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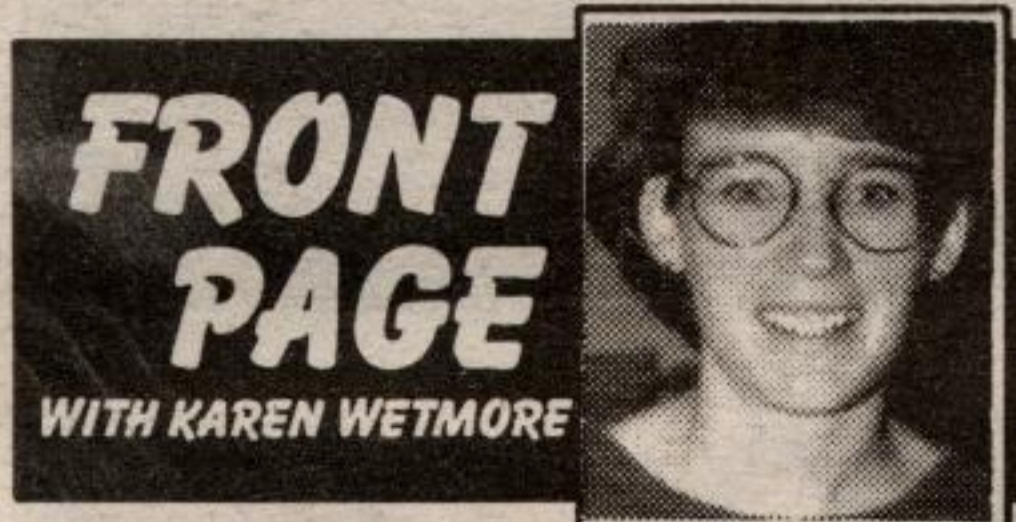
'Exercise' your right to choose how fit you are!

For many years now, I've been saying the following statement, each time believing what I'm saying and knowing I will act accordingly in the future:

"I'm so out of shape — I need to start exercising."

This always gets me thinking about my high school days, when I actually was in shape. When I was a member of the school's cross country and track teams. When phys. ed. was my favourite subject — but that could have been since there was no homework.

But high school days are long gone, replaced by a career which can have its long days, trying to fit in as much quality time with husband, family and friends (who are



all equally busy with their own lives) and sleeping. Who has the time or energy to think about exercising anymore?

Not that I haven't tried various different activities to try to tone up. For a while I thought aerobics was the way to go — lots of movement, loud music and the company of others motivating you.

But there's a lot to be said about the co-ordination required to do aerobics and besides, I don't own any of those little workout outfits which are worn over tights and barely cover your assets.

I switched to working out at home for a while — just me, my VCR and supermodel Cindy Crawford (who herself switches outfits about 15 times in a 45 minute workout). The plus side to this, apart from not having to worry about how bad you look beside Cindy, is that you can push that pause button anytime you want and, say, have a snack. Or a nap.

Guess that's the bad side to it as well.

When summer *finally* started this year, I told myself I should find some kind of outdoor activity. But, when there's no air conditioning in the house, and no backyard pool to hop into, there's little chance of this working. This is because, even though I'm a woman and everyone knows women don't sweat (they glow),

there's something downright unappealing to running around in southern Ontario when the humidity is over 35 degrees Celsius.

Now swimming is a great way to keep in shape. And even though you may feel tired, you're also cool and refreshed from being immersed in the water.

But, if you're in a pool it's also a tad boring swimming up and down the length of the pool — and then there's the chlorine: in your eyes, wreaking havoc on your hair and its unmistakable scent — not exactly like perfume. And what Canadian wants to put on a bathing suit in any other season but summer?

I guess I do get a little bit of exercise, if you count the five-minute ride to the office on my bike. Problem is, I won't take the

bike out for longer rides, since the gear changer thingy is broken and I'm stuck in only one gear — one with which I wouldn't try to battle an uphill slope.

I *could* go for a gentler type of activity to increase my fitness level, such as T'ai Chi or even walking. These slower exercises would probably help me get in shape at a proper pace, with minimal effort and maybe even some enjoyment.

But I'm not sure. Finding the time to pursue these avenues on a regular basis could be a challenge. I'll have to think about it — line up the pros and cons and decide what's best for myself.

If I work it right, this might take me until the next time I say, "I'm so out of shape — I need to start exercising."

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