

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



Battle of the Pillbox

*My vast experience as a gym rat has enabled me to solve some of life's challenges.
Read on ...*

The biggest medical problem we face today is not the solvency of Medicare or the cost of drugs. While Congress is fussing about how to work on these secondary issues, I'm fighting the really important battle – how to get my medicine out of the %&\$#@& packaging.

I'm old enough now that I need to organize my daily medications in one of those pill holders, you know, the ones with different compartments for each day of the week. So once a week the battle begins anew when I try to fill those little cubbyholes.

Let's talk about Prilosec OTC, the anti heartburn medicine. You thought it was great to be able to get Prilosec without a prescription, didn't you. Well, you were wrong. Instead of a nice mail-order plastic jar with my 90-day supply of pills, now I have to buy one of those 42-pill packages that contain six metallic foil "cards," each with seven pills neatly aligned and embedded in them. Visualize me with scissors, cutting close up to and then around seven individual pills with the delicate moves of a surgeon. The metal foil is very sharp; you could lose a finger. So this very careful cutting takes most of the morning. Good thing this stuff isn't for a heart attack!

There must be a better way and I, as a proud retired engineer, thought I'd found it. If I exert enormous pressure on the back of the card, over each pill, I can explosively jettison the pill out the front side of the card. But, about two in seven pills break in two due to the tremendous strain. And doing this in the bathroom, I lose about one of seven pills down the drain (at about \$2 a pop) when the ejected pill ricochets into the sink. Finally, after several pills, my thumb is useless for the rest of the day. Not even special exercises in the Gym's "Thumb Strength" class help. It's enough to give you heartburn! I ask you, is this fair?

After Pat quit laughing, she offered to help. Being a knitter Pat is very accomplished with scissors. (I think that make sense, doesn't it?) Anyway, we decided to concentrate on our strengths. Pat cuts the foil cards along the sides of each pill and then I push the little "suckers" out the side. We have these pill parties every 42 days. So it took two mature adults, with five college degrees between us, but we have won the battle of the pillbox.

Now don't get me started on those child-proof medicine jars ...