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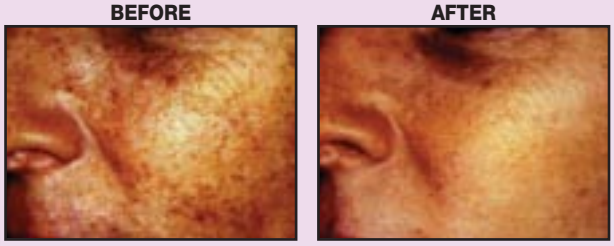

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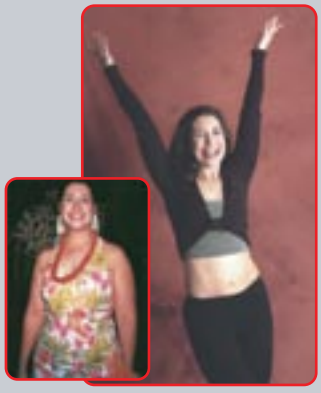

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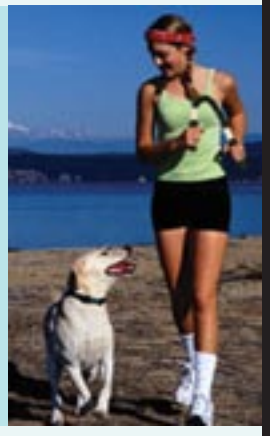

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FEATURES

fitness | Finding Yoga

Earlier this year, I thumbed through a magazine article that discussed the ways American families were going to relax during the summer months. As I look back now, one California couple's relaxation tactics were particularly memorable. Their commitment to leisure included never leaving their small neighborhood enclave which, from the sound of it, was as exclusive as it was earth-conscious. "We don't have to leave anymore, we have our little bakery and coffee shop, our organic food store and our yoga studio. It's all right here."

by Caitlin Haskell

style | The Plastic Surgery Revolution

Most of us have at least one thing we'd like to change about our physical appearance. Maybe it's fine lines around the eyes, a little extra cushion around the middle or a few extra pounds on the tush. Some just grin and bear it…you can't stay young forever, right? On the other hand, millions of Americans turn to a cosmetic surgeon to fight off the ravages of time.

by Amy Covington

life | Lone Star Getaways

The Big Bend area may not be the easiest place to get to from Austin, but it's a stark topographical contrast to the Hill Country. Not to mention, numerous fitness options make it worth the eight-hour drive. Nature-lovers will appreciate the beauty of the towering Chisos Mountains that rise more than 7,000 feet from the desert floor, providing stunning vistas of steep canyons along the Rio Grande and the nearby and forbidding Chihuahuan Desert.

by Lisa Hickey Baile

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I WAS ON THE PHONE WITH MY FATHER

the other day and he told me he'd quit smoking after 60 years. I was stunned. I couldn't believe it. Immediately I asked, "What made you quit?" He said the doctor told him that if he didn't, he would eventually go blind. Needless to say, he quit the same day. He said, "I had to make a choice and it was really pretty easy — I like seeing a lot more than I like smoking."

You may be getting tired of my preaching about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, but when the stakes are so high and the outcome is so important, it's hard to stay quiet. Certainly I understand how difficult it can be to persevere and stay the course, or for that matter, find the course in the first place. But I'm often baffled with the fact that healthy eating and regular exercise are routinely ignored by so many of us.

My theory on this phenomenon may be intuitively obvious, but I'm going to share this piece of wisdom with you anyway. I honestly believe that given the choice, people generally do the things they enjoy and avoid the things they don't. Ingenious, right? Okay, bear with me. What's important about this basic insight is that it revolves around personal priorities and compromise. Just consider my father's situation for a moment. For more than a half-century he willingly engaged in an unhealthy activity because he enjoyed it. Had he truly understood the real consequences and considered the trade-offs, he would have quit smoking years ago. But it wasn't until it became personal and imminent that he made his choice and acted decisively.

How many times have you heard of someone changing their personal habits or lifestyle after being confronted with illness? It happens all the time, but what is most unfortunate is that we often wait until it's too late in the game — when the consequences are serious and immediate.

So what should we do in the face of these unhealthy tendencies? Here are some ideas: 1) Educate yourself and understand the consequences of your habits and behaviors, not only in the short-term, but also for the long haul. 2) Determine realistic and positive alternative behaviors that you genuinely believe you can adopt and sustain. 3) Consult with professionals to find safe and proper ways to achieve your goals. 4) Share your new activities with others and develop a support system with friends and family. 5) Make your new lifestyle fun — soon you'll wonder how you could've lived any other way.

Remember, it's all about personal priorities and how you want to live your life. In the end, the results will speak for themselves.

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HEALTH WATCH

MICROORGANISMS

Hot tubs are a popular alternative to the pool when the nights turn cooler. Many people with arthritis and other ailments seek relief in the heated water and find the swirling jets soothing. Unfortunately, there are health risks involved with prolonged Jacuzzi use, such as a bacterial infection known as "hot tub lung." Some common symptoms are coughing, fever and shortness of breath, and most cases occur when the hot tub isn't cleaned properly. Above 85 degrees, hot water actually kills most of chlorine's disinfectant properties. For more information, visit www.webmd.com.

HEALTHY HANDS

According to a Harvard Medical School study, using a hand sanitizer can stop the spread of gastrointestinal illnesses by 50 percent. This method of "hand-washing" has recently become popular because it requires no soap or water, and dries within a few seconds. Not only does it lessen the risk of catching food-borne illnesses and stomach diseases, but it's especially useful in schools, where children pass viruses back and forth. In fact, two schools in Richmond, Indiana are experimenting with a new product called Safe4Hours, to help keep their students germ-free. The gel is still being tested by the FDA, so in the meantime stick to good old-fashioned hand-washing as a reliable option.

BACTERIAL BENEFITS

Most people associate bacteria with unpleasant infections and germ-infested countertops. But in reality, the human body actually contains more bacteria than cells. Though some bacteria do cause illness, others rid the body of harmful disease and strengthen the immune system. Not surprisingly, numerous studies have shown that animals raised in entirely germ-free environments are more susceptible to infectious diseases when exposed to the outside world. The truth is, a little bacteria can go a long way in protecting us from everyday grease and grime.

HEALTHOPEDIA

ECZEMA EXPOSED

EGG-ZE-WHAT? Eczema is sometimes called atopic dermatitis. It's a skin condition defined by redness, itching, scaly patches of skin and in some cases, even bleeding. It is more common in children than adults and perhaps worse in young people due to their inability to resist scratching their skin, exacerbating the condition to a more painful and unsightly rash.

SLEW OF SYMPTOMS: You may have eczema and not know it, depending on how mild the symptoms are. However, for most sufferers the symptoms are hard to ignore. These include severe itching, skin that is hot and red, flaky dry patches and infection. Typically eczema appears on the arms, neck, face and knees.

UNCOVER THE CAUSE: Many people inherit eczema from their parents; others may simply be more naturally susceptible to the condition, such as those who suffer from food allergies. Environment plays a critical role, as does stress. The immune system is most likely involved, particularly in sufferers who experience flare-ups from time to time. Certain environmental or emotional factors can cause the immune system to overreact and produce the rash or itching associated with eczema.

TRICKY TREATMENT: While there's no real cure for eczema, there are several options to relieve the symptoms and prevent flare-ups. Antihistamines such as Benadryl, lotions and ointments can all be used to reduce itching. Even lifestyle changes may be necessary to avoid certain triggers. As with most conditions, symptoms and level of severity varies from person to person, so it's always best to first discuss treatment options with a doctor or dermatologist.

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COMPETITIVE DRIVE

THE COMPETITIVE MIND. On the field, on the court or in the gym, competition is ever-present and a key component to achieving victory. But are we motivated just for the sake of winning? Or is it a sense of personal accomplishment that stretches us to our limits? Perhaps it's a combination of both. There's no denying that competition plays a prominent role in the athletic world, but where does it come from and what effect does it ultimately have on our success? Competitive behavior is part of human nature with evolutionary ties to our basic need for survival. Yet some of us are more competitive than others. Psychological studies suggest an association between insecurity and extreme competitiveness, such that people who lack confidence on the inside are often seeking external outlets to prove their worth, superiority or overall competence. "Excessive competition is often an attempt to compensate for feelings of inadequacy and inferiority," explains Bradley Kennington, an individual and family therapist practicing in Austin. This type of competitive drive often manifests itself in team sports, where one person strives to stand out among his or her teammates, or in a one-on-one sport (like tennis or golf) where it's easy to determine who the better player is. On the other hand, confidence tends to be a correlate with more solitary pursuits like running and cycling. These endeavors lend themselves to a quiet, inwardly-focused drive to succeed — in essence, a chance to rise to a new challenge or better oneself. Regardless of which type is more your style, neither one is necessarily better or worse than the other. However, those whose competitive drive is so strong that winning is their only incentive may find rare satisfaction. An obsession with winning can easily produce frustration, stress and a sense of inadequacy that spills over into other areas of life, such as work and relationships. "Competitiveness and connection cannot co-exist in a relationship," says Kennington. "Many relationships end or are severely strained because of competition." So if you can learn to set a goal within yourself instead of always striving to be better than everyone else, you'll find focus and relaxation are not far behind. Now that's a winning combination.

