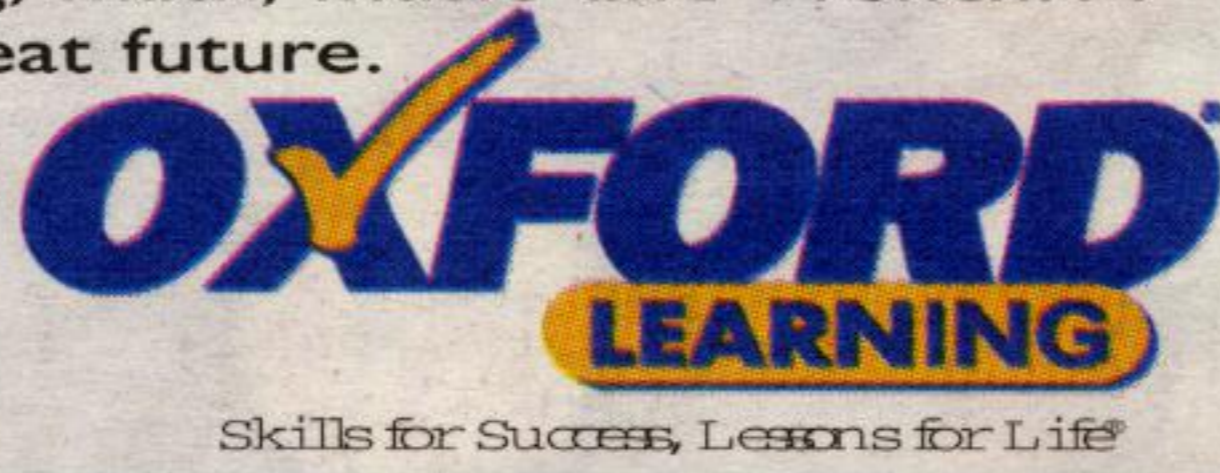




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Tip for Babies – Taking new babies out and about

By Barbara Burrows,

With hospital stays shorter than ever, moms and new babies are often home in 24 hours. Within a few more days, some mothers and babies venture out in public. Twenty years ago, mothers were encouraged to keep their new babies out of public for the first 3 to 6 weeks. Is this an old fashioned idea, or still important?

Dr. Brody says it is very important to give a new infant a great deal of protection from outside sensory stimulus. Outside noise, being handled by different people, bright light, loud voices and sounds are all difficult for a new infant. Brody encourages "gradual sensory stimulation" which means going very slowly when exposing infants to the outside world.

The reason infants need as much peace and quiet as possible to start with is that if things are overly exciting for an infant, the baby "closes" down psychologically in order to cope. The baby's curiosity diminishes when looking around is too overwhelming. Curiosity and the wish to look are present at birth and are the first way a baby begins to build intelligence. If a baby sees his mother's quiet face and hears her gentle voice

in soft light that is easy on his eyes, he wants to keep looking and listening. His attention is turned to his gentle outside world.

If he looks and sees bright lights and people rushing by at a busy mall, he doesn't want to look - it is too much. This setting can actually make a baby feel assaulted by too much stimulation and this discourages his wish to look and listen. When a baby's world is over-exciting, she cannot use her eyes and ears freely. She feels bombarded, which can make her quiet, less curious. She is too busy trying to guard against the experiences she doesn't like to turn her attention outward. She stops being attentive, turns inward and she may escape into long hours of sleep, or become jumpy, nervous, cranky, irritable and lacking composure.

To help infants achieve optimum development and reach their full intelligence potential, it is very important to protect them from too much stimulation. Aim at helping your baby retain composure so she feels relaxed enough that she can watch, look, listen, hear, touch, feel, and even taste in a way that feels comfortable. This will support her attentiveness to the outside world - and this is what helps her become bright and alert.

The baby's curiosity diminishes when looking around is too over-whelming.

