun sport for the whole family. Snowblades have non-releasable bindings and adapt to any boot, so everyone can try out one pair. Elan and Salomon make blades in the \$200-\$300 range.



Frozen assets: (Top photo) Burton snowboarding gear; (bottom, clockwise from left) X-scream skis by Salomon, skiwear from Obermeyer. All available at Bavarian Village Ski & Golf.

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

MONDAY, JANUARY 4

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Yvette D. Austin, president of Austin's Image Consulting Services in Detroit, is the featured speaker at the meeting of the Association of Image Consultants International, Southeast Michigan Chapter (AICI). Austin will address "How to Put Together a Seminar" 6 p.m. Tom's Oyster Bar, 29106 Franklin Road, Southfield. RSVP (734) 665-1188.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 5

TO YOUR HEALTH

Livonia Mall and Botsford Hospital present a pro-

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

gram for the Livonia Mall Walker. Walkers meet at 8 a.m. at the Livonia Big Boy Restaurant for a continental breakfast and a discussion on "How to stay healthy and have fun while traveling." For information, call (248) 476-1160.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 7

TEL-TWELVE TREASURES

Tel-Twelve Mall presents an antiques and collectible show today through Sunday, January 10. Exhibits include furniture, jewelry, porcelain, hardware replacement, collectibles and more. "The Glass Doctor" will offer estimates on china and glass restoration and repair.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9

SPELLBINDER

Robert Edward Levin discusses his debut novel, *The Liard and the Fly*, 2-4 p.m. at Barnes & Noble in Troy. This spellbinding tale of suspense is the story of an uncompromising friendship between two men bound together as they search for a madman in an all too compromising world. Levin is a graduate of Michigan State University and Thomas M. Cooley Law School. Barnes & Noble, 396 John R. Troy.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

BEANIE BONANZA

The Plymouth Beanie Baby Show returns to the Plymouth Cultural Center, 525 Farmer Street. The show features new, current and retired Beanie Babies and accessories. Beanie Baby door prizes awarded every hour 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$5. \$2/ages 4-12. For more information, call (734) 465-2110.