THE COMPETITIVE BODY. According to a Penn State University research study, competition (both the anticipation and act of) elicited an almost three-fold rise in testosterone levels among women than those observed in men. The surge in testosterone is thought to increase a competitor's willingness to take risks, improve his or her psychomotor function and coordination, as well as increase cognitive performance and mental acuity critical to winning.

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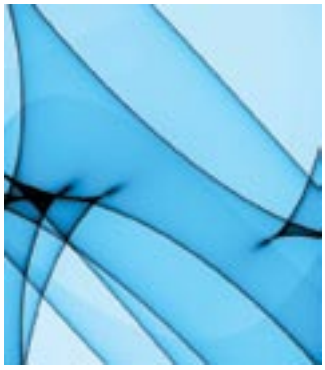

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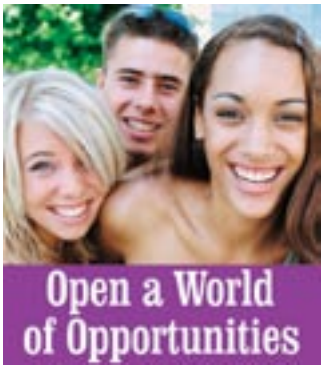

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finding yoga

by caitlin haskell

Earlier this year, I thumbed through a magazine article that discussed the ways American families were going to relax during the summer months. As I look back now, one California couple's relaxation tactics were particularly memorable. Their commitment to leisure included never leaving their small neighborhood enclave which, from the sound of it, was as exclusive as it was earth-conscious. "We don't have to leave anymore," they said with a subtext of self-satisfaction. "We have our little bakery and coffee shop, our organic food store and our yoga studio. It's all right here."

Though yoga has become a significant topic of interest in the past decade due to its effects on relaxation, mental clarity and body strengthening, it's still surprising to see the integral role it plays in the lives of a growing number of Americans. And Austin is no exception to the yoga boom. Just as we crave coffee to wake up and hearty meals throughout the day to stay energized, we look to yoga for balance and perspective in our everyday lives. As the California couple knew, a neighborhood without its own yoga studio is somehow incomplete. Certainly yoga can be much more than a nurturer of the mind and body; for some, it's even a scientific practice with the ability to affect real social change.

As a tribute to the depth, exploration and rigor of yoga, we've decided to profile three different Austinites at various stages in their development, all brought to the practice by different motivations. In the course of these profiles, we hope to share some insight about the interesting ways yoga finds its way into a busy Austin life and how easy it can be for someone to actually find yoga.

profile 1: kimberly jones, yoga instructor

Profession: Ph.D. Student, Pre-Columbian Art History

Preferred Yoga Tradition: Hatha

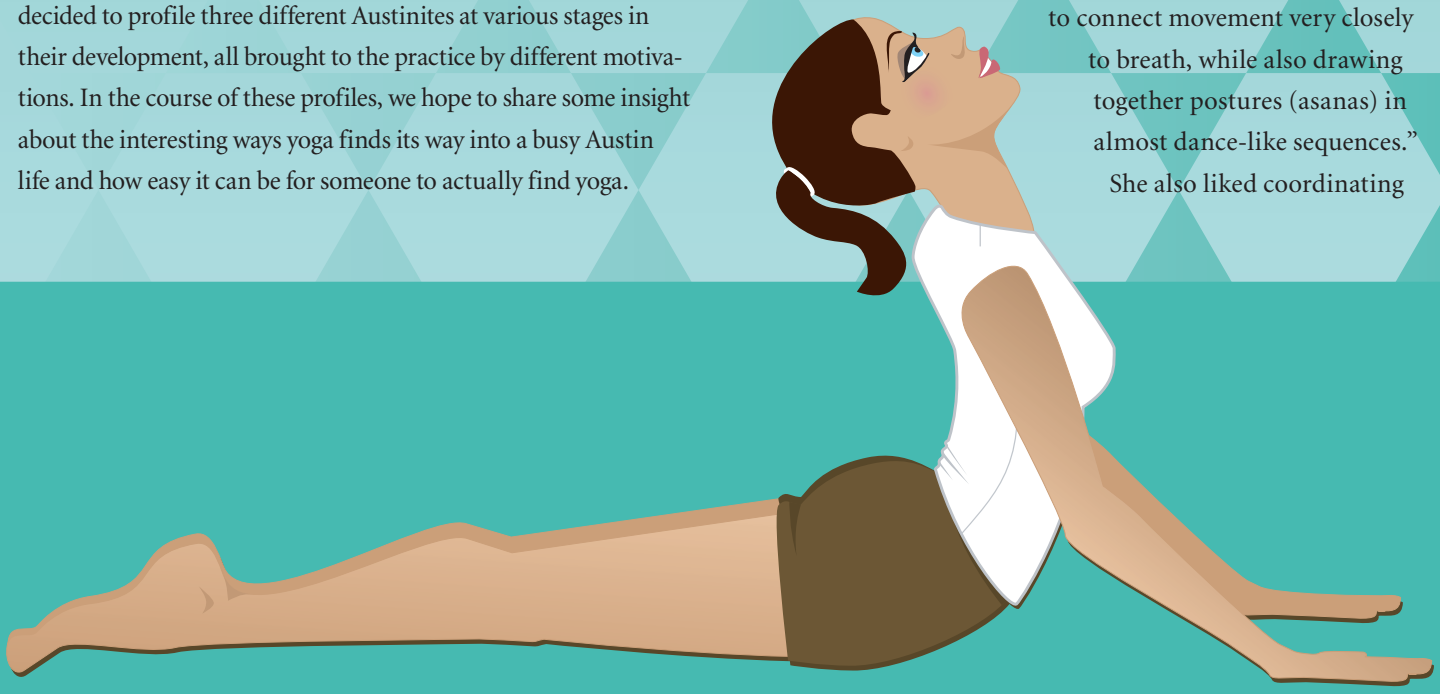
Familiarity with Yoga: Instructor since 2002

Growing up in Plano, Texas, Kimberly Jones is a longtime dancer who competed in jazz, tap, ballet and point. Arriving in Austin as a UT undergrad, Jones took a job upon graduation working on extracurricular education programs. However, after just one year at her desk job, she quickly decided to take up yoga.

"Sitting and conferencing all day was both tiring for my bad hip (due to a nerve damage injury at age 15) and emotionally draining. Not to mention I gained 20 pounds in a year under the stress and sedentary lifestyle. I heard about Yoga Yoga from a coworker and started attending classes twice a week."

The Hatha tradition provided Jones' entrée into yoga, which is the style she now teaches. Before her time as a yoga instructor, Jones took classes primarily in the Vinyasa style, but experimented with Kundalini, Vini and Ashtanga. Since then, she has sporadically practiced Anusara and Iyengar as well.

As Jones explains, "In the beginning, I preferred the Vinyasa-style flow because it allowed me to connect movement very closely to breath, while also drawing together postures (asanas) in almost dance-like sequences." She also liked coordinating



movements with a variety of musical compilations designed to accompany yoga.

When asked about her teaching philosophy, Jones points out that one portion of her job is simply to teach the philosophy of yoga. While yet another is helping people release from their workday and part with stress. Often times she finds yoga instruction nearly as relaxing as practicing it herself. "When I tell them to breathe and just let go, I can't help but do the same," she explains. "Plus, the relationships one develops as a teacher in the yoga community with students and fellow yogis inevitably draws you in."

In addition to teaching three Hatha classes a week, Jones enjoys other forms of exercise and meditation. "The meditative pulse" of running around Town Lake or the refreshing feeling of swimming at Barton Springs provides an alternative physical outlet, and she frequently finds time for individual meditation at home at the end of a long day.

What is Hatha Yoga? Hatha Yoga can be as gentle and easy as light stretching or it can serve as a challenging workout that improves muscle tone. It's a great way to stretch your muscles, work on your flexibility and relax. By aligning bodily actions and mental awareness, Hatha Yoga improves both balance and strength. It's based on 84,000 postures (the spiritual number which, to our knowledge, has not been audited) but you could expect to be introduced to a dozen or so and learn variations of them in a single 90-minute class.

Because the physical intensity of a Hatha Yoga class is relatively scalable, variations of Hatha have been used as the basis for pre-natal yoga and yoga classes for the elderly. On the cardiovascular end of the Hatha spectrum, Hatha Flow — incorporates movement between postures with very little rest in between — can be a great cardio workout.

profile 2: alex earle, yoga newbie

Profession: Health & Fitness Magazine Ad Consultant

Preferred Yoga Tradition: Bikram

Familiarity with Yoga: Longtime Athlete, Yoga Beginner

Alex Earle is a tennis fanatic with a football player's mentality towards lifting weights. He lifts almost everyday and his commitment to fitness is apparent (even to those who don't know his affiliation with *Austin Fit Magazine*). He is not, however, the type of guy one would expect to find contemplating his breathing, considering the feng shui of his apartment or shopping for yoga pants.

