

Lifestyles

January a fitting time of year for exercise

People head out to fulfill their New Year's resolutions

By **CARRIE BRUNET**

The Champion

If you're looking to shape up or trim down this month, you're not alone.

January is one of the busiest times of year at the Milton Leisure Centre, as people head out to fulfill their New Year's resolutions, according to Fitness Supervisor Tracy Hasselfeldt.

It's the time of year, explained Ms Hasselfeldt where people who have wanted to improve their health head out, and people who are continuing their fitness programs expand.

For the uninitiated, a physical assessment and even some personal training sessions are recommended.

During the assessment, a trainer will put their client through a battery of physical tests including cardiovascular, strength and flexibility.

Once it's completed, the trainer can put together a comprehensive program for the client that will suit their needs and goals for fitness.

Furthermore, a couple of training sessions helps the client learn to use equipment and free weights efficiently and properly to limit strain and reduce the risk of injury.

"You only need two or three sessions to make sure you're doing the exercises properly," Ms Hasselfeldt said. "Just enough so you are able to do the program safely without hurting yourself."

Injury must be avoided at all costs, Ms Hasselfeldt stressed, adding that it can be a big reason for not keeping that resolution to get fit.

"If you get hurt, you're less likely to come back," she said.

Other ways to ensure a continued relationship with the centre is find tricks to stay motivated.

Ms Hasselfeldt recommends pairing up with a friend or family member for workout sessions.

"You'll motivate each other," she said.

A lot of couples work out at the centre together, Ms Hasselfeldt added. She often sees teens and their parents exercising together also.

Setting reasonable goals is another important step in ensuring success.

"Set small goals, and reward yourself as you meet them," Ms Hasselfeldt. "Buy yourself that new pair of running shoes or that t-shirt that

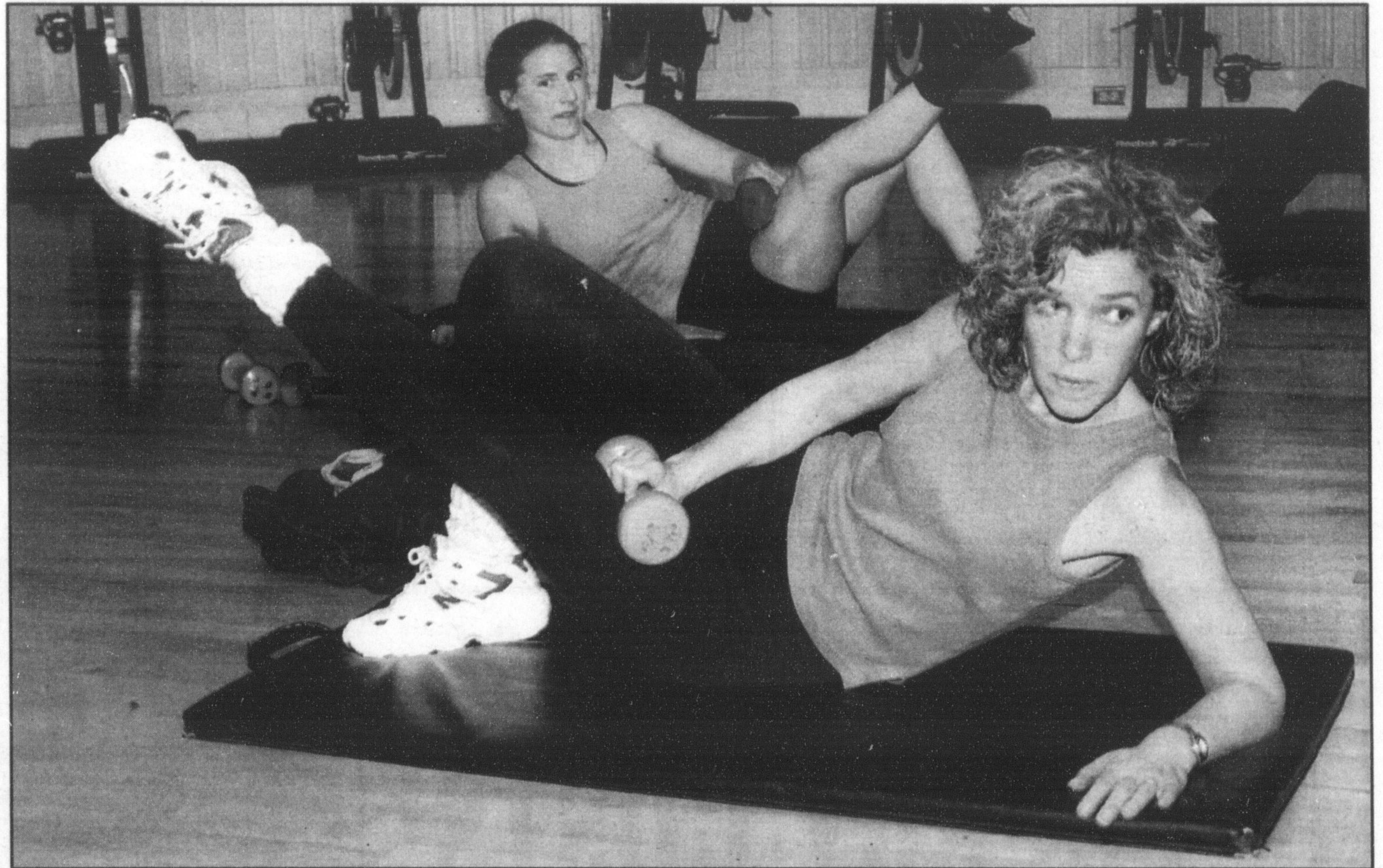


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Sculpt class participants Debbie Malette (front) and Ruth Kerr learn weight training techniques at the Milton Leisure Centre during a noon-hour class. Sculpt classes allow participants to introduce weight training into their workout in a controlled and supervised environment, reducing potential for injury or strain.

you've wanted."

