

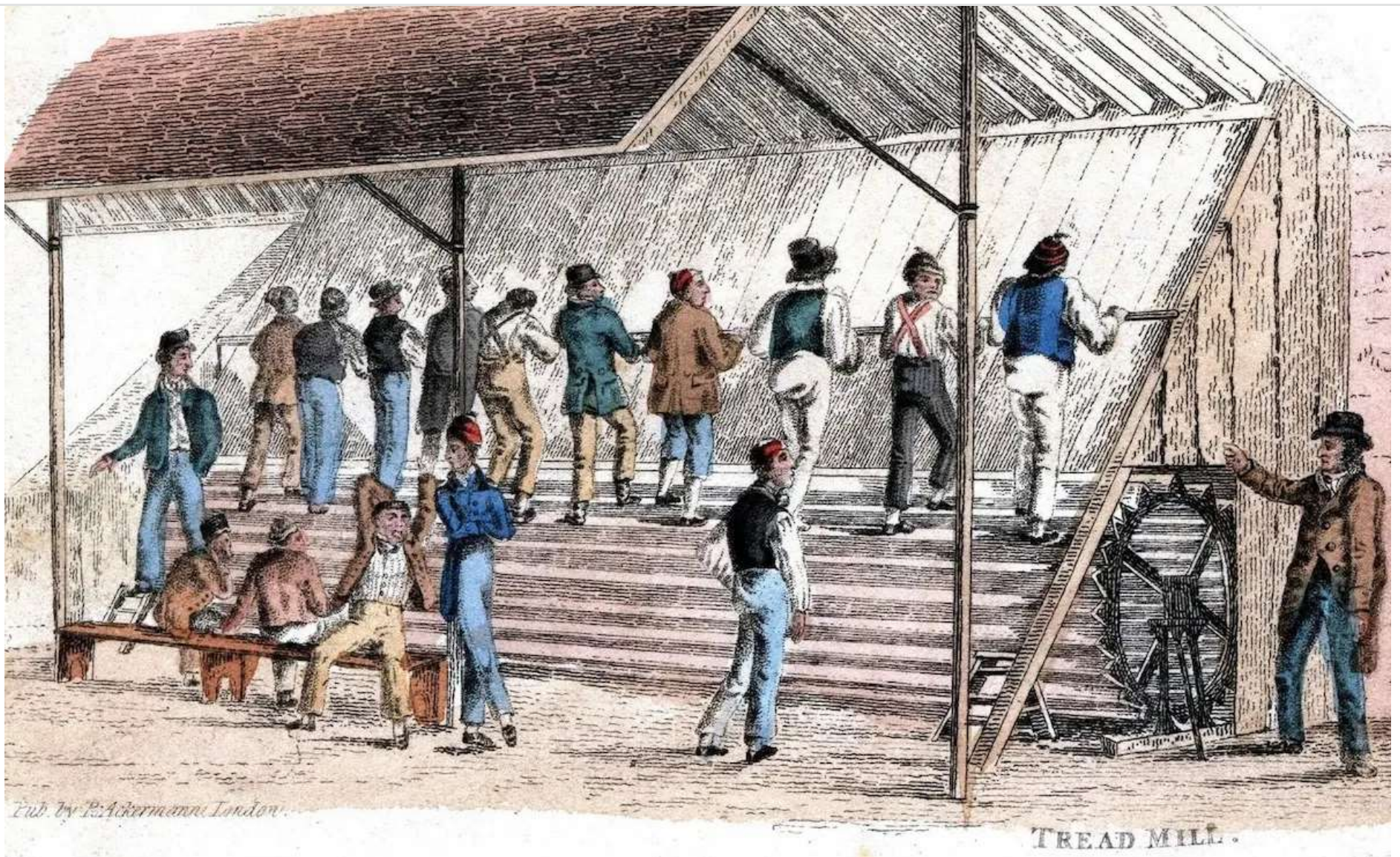


VALE

MAGAZINE

LIFE By KATERINA PAPATHANASIOU / NOVEMBER 30, 2022

THE TREADMILL'S SURPRISING HISTORY AS A TORTURE DEVICE



Inmates on a penal treadmill at Brixton prison in London, England, c. 1827 – Credits: <http://www.britannica.com>

If you've ever set foot on a treadmill, you know it's rarely a pleasant experience. Even people who enjoy walking or running don't often like the treadmill!