So what drew him into the yoga studio? The mystique of it actually. Having heard about the yoga craze from so many different sources, he decided to try it himself one day after work. The result was that, much to his surprise, Bikram Yoga gave him a grueling workout without all of the running around he was used to with tennis.

"During my first Bikram class [at Bikram Yoga Davenport], it became apparent very quickly (within 20 minutes or so) that yoga was not only a good workout, but perhaps one of the best and toughest aerobic and anaerobic workouts I'd ever experienced. In comparison to the aerobic exercises I endured in high school and college soccer, it was equally intense. I got the same burning feeling in my legs that I experienced from various running drills and it wasn't just my muscles that were worked to fatigue…my heart, lungs and mind were all tested to the max!"

Now, Earle goes back to Bikram Yoga for the physical challenge and mental rigor. Harder than a tennis practice, but easier on his joints, making it through a 90-minute yoga session is a regular test of bodily strength and spiritual will.

What is Bikram Yoga? If the idea of being in a 100-degree room and performing 26 postures for 90 minutes sounds like your idea of a great workout, Bikram Yoga is probably for you. Developed by Yogiraj Bikram Choudhury, the 26 posture method of Bikram Yoga is designed to warm the body as well as stretch ligaments and tendons in a specific order. This sequence of postures moves freshly oxygenated blood throughout the entire body. In a typical class, students will hold each posture twice for a set amount of time. Though not for the faint of heart, Bikram Yoga claims to restore health and energy to every muscle, joint and organ in the body. Just be prepared to sweat!

profile 3: nawaratri sannyasi, yogi

Profession: Teacher, Satyananda Yoga Center, Bihar School

Familiarity with Yoga: Teacher for 20 years, 45 years practicing

Upon speaking with Nawaratri Sannyasi, it becomes clear that yoga serves not only as a recreational activity, athletic outlet and relaxation technique, but it can also be a way of life. As a student of guru Swami Satyananda Saraswati, (who taught yoga to such illustrious figures as Pope John Paul II and founded the first University of Yoga), Sannyasi seems to view yoga as a way to mend the modern world. The emphasis in today's society on material goods and physical bodies over spiritual awareness has created an imbalance that, in her opinion, shows its face in depression, addiction and crime. For the Bihar School of Yoga, the way to begin healing physical, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual ills is to turn to the teachings of gurus, passed down over thousands of years.

Sannyasi began practicing yoga at the age of 7 and has taught all over the world, including Bombay, London, Botswana and the United States. Today she teaches free classes for the Bihar School on Thursdays and Saturdays at the Austin Asian-American Cultural Center. Covering poses (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), stress relief, yoga detox (shatkarmas), deep relaxation, meditation, manta, diet and yogic science, people interested in attending need only call and reserve a spot for themselves. Sannyasi also serves as yoga consultant to the Austin Independent School District (AISD), teaches students in a variety of Austin schools and is the overall yoga "go-to" for the City of Austin. Best of all, her classes are free of charge so that monetary concerns are never in the forefront of students' minds.

Sannyasi makes it clear that she does not choose what she teaches. "Ego is not involved," she says, meaning that her personal preferences don't figure into the equation when it comes to instruction. Rather, teachings are dictated by tradition. As the Bihar School Web site delineates their tradition, "it was systematized by Paramahamsa Satyananda Saraswati and continued by Paramahamsa Niranjanananda Saraswati, based in Munger and Rikhia, Bihar, India; in the lineage of Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh, India." In other words, they practice a body of knowledge that has been passed down for centuries. Sannyasi makes it clear that she is not a teacher because she wanted to undertake the endeavor. Instead, this was a decision made by her guru. Otherwise, she would never have been able to teach.

As Sannyasi explains, the purpose of training and teaching yoga, according to this tradition, is not expressly for physical results. Physical benefits are simply a convenient by-product of the holistic approach to yoga that the Bihar School espouses. Rather, the reason for doing yoga is to benefit humanity. As such, teachers can be found working with addicts, patients suffering from cancer and AIDS, people with special needs, and the mentally ill. For each specific illness there are corresponding postures and practices that are known to heal effectively.

Though this humanitarian undertaking might strike some as analogous to a church outreach mission, Sannyasi makes it clear that yoga is not a religion, nor does it have any religious pretense. Agnostics and atheists can practice yoga, just as well as anyone else. In fact, she says that yoga is more like "a science learned through deep meditation." She uses the term science quite literally here. Just as physics and chemistry operate under certain rules, so does yoga.

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Bikram Yoga Davenport • 3600 N. Cap of Texas Hwy
328.4949 • www.bikramyogadavenport.com

Bodhi Yoga • 2905 San Gabriel St.
478.2909 • www.bodhiyoga.com

Body Vida • 1115 South Congress Ave.
447.9642 • www.bodyvida.com

Clear Springs Studio • 2 Locations (Far West and Copeland St.) • 231.9644 • www.clearspringstudio.com

Creekside Yoga • 900 Round Rock Ave., Ste. 212
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Furthermore, in much the same way that an elementary student would make a steady progression through school, "there is an order to the subjects in yoga." Sannyasi continues, "A first grader should not be introduced to trigonometry and quite similarly there are some poses in yoga that a beginner should not be doing." Likewise, people with conditions like high blood pressure should not attempt certain poses.

In contrast to the popular perception of yoga as a trendy athletic alternative, Sannyasi believes that we should focus more on the spiritual benefits of yoga. "Everyone today is so immersed in the physical," she says, "but we should work on what we take with us when we die. In each class, even starting from the very first day, you should feel better when you leave than when you came in. But, the focus here is to work on our spiritual selves." As someone who's helped others through trauma, disease and substance abuse, it's easy to see why Sannyasi tends to de-prioritize the physical benefits of yoga.

For Sannyasi, Jones and Earle, yoga is and continues to be a personal journey of discovery. Each has their own approach, motive and reward. So whether you seek yoga to reach new levels physically, de-stress or simply restore balance in your life, it's worth giving a try. Because you never really know when you're going to find your ticket to Samadhi.

To get you started in the right direction, we've provided a list of yoga studios serving the greater Austin area (p. 16). When picking a studio, make sure to do your research — inquire about the breadth of their programs, whether or not they specialize in a particular type of yoga, their class times and sizes, as well as any introductory offers for first-timers.

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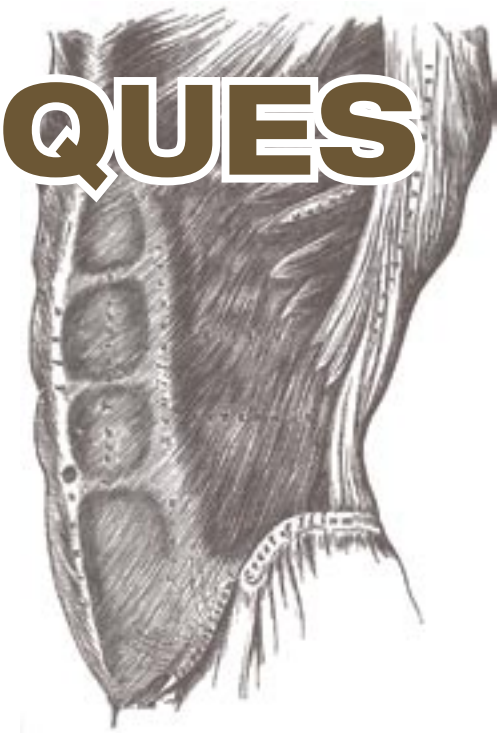
MUSCLE OF THE MONTH

HANDLING OBLIQUES



IT'S NO SECRET THAT BOTH MEN AND WOMEN STRUGGLE to keep their mid-sections trim and slim, especially as they age. One thing to remember however, is that the abs aren't the only muscle group to target when attempting to tone the stomach. The obliques — sometimes affectionately called the "love handles" — are the muscles that rest just above the hips on each side of the torso. Though easy to neglect, they're just as important as the abs, due to their proximity to a series of back muscles. Firmer obliques lead to a stronger all-around core and greater flexibility. The good news is that you don't need any fancy equipment to get started. Paul R. Touey, a personal trainer at Fitness on Fifth, demonstrates three simple moves that will have you loving your "love handles" in no time.

TRUNK ROTATION

Position yourself on the floor with hips and knees bent and one hand behind the ear. Place the other hand on the floor. Drop knees toward the floor without touching it and keep the upper body straight. Take a breath in and contract the obliques and abdominals. Pull the rib cage up and over toward the opposite hip while exhaling. Hold the contraction and breathe out the remaining air. Lower the trunk down to the starting position and repeat.

EX_BALL TRUNK ROTATION

Lie on a Swiss Ball with lower back centered on the front of the ball. With the feet firmly on the floor, place one hand slightly behind the ear and the other hand on the hip or side of the trunk. Take a breath in and contract the obliques and abdominals. Begin pulling the rib cage in a diagonal direction toward the opposite hip while exhaling. Hold the contraction and exhale the remaining air. Lower the trunk back to the starting position and repeat.

