

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring



Life on a Treadmill

Last month I exposed the sorry life of a Fit Center treadmill machine. Let me tell you about my personal experience with treadmills ...

It was almost two years ago. Pat and I were regularly exercising on our home treadmill. Pat had just tumbled off the machine for the third time in two months, when it stopped dead suddenly in mid routine for no apparent reason. Pat also complained that she hadn't seen the sun in six months because the folded-up treadmill blocked the window in her office. Picky, picky, picky. But I got the message. (I wasn't going to get anything else, until I got the message.)

The next day our treadmill was gone and I decided to join the Fit Center. Pat was already a member and a few months ago I told you the story of joining Lynne O's Building Bones class. Pat and I also started to use the treadmills in the cardio-weight room.

Pat selected a treadmill based on the "extras" it provided. She needed a place to hold her water bottle, a book, and thinking ahead to when she was fully adapted to - and confident in - the machine, her knitting. (That's scary, isn't it?) Then Pat discovered MP3 players and electronic books. So now Pat wears ear phones (that double as ear muffs to protect her from the cold) and gets totally absorbed in some book or other.

I, on the other hand, selected a treadmill that could do the most for me (translation: easy to operate). After Pat showed me how to work it, I've been on my own for months now. I use a treadmill near one of those hanging TV monitors, you know, with a sign on it that says, "Do not touch or move!" The TV must be magic because every time I come into the weight room the TV is in a different position and at a different sound level. No ear phones for me; I use the time to think up these brilliant "rantings."

But there are distractions. The treadmills are lined up against big mirrors, so while exercising you can see the entire cardio-weight room. I get so intimidated by Gym members who not only know how to operate every machine in the place, but actually use them regularly. And when the Staff people exercise, forget it - they should have their own room!

My only satisfaction - and it doesn't happen often - is to sneak a look over to the treadmills on either side of me, and find that I'm going faster than someone else. Until I find out it's someone who's just returned to the Gym after a heart transplant or other significant operation.