

of order and you won't get your money's worth."

Try to find a gym with enough facilities to keep you interested, with hours of operation to suit your schedule. Most young professionals tend to select gyms close to their places of business, allowing them to work out on their lunch hours, or just before or after work. If possible, it's often a good idea to find a health club chain, with several locations, with one membership allowing you to use all facilities.

Join with a friend. You'll keep each other company, and motivated. Many people look to their health club memberships as a ticket to a new social club (it's no surprise that gyms have become the so-called singles bars of the 80s), but you might find that at your particular club, on your particular schedule, you're no more likely to make new friends than you would in, say, a crowded airport. Go with someone you know, to keep things interesting, and to keep costs down. Most clubs offer two-for-one introductory membership programs throughout the year; if you've decided on a club, ask about any upcoming discounts or membership drives before signing up.

"You should look for a gym that's honest," says Dr. Gabe Mirkin. "If you see gimmicks, get out. If they want to send you supplements, things to add to your food, go somewhere else. Also, look out for passive machines. If you see a machine, say a vibrating machine, that has a u-shaped belt that goes from the machine around your buttocks and then back to the machine, and then you turn on the motor, all that's going to do is give you a headache. It's not going to get rid of fat, and it's not going to make you fit." Similarly, bicycles with motor driven pedals should be avoided.

Cliff Lothari, the YMCA's associate director for program services, says you should look for a gym or health club that is progressive enough to anticipate and invent new ways to exercise. "The challenge to our health and physical educators, and to our private clubs and Ys around the country, is to take the young person who has become much more aware of the importance of having a healthy body and identifying some exciting new activities for them to pursue," he predicts. "You just can't go out and play touch football and wreck your knee and expect to go to work on Monday."

One example Lothari points to is the rise in popularity of a sport called Wally-Ball, a west coast hybrid of volleyball and racquetball wherein a net is strung across the center of the racquetball court, and the walls are used to keep the ball alive. "It's a unique and exciting game," he says. "I would say that in the next decade or two we may see some creative new activities that are invented by creative folks."

In major cities, expect to pay healthy prices for membership at some of the better clubs. At the high end, in a city's most

expensive health clubs, expect to pay \$750 for initial membership, and \$60 a month individual dues; tennis memberships might cost as much as \$3,000 for the initial fee, and \$1,000 in annual dues. By contrast, it's possible to gain a full membership to a YMCA or YMHA in most cities for less than \$150 annually. In smaller cities you can expect to pay even less for an individual "Y" membership. Shop around for the best deals, and for the club that best fits your needs and your schedule. Court time at many tennis, squash and racquetball clubs usually costs extra, even to members, and you should try to find a club which keeps either membership or per-use costs to a minimum.

If you live close to your alma mater, your best bet is to continue to use the campus facilities and to remain an alumnus in good standing. Donate some money to your school (remember, it's tax deductible), and work out with a clear conscience. In addition, many universities have pooled resources to open shared alumni clubs in major cities, and many of these have exercise facilities. Check with your school before your graduate to see what they have to offer.

Also, many companies subsidize health club memberships for their employees, or offer deep discounts with participating clubs. Some forward-thinking companies, particularly those in rural areas, have on-site gyms for employee use. Ask your employer about company policy in this area before you sign up on your own.

DESK JOCKEYS—AVOIDING ON THE JOB INJURIES

The nine to five world can take its toll on your body, particularly if your job calls for you to be at a desk all day. According to physical therapist Lori Monson, the most common nagging injuries resulting from extended sitting in a confined position affect the neck, and the upper and lower back.

Some things to watch out for:

- Try to avoid cradling the telephone between your head and shoulders for long periods of time. If you're on the phone con-

stantly at work, get a headset; you also might consider a phone attachment which extends from the receiver, allowing you to rest the phone on your shoulder without tilting your neck. If neither is possible, try to remember to keep a hand on the receiver, and your neck erect, as often as possible. If all else fails, get a speaker phone.

- Select a comfortable desk chair, preferably one that offers additional support to the lower back.

- Be sure your desk and chair are at the right height. If your desk is too high, you'll likely develop strain in your shoulders from lifting your elbows; if it's too low, you'll probably lean over too often and at too great an angle, and run the risk of neck strain. Try it out for a day or so and then make the necessary adjustments.

- If you do a lot of reading at your desk, rest the reading materials on a tilt whenever possible. You can do this simply by leaning a book on another book, and in so doing you can save unnecessary strain on the neck from looking straight down for long periods.

- Don't organize your desk to one side of your body. If you pick up the phone on your left hand side, for example, make sure there's something else in place that you pick up on the right (a Rolodex, let's say, or an appointment book). Switch things around every once in a while. "In time," Monson says, "you're going to start orienting your body towards the things you reach for, and you can get some posture changes."

- The best thing to do, though, is to get up a lot. Walk around. "If you're working at a computer or a word processor, that might not be realistic," cautions Monson, "but if you're going to be sitting down and won't be able to move around, there are some things to do. You can do side bends from the waist, and shoulder circles. You can tuck your chin in towards your Adam's apple, rolling the shoulders backwards to counteract what sitting usually does that's injurious."

- Of course, most of you have probably spent years huddled over books or term papers, and you may have picked up some