EX_BALL LATERAL TRUNK FLEXION

Lie sideways on a Swiss Ball with one side of the trunk over the ball, keeping a natural curve in the back. Bend the knees and spread the legs apart as much as possible to stabilize the body. Anchor the feet against a wall if necessary. Place the arms across the body or slightly behind the ears. Take a breath in and contract the internal obliques. Pull the side of the rib cage toward the side of the pelvis while exhaling. Hold the contraction and exhale the remaining air. Lower the trunk back to the starting position and repeat.

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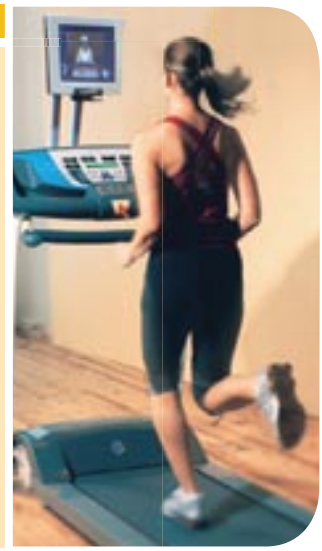
WORKING OUT, WORKING IN

When it comes time to burn some calories, do you hit the gym or hit the pavement? Both options have their pros and cons, but there may be some factors you haven't considered. Here's a rundown of three favorite workouts that will keep you slim in or out of the gym.

TRAIL OR TREADMILL

Running or walking on a treadmill may keep you dry, but you won't get the same kind of challenge you would on natural terrain. For one thing, the surface of a treadmill remains constant, regardless of any incline you add, whereas running on pavement or a grassy hill provides a wide range of surfaces that work your muscles whether you realize it or not. Some people prefer the treadmill because it allows them to control the variables and monitor their progress at all times, as well as zone out to their favorite sitcom or the latest news story. While this may be a motivator for some — particularly older people who don't want to brave the elements — studies suggest that walking outdoors is an all-around healthier option because it stimulates the mind as well as the body. Serious athletes also swear by the pavement when they're training. After all, marathons aren't run on a treadmill.



SPIN OR CYCLE

Until a couple years ago, taking your bike ride outdoors definitely had the leg up in this competition. But with the soaring popularity of "spinning," a high-energy indoor cycling workout set to music, it seems there may be a tie. Certainly, there's something to be said for hitting the hills on a road bike — the fresh air, the scenery, the adrenaline rush you get flying downhill after pushing your way up a steep climb — but "spinning" definitely takes indoor cycling to a whole new level. In fact, during a one-hour class you're likely to burn more calories than you would going for a 60-minute bike ride, mostly because there's an instructor to encourage and challenge you the entire time. If you still can't decide between these two options, we suggest a little of both. Spin your heart out during the week, and when the weekend rolls around, take your bike out for a leisurely ride.

LAKE IT OR FAKE IT

For many people, a stationary rower is a lot more accessible than a canoe or skull, and unless you're on a crew team or an avid kayaker, you probably don't need to worry about weighing the two options. Even so, it may be to your advantage to try out the real thing for a change of pace and scenery. The problem with stationary rowers is that most people don't use them correctly, putting too much emphasis on pulling with the upper body. Rowing is actually a lot more about engaging the core muscles and the lower body than working the arms. If you know what you're doing, the stationary option can be used as a good training tool, but just think how much more fun you'll have skimming across the lake, taking in the sights and sounds while you row, and working your body from head to toe.

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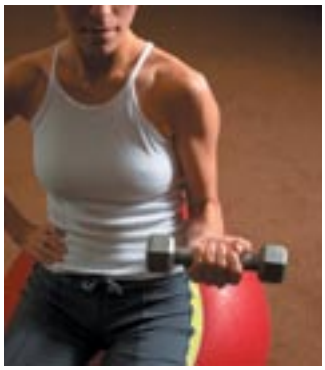

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DIET-GRAM

MIXED LETTUCE

ICEBERG. Often noted as having little nutritional potency, this mild yet crisp-textured lettuce is a favorite with children and adults alike. While it does supply a significant amount of folate, it's best when paired with a darker green in order to maximize on nutrition without skimping on taste.

ROMAINE. A salad that starts with a heaping pile of this leafy green is sure to pack a nutritional punch. Every two-cup serving of romaine provides approximately half the daily value of vitamins A and C, and large amounts of manganese and chromium, which help the body metabolize fat.

ARUGULA. Adding to the mystique of this tart little salad green, arugula is unique in that it is a good source of calcium, a nutrient commonly lacking from other types of lettuce. It's also high in vitamin C and folate. While some people may need to acquire a taste for its bitterness, the benefits are well worth it. A member of the cruciferous vegetable family (along with broccoli and cabbage), arugula contains cancer-fighting phytochemicals.

MACHE. Also known as lamb's lettuce, mache has tiny spoon-shaped leaves that are both delicate and sweet. Introduce yourself to this relatively unknown lettuce and you'll reward your body with vitamins A and C, iron, potassium, zinc and folate.

RESTAURANT REVIEW

PORTABLA

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FEW THINGS ARE BETTER THAN A PICNIC in the fall, except for maybe a lazy lunch at a sidewalk café in Europe. Luckily, you can have both at this charming west Austin eatery known as Portabla. For nearly six years owner Chase Jones has been serving up his very own version of what he calls "gourmet takeaway," a tempting mélange of hot and cold sandwiches, homemade soups, flatbread pizzas and prepared dinner selections such as Italian meatloaf and stuffed peppers. Reminiscent of an Italian café, the décor is modern yet intimate with bright red and lime-green walls that make you want to stay awhile. The menu is small yet diverse, offering only the finest local and organic meats and cheeses; the bread is baked fresh next door at Sweetish Hill and delivered each morning. Creative and whimsical, the daily panini and soup selections are always mouth-watering. Lean, organic roast beef is paired with horseradish, veggies and pepperoncinis on crunchy ciabatta; squash and artichokes are puréed to make a unique and delicate soup. Be sure to visit www.portabla.com to browse the nightly dinner selections, prepared and waiting for you to pick up on your way home from work. Grab a bottle of chilled Pelligrino while you're at it and you've got a European feast that's picnic-ready any night of the week.

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PARTY **PAELLA**

by Alexa Sparkman, M.A., R.D., L.D.

This Paella will be a hit at tailgate gatherings or Halloween hauntings. The high starch content of the Arborio rice creates a creamy butter-like consistency which is perfect for this dish. Sazón seasoning turns the rice a bright orange color, a perfect accent to fall decorations. For a more traditional yellow rice Paella, try using saffron instead. This recipe costs approximately $35 for eight servings.

INGREDIENTS	COST
2 tablespoons olive oil (divided)	$.10
5 shallots, thinly sliced (divided)	$.52
5 cloves garlic, chopped (divided)	$.20
1 1/2 cups Arborio rice	$2.29
3 cups low sodium fat free chicken broth	$3.00
1 1/2 packets Sazón seasoning or 1 packet saffron powder	$.30
2 links Cajun style turkey sausage	$3.19
1 pound fresh shrimp, peeled and deveined with tail on	$13.99
1 pound natural chicken tenders, tendons removed	$7.27
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar	$.10
1/2 pound sugar snap peas	$1.08
1/2 cup cilantro, chopped	$.25
1/4 cup fresh oregano, chopped	$.25
1 red bell pepper in 1/2-inch julienne slices	$.99
Freshly ground black pepper to taste	$.99
AT-HOME TOTAL (8 servings)	**$34.52**
RESTAURANT COST (1 serving)	**$12.95**

HINT

This recipe can also be made with brown rice. The texture of brown rice is different, but you get the added benefit of extra fiber and B vitamins. Brown rice will need to cook 45 to 50 minutes.

Alexa Sparkman, M.A., R.D., L.D. is a registered dietitian who has had a nutrition counseling business in Austin for the past 18 years and specializes in all aspects of nutrition care. For more information, call Alexa at 257.0898.

PREPARATION

Organize, measure and pre-prep ingredients first.

Blanch sugar snap peas in simmering water for four minutes, pat dry and set aside.

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in large-lidded skillet or sauté pan. Add half of the shallots and garlic. Sauté until just tender but not browned about two minutes. Add rice and sauté two to three minutes more. Add chicken broth and Sazón seasoning stirring until well mixed. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce heat to simmer and cook for 20 to 25 minutes until all the water is absorbed.

While rice is cooking:
Score sausage links two times on each side and broil, turning frequently to brown evenly. Slice into one-inch pieces and keep warm.

Heat remaining olive oil in a non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add remaining shallots and garlic and sauté about two minutes. Add shrimp and sauté three to four minutes more until shrimp just turns pink. Don't overcook. Remove shrimp from skillet and keep warm. Add chicken tenders to onion and garlic left in the skillet, drizzle with balsamic vinegar and sauté until golden brown. Once juices evaporate, set aside and keep warm.