30-DAY BEACH BODY CHALLENGE 						
DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7
WARM UP: 10 MIN CARDIO: 15 MIN CORE: 10 MIN STRETCH: 5 MIN	PLANK: 1 MIN SQUAT: 10 REPS LUNGES: 10 REPS BURPEES: 5 REPS	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	OFF
DAY 8	DAY 9	DAY 10	DAY 11	DAY 12	DAY 13	DAY 14
WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	OFF
DAY 15	DAY 16	DAY 17	DAY 18	DAY 19	DAY 20	DAY 21
WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	OFF
DAY 22	DAY 23	DAY 24	DAY 25	DAY 26	DAY 27	DAY 28
WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN WALK: 10 MIN JOG: 10 MIN	OFF
DAY 29	DAY 30	OFF				

The treadmill's fascinating history is explained in more detail below.

The Treadmill and Prisons

In his 1912 book “**Curious Bits of History**,” author Albert William Macy notes that the treadmill was invented in China and later adapted by civil engineer William Cubitt to serve as a prison labor device.

Cubitt is credited with inventing the “treadwheel,” which was made of two wheels connected by interlocking cogs.



The treadwheel initially served as a device for pumping water and grinding corn. However, shortly after its development, it went on to become a tool for punishment.

The novelist **Oscar Wilde** was even sentenced to time on the treadmill as a punishment for “gross indecency with certain male persons.” He describes his experience in the poem “**The Ballad of Reading Gaol**.”

In the 1800s, treadmills had a place in numerous prisons worldwide, where they served as “**atonement machines**.” In England, Scotland, and Wales, 109 out of 200 jails featured them. Four prisons in New York, Connecticut, Philadelphia, and Charleston also utilized them.

Treadmills fell out of favor relatively soon after they were introduced in the United States. “Collective industry,” which involved using prisoners as factory workers, became a more popular method of making prisoners repent for their sins.

It wasn't until the 1900s that the treadmill began its transition to being used as a health and fitness tool.

In 1910, the **Centers for Disease Control** released reports showing that "diseases of the heart" were the primary cause of death in the U.S. In 1913, Claude Lauraine Hagen received **a patent** for the "training machine," which was his version of the treadmill.



A few decades later, in response to ongoing concerns about heart disease, a cardiologist named Robert Bruce introduced "**the Bruce protocol**." This approach tested patients' heart health by hooking them up to electrocardiograms as they walked on a treadmill. Army physician Kenneth Cooper went on to adopt this approach and used it to test pilots and contenders for the space program.

Cooper continued his efforts for over 20 years. In 1968, he published a book titled "Aerobics," which introduced his own method of running-based exercise. Cooper is still known as "**the father of aerobics**."

rooms (where they may or may not serve as coat racks).

The Modern Treadmill

The treadmills of today look very different from the treadmills of yesteryear.

Modern treadmills feature many exciting features, including the option to adjust the speed, resistance, and incline. Some also include tools to help walkers and runners know how many calories they're burning, as well as screens that provide entertainment in an effort to make workouts more enjoyable.





Despite the number of evolutions the treadmill has gone through over the years, there's no doubt about its questionable history.

If you loathe walking or running on the treadmill, you're not alone — and perhaps your instincts are on to something!

The good news is that there are many other ways to elevate your heart rate and achieve your fitness goals, from running or walking outdoors to heading to your local yoga studio.