She also recommends keeping a monitoring progress. "Logging your achievements is a good way to stay motivated," Ms Hasselfeldt said.

As with anything, variety is what will maintain one's interest, and with exercising it's the best way to make sure all muscle groups are being used.

Ms Hasselfeldt suggests all fitness programs should incorporate a cardiovascular and a weight training component.

"When people want to lose weight they think about cardiovascular because it burns fat," Ms Hasselfeldt said. "But weight training increases your muscle mass, which speeds up your metabolism and helps you burn calories."

While some patrons may be intimidated by

weight training, Ms Hasselfeldt suggests a sculpting class in which a qualified instructor will demonstrate proper use of weights in low proportions.

"Start off with two or three pounds," she said. "Whatever you're comfortable with."

She also cautions to start off slow.

"Start three times a week," Ms Hasselfeldt said. "You can work your way up to five times. A lot of people come in all gung-ho, which is great. But, they injure themselves and then they don't come back."

Weight training also offers a great benefit to seniors who may be losing bone mass through osteoporosis.

"It builds bone mass and strengthens the muscle around them," she said.

The leisure centre caters to all age groups and all levels of fitness, offering basic aerobic classes up to high intensity work-outs such as their ever-popular cycling classes.

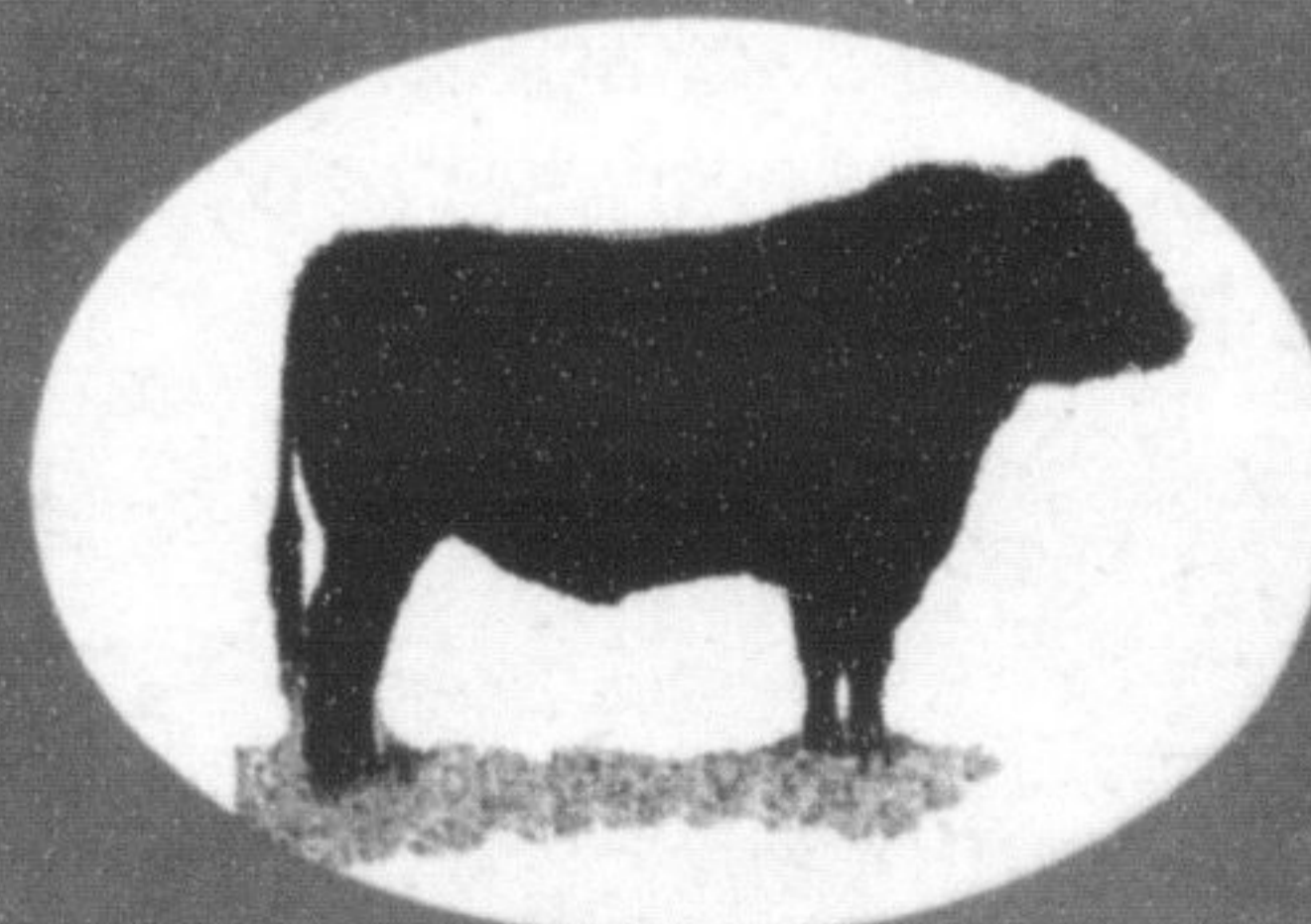
Classes such as Aquafit (underwater aerobics) are great for those who are starting out because the intensity is low.

Aquafit is also a good choice for anyone who wants to limit joint strain and for expecting mothers.

For the seasoned aerobic class-goers, step classes continue to be an all-time favourite, and are offered five times a week.

The centre has also introduced cycling classes, which simulate an outdoor mountain biking experience on stationary bikes.

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