When rice is done, spoon it into a large mixing bowl and fluff with a fork to separate grains. Toss rice with peas, cilantro, oregano, red bell pepper, sausage pieces, shrimp, chicken and black pepper. Serve on a large colorful platter.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving	
Calories	314
Protein	29g
Carbohydrates	34g
Fat	6g
Sodium	427mg

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Q WHY IS CONTROLLING PORTION SIZE SO IMPORTANT FOR GOOD HEALTH?

A Overeating, especially in one sitting, can cause your insulin to surge. Likewise, eating too fast will cause stress in the digestive system, as well as the heart. Stress can then increase cortisol (a stress hormone) which can cause the body to hold fat in the abdominal area.

Q WHICH IS BETTER: THREE HEARTY MEALS A DAY OR FIVE SMALL ONES?

A As most of us have heard by now it's better to eat five smaller meals and there are several reasons why. By eating small meals you keep your blood sugar lower and more level throughout the day. This prevents cravings, insulin surges which can cause weight gain and emotional changes. In addition, eating smaller meals helps indigestion, acid reflux and heart burn.

Q HOW CAN PEOPLE CONTROL PORTION SIZE WHEN DINING OUT?

A My advice to clients is to spend a day or two at home and begin measuring and weighing portions. This helps you identify how much you should be eating. Learn what a typical serving looks like for different foods. For example, one serving of pasta is about the size of a tennis ball. One serving of bread is just one slice. Understand serving size, so when you're out at a restaurant and over-served you'll know to split the portion or save half for another time.

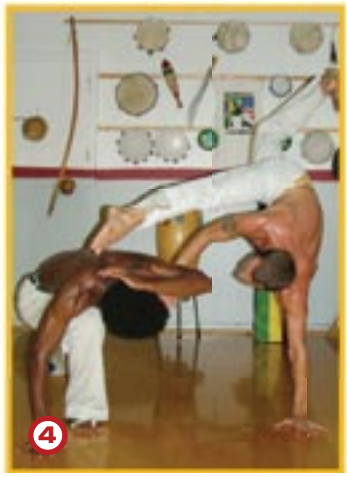
CLOSER LOOK

CAPOEIRA

IF YOU'RE TIRED OF THE SAME OLD

hum-drum workout, why not try something a little more cross-cultural to spice things up? Capoeira is the newest rage in many cities across the country, though it's hardly a new trend worldwide. What began as a disguised defense technique by African slaves in Brazil nearly 400 years ago, is now one of the most popular and exciting ways to stay in shape no matter where you live. A twist between martial arts, gymnastics and dance, it's almost better classified as an art form than a sport. Indeed, watching Capoeira is just as exciting as participating, particularly because of the music that accompanies the game at all times. The first thing to happen is the formation of a circle or roda (ho-da) inside which two players begin with a cartwheel and traditional ginga movement. From there, it's a steady but fast-paced display of interaction and reaction, a harmonized balance between players who dodge high kicks, leap over low-kicks and gracefully evade their opponents rather than blocking or hitting them. Because players are always moving in the pattern known as ginga, Capoeira is a wonderful, full-body aerobic workout. It's so much fun that it's hard to think of it as exercise. The idea is to give yourself up to the art of it all, clapping and singing the traditional Brazilian chants as part of the roda, then letting the rhythm wash over you as you improvise new moves once it's your turn. If it all sounds a bit confusing or overwhelming, you may want to check out a local class or performance. Capoeira Evolução (www.capoeira.net) is Austin's own Capoeira school, offering a variety of classes for all ages. They even allow first-timers to try it for free. So you won't be totally in the dark at your first session, here are some basic moves that you're certain to encounter as a beginner. After a few short lessons you'll be hooked on Capoeira and ready to get your ginga on!

1) Ginga: the basic movement of the capoeira. All kicks and action start from the Ginga. The Ginga follows the rhythm of the Berimbau, played by the Mestre. **2) Acrobatics:** Capoeira uses a lot of acrobatic moves to allow better flow of the game and rhythm.



3) Martelo & Esquiva: Some kicks are similar to other martial arts, but the defense is always done without blocking (esquiva). One needs to escape from the kicks, instead of blocking them. **4) Au Batido:** Some kicks incorporate acrobatic moves. It gives the student different angles and power for the attack. **5) Armada Pulada:** High and powerful kicks are also used. The student can determine the height, speed and power based on the type of game played. **6) Envergado E Navalha:** Using high kicks and jumps, one can dodge weapons and attack the opponent.

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Aspiring Basketball Pros Run With Austin

THE AUSTIN SPORTS SCENE IS EXPANDING, and with that expansion comes good news for basketball fans. The Austin Toros will play their first home game of the season on Friday, Nov. 26 at the Austin Convention Center. So who are the Toros, anyway? They're one of eight teams that make up the NBA Developmental League, otherwise known as the D-League. The purpose of this new league is to give players (as well as coaches, trainers and referees) the opportunity to develop their talent and skills in a competitive arena in hopes of eventually being called up to the NBA. In fact, the D-league now serves as the primary talent source for the NBA, with more than 30 players moving up since the start of the organization in 2001. As part of a greater mission to help the sport grow both domestically and internationally, the Toros will additionally assume the role of helping professional sports growth in their home city. Even legendary tennis star Andre Agassi believes in the potential of the Southwestern D-League, having invested in four teams in the region. With franchises already in Albuquerque, Austin, Fayetteville, Ft. Meyers, Fort Worth, Little Rock, Roanoke and Tulsa, the NBA hopes to double the size of the league by next season. For more information or to be one of the first to catch a glimpse of the Toros in action, visit www.austintoros.com.

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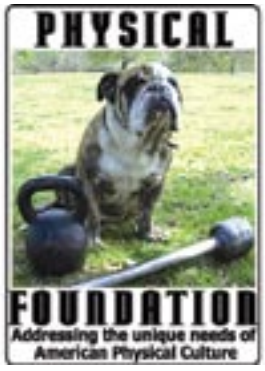

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Nip + Tuck

by Amy Covington

THE PLASTIC SURGERY REVOLUTION

Most of us have at least one thing we'd like to change about our physical appearance. Maybe it's fine lines around the eyes, a little extra cushion around the middle or a few extra pounds on the tush. Some just grin and bear it…you can't stay young forever, right? On the other hand, millions of Americans refuse to sit idly by while crow's feet and saddle bags settle in, so they turn to a cosmetic surgeon to fight off the ravages of time (and a few too many French fries).

In the past, plastic surgery was rarely talked about, generally reserved for wealthy women and entertainers. Today, evidence of a dramatic increase in self-enhancement seems to be pervasive. You can't turn on the TV, open a magazine or go to the mall without noticing the radiant, youthful-looking skin as the ideal. Actresses like Demi Moore set the bar with an uncanny ability to defy the effects of aging, while virtually every makeup counter showcases lotions and serums claiming to revive sluggish skin and stave off future wrinkles.

Change, The Only Constant

Cosmetic surgery clientele now spans almost every demographic. Going under the knife (or laser) has become so popular that men and women of all ages are now writing checks, spending some $8.4 million last year for treatments ranging from Botox to collagen injections, liposuction to breast augmentation.

Controversy has always followed the plastic surgery community, however. Opponents claim it's vain and unsafe, and those who advocate it perpetuate unrealistic ideals for the rest of us. Granted, the plastic surgery community is not devoid of controversy (leakage of silicone implants, scarring, liposuction, etc.) and there are always the extreme cases — Michael Jackson and the infamous Cat Woman are two of the most well-known. Conversely, the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) contends that cosmetic surgery can improve quality of life by promoting a positive self-image and reducing psychological stress.

Despite any storied beginnings, there are many reasons for the increase in cosmetic procedures, as well as the shifting public opinion in favor of it. Some include advancements in the treatments themselves, many of which are now affordable, non-surgical, outpatient treatments available to virtually anyone who wants them.

"People are becoming more concerned about the risks of surgery and the long-term affects on their face and body," says Mike Clark of Natural Bio Health in Austin. "Advances in non-surgical cosmetic procedures, like mesotherapy for instance, offer safer and effective alternatives to liposuction, chin surgery and lower eye lid surgery, and advances in laser [treatments] beautify the skin by eliminating spider veins, age spots, brown spots and Roseacea."

The Wave of the Future

Not surprisingly, the traditional face-lift, a procedure in which the skin of the face is surgically cut and pulled to reduce the baggy effects of aging, is not among the most requested services. "The most popular non-surgical procedures are Botox, Restylane and facial rejuvenation using intense pulse light," Clark explains. "More and more people are seeing the benefits of mesotherapy for fat reduction, chin sculpting and cellulite removal. Of course laser hair removal also is extremely popular."

According to Michael Escobedo, M.D. of LazrSmooth Studios in West Lake Hills, the most popular procedures his practice sees are "Botox and fillers, IPL photofacial, microdermabrasion and Thermage. Fillers (such as Collagen, Restylane, and Captique) are more popular among both genders of 'baby-boomers' because they 'fill-in' wrinkles and correct contour defects in a three-dimensional fashion. The most popular areas of therapy are the smile lines (naso-labial folds) and the oral complex (lips and marionette lines)."