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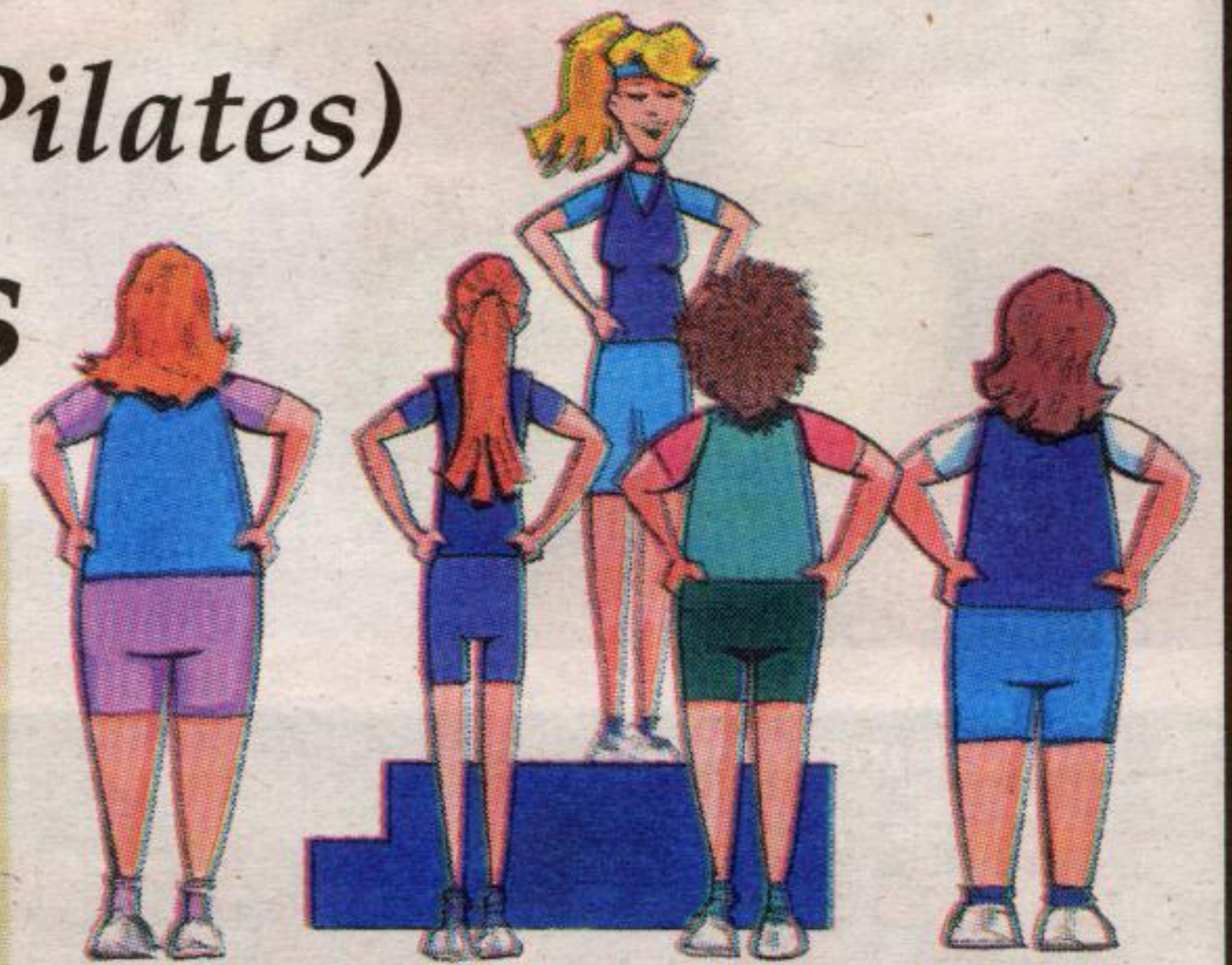
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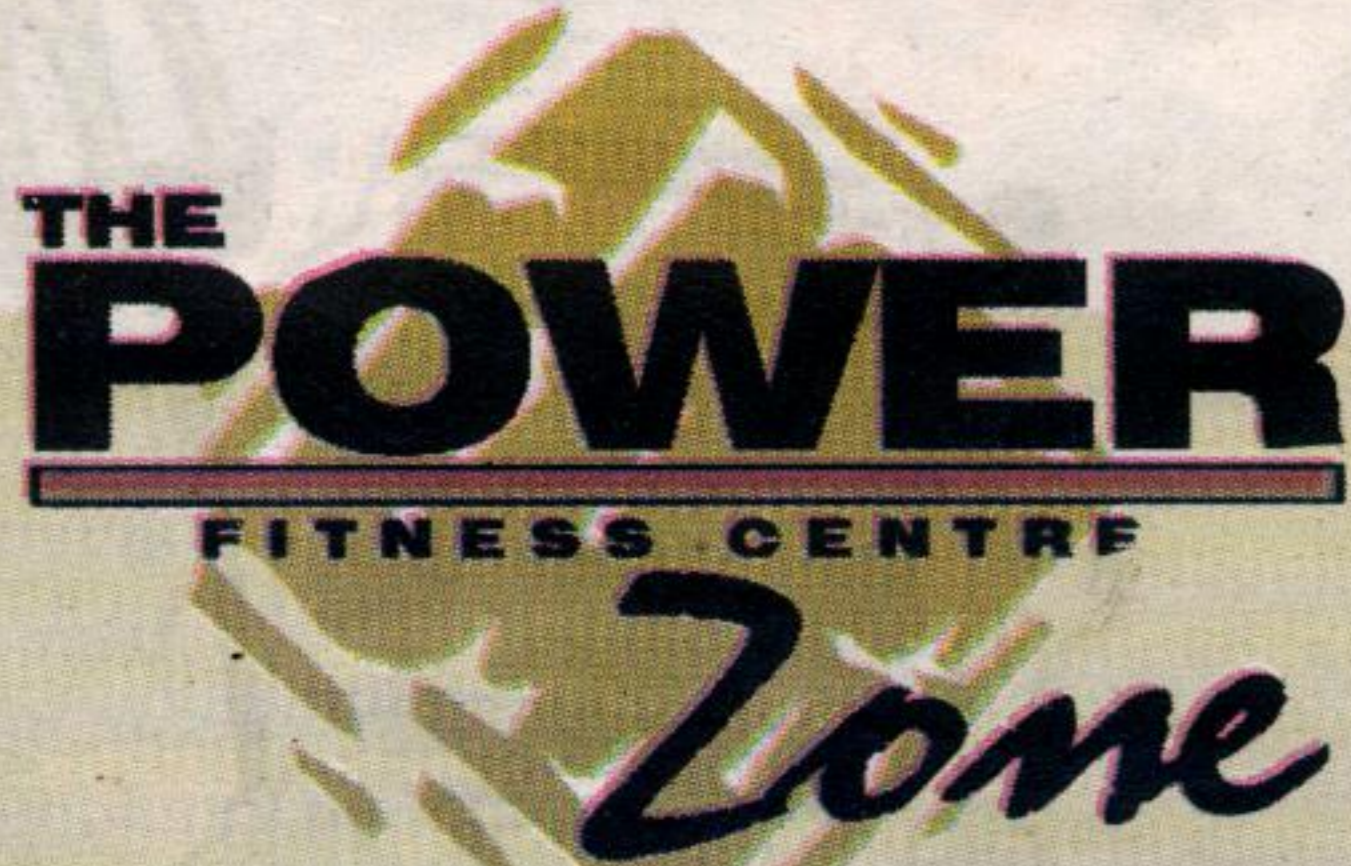
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