Despite a surge in non-surgical cosmetic enhancements, what is not as well known is that many plastic surgery patients undergo treatment not out of vanity, but to correct abnormalities from birth defects, disease and physical trauma. Last year, an astounding 5.5 million reconstructive surgeries were performed, including tumor removal, laceration repair, scar revision, hand surgery and the biggest shocker, breast *reduction* surgery.

Level Playing Field

The vast majority of cosmetic surgery patients are women ages 35 to 50, for whom getting "nipped" and "tucked" doesn't appear to bother them, while men opt for more non-surgical procedures. For women in the 35 to 50 age group, the top five procedures during the past year were liposuction, breast augmentation, nose re-shaping, eyelid surgery and "tummy tuck." Across the board, the number and ages of patients seems to be leveling out.

"In the last few years I've noticed a shift in the age and gender of my clients seeking cosmetic procedures," mentions Dr. Escobedo. "In the past, middle-aged females were the majority of the clients; however, today both genders equally seek my services, albeit for different reasons. The younger generations are concerned with prevention more than correction of photo-damaged skin. Male 'baby-boomers' seek my services to remain competitive in the professional sector. Some feel they concede positions to younger individuals due to their

appearance. Both male and female 'baby-boomers' seek my services as a result of life-changing events such as divorce, grandparents, retirement and birthdays."

Clark reports similar trends at his practice. "Men are increasingly seeking non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as hair removal and facial rejuvenation," he says. "It's still primarily the middle-aged women but we are seeing more younger patients, for example people in their 30's looking to prevent wrinkles and undo sun damage."

Keeping It Real

Long gone are the days of sitting under a hair dryer for curls to set. Instead well-polished men and women expect instant realization of their vision for personal beauty. Fortunately, many cosmetic procedures are as quick as a trip to the salon or eye doctor. There is little to no recovery time with Botox, collagen fillers, microdermabrasion, IPL Photofacial, Thermage and permanent hair removal. With the latest advancements, the phrase "here today, gone tomorrow" is an understatement.

Nevertheless, the growing accessibility and convenience of cosmetic procedures, "buzz" from shows like "Nip/Tuck" and an ever-rising beauty benchmark leave some mental health professionals concerned. "There are healthy reasons and unhealthy reasons to get plastic surgery," explains Ann McIntosh, a licensed counselor and therapist practicing in Austin. While it may seem like a Catch-22, therapists and psychologists warn against tying self-worth and the ability to lead a happy life to physical appearance.

"A healthy reason is not based on unrealistic expectations or trying to save a marriage, getting the dream guy, dream girl or a job. Saying things like 'He wouldn't leave me if I looked younger' or 'If only I looked 10 years younger I could get this job' and obsessing over physical appearance are warning signs," stresses McIntosh.

Certainly understanding the risks and having a clear idea of the outcome is important before rushing into plastic surgery. "First, it's important to have realistic expectations," Clark advises. "Then it's important to talk with a doctor who can discuss your needs and expectations, has the necessary skills and training, and does not over-promise. Finally, it's important to discuss any risks of the procedure and any possible long-term adverse effects."

According to Clark, the wrong reason to get a procedure is to treat "imagined" blemishes and nonexistent fat. When a patient has a distorted body image — known as body dysmorphic disorder — one of the most frightening aspects is that a cosmetic procedure often doesn't satisfy his or her unhappiness with their appearance.

"It's the physician's responsibility to determine the appropriateness of every procedure," Dr. Escobedo says. "In general, warning flags go up when a patient describes dissatisfaction with multiple procedures and physicians. [As a result] it's my policy to ask each patient to disclose information regarding their procedure with their significant other."

Despite the younger median age of cosmetic surgery patients, the ASPS maintains there's no evidence of an overwhelming amount of young adults undergoing plastic surgery. ASPS statistics show that patients aged 18 and younger made up only four percent of all cosmetic procedures in 2004. Additionally, a study published in the medical journal *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery* reports only five percent of college-aged women have actually undergone cosmetic surgery.

Know Before You Go

Whether right out of college or enjoying your golden years, McIntosh recommends asking yourself the following questions before considering a cosmetic procedure: What do you think the procedure will do for you? How will it serve you? What do you think would happen if you did not get the procedure? How do you think about yourself now?

Once you are confident in your decision to have a cosmetic procedure, you need to choose a doctor. Dr. Escobedo offers these questions to be asked of your doctor before getting a cosmetic procedure:

- What procedure is best for my condition?
- Will the physician or an assistant conduct the procedure?
- How long has the physician offered the procedure?
- May I see some before and after photographs of clients treated by the physician?
- Can someone who has had the procedure call me to discuss my concerns?
- What are the alternatives? Adverse events? Benefits?
- What is the total cost of the procedure including numbing medication?
- If proceeding with Botox, how many units are used in each area? What is the cost per unit?

Everyone has room for improvement, whether inside or out. And though plastic surgery is commonly viewed as a physical upgrade, for many, the psychological benefits far outweigh the aesthetic improvement. Remember, however, that the decision to undergo even the smallest cosmetic enhancement is an important one and should not be taken lightly. Take the time to inform yourself, understand all the risks of the procedure and reflect on the real reasons you feel your appearance needs updating.

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TONY LIL' JON

+

Energy is a common theme among these not so little dudes. Tony Little wowed us with his high-powered infomercial for the Gazelle glider. All the while, Lil' Jon keeps us energized on the dance floor with hit after hit and the help of his energy drink Crunk Juice.

THE COSTUME: rasta wig with pony-tail pulled through back of black baseball cap, gold plastic jewelry, muscle tank, baggy jeans, tennis shoes

GREETING: OK! You Can Do It! What!?!

KEITH RICHARD SIMMONS

+

Richard and Keith both know how to get us "Sweatin' to the Oldies." Despite being smoked off stage with a fire exstinguisher on the Letterman Show and chain smoking to stardom, these two celebrities keep rolling like a stone.

THE COSTUME: afro wig, headband, rock n' roll tee (cut into a muscle tank), striped running shorts, cigarette hanging out of mouth, white tennis shoes and black socks

GREETING: Farewell Fat, Hello No Smoking In Bars?

SUZANNE DONNA SUMMER

+

These "Bad Girls" from the disco era worked their thighs and microphone "Hard For The Money." If your lookin' for some "Hot Stuff" on Halloween evening, a thigh-master and an anthology of disco hits will be sure to break a sweat.

THE COSTUME: spandex body suit, thigh-master (for extra glitz, spray with glitter and adorn with metallic ribbon), body glitter, metallic heels, microphone

GREETING: Eat your salad before it gets cold. How's that hot stuff baby this evenin'?

ANDRE 3000 AGASSI

+

Breaking the mold comes easy for these two Andre's. Agassi proved it early on with his bold fashions statements and legendary stroke perfected by hitting 3,000 tennis balls a day growing up. Andre 3000 pushes the envelope by taking his fashion and music where no hip-hopper dares to go.

THE COSTUME: rocker wig, multi-colored scarf worn as headband, bow tie, pink polo, denim cut-offs, brightly colored tennis shoes, tennis racket

GREETING: Shake it like a wooden tennis racket!

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Famous fragrances are in the air…so if you want to smell like your favorite star, here's our two "scents" on which ones are worth a second whiff.

PARIS HILTON • PARIS HILTON • $39 1.7 OZ.

Is it any surprise that the Hilton princess named her perfume after herself? Her name is Paris after all. As glitzy and ritzy as the goddess herself, this fragrance is all about being flirty. The notes of frozen apple with mimosa blossoms and sandalwood may be too sugary for some, but we agree with Paris: it's hot.

BEYONCE • TRUE STAR • $45 1.7 OZ.

There's no denying that Beyonce Knowles is the real thing. Her beauty, like her perfume, radiates with timeless sex appeal that's elegant and honest. Fresh, floral, warm and arousing describe this sultry scent layered with notes of sweet pea and honeysuckle. We think you'll be ready for this jelly any night of the week.

BRITNEY SPEARS • CURIOUS • $39.50 1.7 OZ.

With soft floral hints of Louisiana magnolia blended with jasmine, vanilla and sweet Anjou pear, there's nothing "toxic" about this fragrance. More innocent than Britney herself, the subtle aroma may leave even the girliest of girls "curious" about their other options.

DONALD TRUMP • THE FRAGRANCE • $60 3.4 OZ.

Mint, cucumber and exotic plants all have at least one thing in common — the color green. They also make up the aromatic notes in Donald Trump's woodsy cologne that will have you smelling like money with just one spray. There's even a touch of black basil for added mystique. Wear this to work and you're certain never to hear the words, "You're fired."

LONE STAR

photo courtesy of Lajitas Resort

The Big Bend area may not be the easiest place to get to from Austin, but it's a stark topographical contrast to the Hill Country. Not to mention, numerous fitness options make it worth the eight-hour drive. Nature-lovers will appreciate the beauty of the towering Chisos Mountains that rise more than 7,000 feet from the desert floor, providing stunning vistas of steep canyons along the Rio Grande and the nearby and forbidding Chihuahuan Desert. Exercise enthusiasts will value the area's challenging outdoor options of mountain biking, rafting, golfing and hiking. So hop in your car and venture out of Austin, as some of the most spectacular scenery in Texas awaits you.

By Lisa Hickey Baile

GETAWAYS

HIKING

Encompassing almost a million acres, Big Bend National Park (www.nps.gov/bibe/home.htm) offers several hiking options from steep, rocky hiking trails to short, paved walks. One of the more strenuous, yet scenic hikes takes you from the Basin Store and visitor centers to Emory Peak (elevation 7,825 feet), providing a panoramic view of nearby desert and mountains. The 9-mile round-trip trail gains elevation of almost 2,000 feet and climbs steeply through oaks, pines, junipers and madrone trees.

The only private lodging available within the park is the historic Chisos Mountain Lodge, located at an elevation of 5,400 feet at the base of the Emory Peak trail. "The stone cottages and Emory Peak lodge were built in 1940 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) government workers," explains Linda Poindexter, reservation agent at the property.

Detailed maps are available at the visitor centers, where you can also obtain an entrance permit ($10 per vehicle, valid for one week) and get information on ground conditions. The National Park Service describes the weather in the fall as warm, although temperatures vary greatly between the desert floor and the Chisos mountains. Winters are generally mild, with periods of cold weather (including light snow) possible. It is recommended that hikers wear a wide-brimmed hat, comfortable clothing and sturdy walking shoes or boots. Plenty of water is an absolute imperative — one gallon per person per day is typically considered enough.

photo courtesy of Crystal Allbright

RAFTING

A float trip on the Rio Grande winds through breathtaking backcountry of remote canyons, including Colorado Canyon, the area's only volcanic canyon. Mariscal Canyon is a 10-mile slice that takes you along the southern boundary of the park, revealing a remote section of the river that "bends" — giving Big Bend its famous name. Perhaps the most popular area for a raft or canoe venture however, is Santa Elena Canyon, an enchanting 20-mile stretch with steep cliff walls rising some 1,500 feet above the river.

An outdoor excursion outfit in Terlingua called Desert Sports (www.desertsportstx.com), operates everything from half-day to multi-day trips for visitors. "When the river is high, which is generally in the late summer and early fall, there are a number of good rapids," explains Desert Sports' rafting guide Jeff Renfrow. "But generally, what this river has to offer is the incredible scenery and solitude. Yet there are also times when there are white-water conditions," he says.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

Cyclists refer to Big Bend as Moab without the crowds. According to the Web site, BicycleBigBend.com, "The area has everything from beginner trails to places where epic-loving experts can rip it up, as well

as some of the finest winter riding conditions anywhere. The area has almost 1,000 miles of dirt and Jeep roads to explore, especially in Lajitas and on the east side of Big Bend Ranch State Park."

For racers, there is the Mas o Menos 100K Chihuahuan Desert Mountain Bike Endurance Fest every February in Terlingua. The event was formerly called the Chihuahuan Desert Challenge and was ranked among the "Top 25 Cross-Country Race Courses in the World" by *Velonews Magazine*. Mountain and road bikes can be rented in Terlingua.

STAR GAZING

The stars at night are big and bright, deep in the heart of West Texas, according to Mark Cash, the public affairs specialist at the UT McDonald Observatory (www.mcdonaldobservatory.org) in Fort Davis. Under the darkest night skies in the continental United States, the observatory invites the public to view constellations, the moon, planets, stars, galaxies and other astronomical wonders through large telescopes at the Visitor Center Public Observatory.

photo courtesy of Tim Jones/McDonald Observatory

"See our nearest star, the Sun, from the comfort of our multimedia theatre during the 'Solar Viewing' program," describes Cash. "You can view sunspots, flares and prominences safely as they happen live."

Three times a week the observatory hosts evening "Star Parties," which are open to everyone and geared towards the entire family. In the event of rain, significant clouds or high winds, a series of unique indoor presentations is offered instead. The parties take place every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday night.

RELAXATION

For those craving luxury, a night at the Lajitas Resort on the Rio Grande is a must. Considered the ultimate Texas hideaway, the resort has an 18-hole golf course (one hole's green is located across the river in Mexico), spa, swimming pools and a lavish equestrian center. The fine dining Ocotillo Restaurant, created by renowned Austin Chef Jeff Blank, offers a menu that is out of this world.

Austinite Steve Smith purchased and transformed a sleepy little border village into this unique five-star resort. With décor resembling the Old West, the hotel takes you back in time, somehow minimizing the stresses of modern life with the opulence of nature. Enjoying a cocktail as the sun is setting over the Chisos Mountains provides an unforgettable sight.

The scenic wonders of the Big Bend area beckon outdoor enthusiasts with seemingly endless miles of trails and other temptations. In contrast to the famous Grand Canyon, the deep canyons carved by the Rio Grande seem almost devoid of tourists, leaving a visitor feeling a uniquely peaceful solitude. And nothing is bigger in Texas than the area's night sky. Someone once said, "You either get Big Bend or you don't." Bets are that most Austinites who make the road trip will find they "get it" pretty quickly.

DIRECTIONS

Big Bend National Park: Drive from Austin, through Fredericksburg, on Hwy 290 West. Take I-10 West past Junction to Fort Stockton. Next, take Hwy 385 South, through Marathon and onto the Persimmon Gap entrance of Big Bend National Park.

Lajitas: Exit the park on 170 West passing through Study Butte and Terlingua to the Lajitas Resort. www.lajitas.com

Desert Sports: Located 12 miles before Lajitas Resort.

McDonald Observatory: Exit the park on Hwy 118 North through Alpine and Fort Davis to the Observatory.

NEARBY AQUATIC ESCAPES

Horseshoe Bay: Located on the edge of Lake LBJ, Horseshoe Bay Resort adds a touch of the Cote du Azur to an area otherwise known for its fishing cabins and 30-year-old wooden A-frames. The resort features three Robert Trent Jones golf courses, a full-service marina with pontoons, ski boats and wave runners, and 14 tennis courts including red clay and Pro Grass surfaces. There is even a new 349-room Hill Country Marriott luxury hotel, providing guests access

to all of Horseshoe Bay Resort's amenities. Kristy Bunte, a representative within the resort's sales and marketing department, is most impressed with the white sand and palm trees of the beach. Though a bit biased, she's confident that there's nothing else like Horseshoe Bay Resort on the 6,375-acre, 22 mile-long lake just outside of Austin. **www.hsbresort.com**

Texas Ski Ranch: An aerial view of the 70-acre Texas Ski Ranch (TSR) shows a lake, an island, a beach and a bar. No, it's not Cozumel, but rather an adult adventure park located just a few miles south of San Marcos. Open year-round, the complex offers wakeboarding, waterskiing, rock-climbing and other extreme sports. "I would recommend the cable lake," says Catie Bialick, an employee at TSR. "You can wakeboard, waterski or knee-board using a cable instead of a boat. Since you're dragged by a pulley system, there's no wake, so it's completely different. We also have jumps and other obstacles for wakeboarders." **www.texasskiranch.com**

photo courtesy of Texas Ski Ranch

Krause Springs: Chosen as one of the best swimming holes in Texas by *Texas Monthly*, Krause Springs is a spring-fed natural swimming pool on a bluff overlooking Cypress Creek. Located 34 miles west of Austin in Spicewood, Krause Springs consists of 32 springs, several waterfalls, a creek and camp sites.

The property is owned by Elton and Jane Krause, who live on the property and operate the park. "We get visitors from all over Texas and the United States," explains Elton Krause. "Most people comment that it's a very nice place and they want to come back." The park is open year-round.

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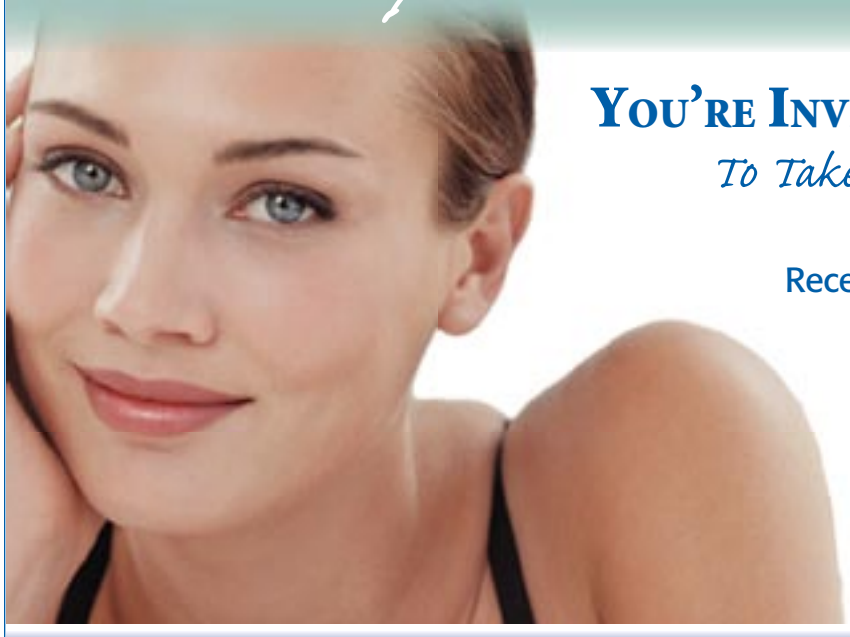

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AUTUMN IN AUSTIN

With cooler weather finally making its way into central Texas, October is the perfect month to get outside and explore the happenings around town. Nature lovers and bookworms alike will find an endless supply of fun this fall. Here are some favorites this season.

GET YOUR GREENBELT ON

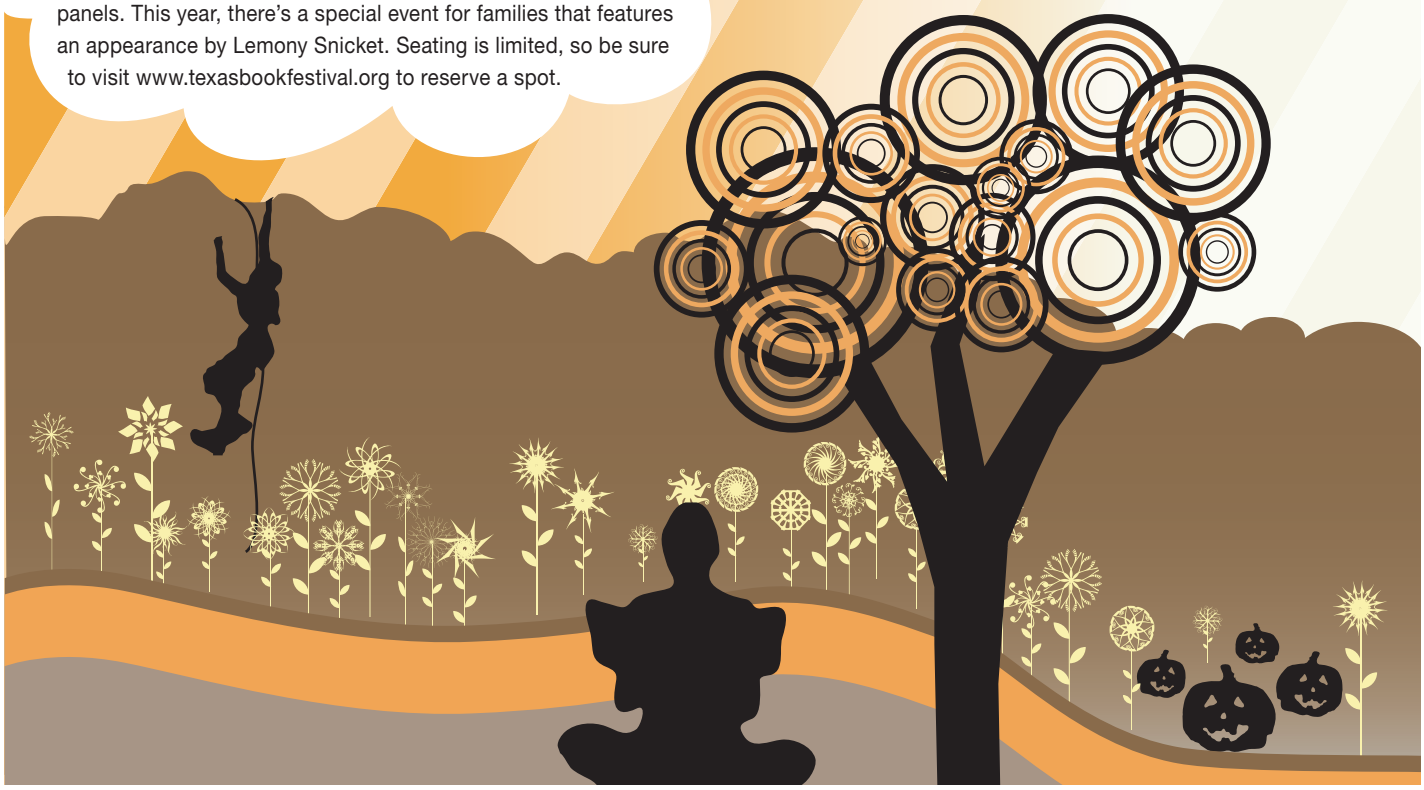
Biking, bird-watching and belaying — Barton Creek Greenbelt is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. While some still take to the swimming holes, most seek out the cool shade of the autumn leaves for an early morning walk or mid-afternoon bike ride. With more than 800 acres of land stretching over eight miles, the beauty of the greenbelt can be explored all season long. You may find yourself scaling limestone cliffs one weekend and out for a peaceful stroll with your dog a week later. Strap on a pair of hiking boots and bring along the binoculars for a look at Austin wildlife. No matter which path you choose to navigate, you're sure to get plenty of exercise, while enjoying the natural outdoor splendor of Austin.

PUMPKIN PLAY

October means different things to different people, but one thing is for sure: pumpkins are a seasonal favorite. Whether you prefer to paint them, carve them or eat them, you can get your fill this fall by taking a short drive to Evergreen Farms in Elgin. There you'll find a pumpkin hunt being held the last three weekends in October, with wagon rides, a pumpkin toss, seed spitting contests and even a pumpkin maze. Of course it wouldn't be a pumpkin festival without the chance to pick your own pumpkin off the vine. Mashed in a pie or carved into the face of Frankenstein, there's no question pumpkins are the perfect autumn accessory. For more information, visit www.evergreen-farms.com.

TAKE A LOOK IN A BOOK

There's no better time than fall to renew your interest in reading. The days are shorter, the nights are cooler and something in the air tells you it's time to shut off the T.V. and curl up with a good book. Luckily the 10th Annual Texas Book Festival is held in October with more than 150 authors participating and plenty of books to browse. The festival, which got its start in 1995, was founded by Laura Bush in an effort to celebrate the state's rich literary history. Since then, it has grown bigger and better every year, with many distinguished authors in attendance for book-signings, readings and discussion panels. This year, there's a special event for families that features an appearance by Lemony Snicket. Seating is limited, so be sure to visit www.texasbookfestival.org to reserve a spot.



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KNOW AUSTIN

HAUNTED HOUSES OF AUSTIN

Some of the oldest buildings in downtown Austin surround and include the **HOFHEINTZ-REISIG BUILDING** at 303 Red River St. Built in 1863, this German-inspired stone structure, and corncrib next door, were the center of what was once Austin's German immigrant community. Today the building houses Moonshine Patio Bar and Grill. It's easy to believe, in this ambiance-soaked location, that an unseen presence is mingling with the staff and guests.

Rumors of moving objects, cold gusts of air, cloudy vapors and shadowy figures in the **B-SIDE BAR** began as soon as it opened. Stories of the strange happenings at 311 Colorado continue today. It's believed that the ghosts occupying the B-Side of the Bitter End originated during the Guytown era, which began in 1871 and ended in 1912, when prohibitionist Mayor Woolridge had the red-light district torn down and replaced with warehouses.

The ghost stories of the **GOVERNOR'S MANSION** are whispered by some and spoken openly by others. Either way, the fact remains that toward the end of the Civil War and Governor Pendleton Murrah's reign, his heartbroken nephew took his life, with a gun in the second-story bedroom. His blood stained the walls for months before they were finally re-painted by the new Governor's staff. The first to run terrified from the room was the teenage daughter of a servant in 1865 and Ann Richards was the last to comment on the "freaky" room.

Today the **NORTH-EVANS HOUSE** is home to the Austin's Women's Club. The untimely tragic death of the North's daughter was the beginning of many sightings, as well as mysterious haunting activities always involving a young girl. This story, unlike most others, has a happy conclusion and one that will make any disbeliever, a believer.

Be the first to name the most haunted hotel in Austin and win a special Austin Ghost Tour for two (www.austinghosttours.com). Email answers to contest@austinfitmagazine.com.

AUDIBLE

FAST TRACKS »

As the days get shorter, give yourself an extra boost by popping in one of these recommended fast tracks.

ISOLEE « Wearemonster « Playhouse

Undoubtedly one of the best electronic albums of 2005, "Wearemonster" is the highly-anticipated follow-up to Isolee's debut, "Rest," which was perhaps best known for bonafide classic "Beau Mot Plage." Since then, Isolee fans have had to make due with a smattering of remixes and the occasional single. On "Wearemonster" Isolee (ne Rajko Muller), returns in top form, presenting a suite of songs that are at once imminently listenable and deliberately aggressive and raw. Recalling the sounds of the past while keeping his eyes fixed firmly on the horizon, Isolee continues to form a satisfying sound that is all his own.

FLASHBACK! « Mixed by Triple R « My Best Friend

Artists like Morgan Geist (Metro Area) and Luke Vibert under his Kerrier District alias have shown how well the dance sounds of the past can translate to present sensibilities. For "Flashback!" Reiley Reinhard (aka Triple R) presents a compilation of singles culled from his My Best Friend label. The artists on "Flashback!" bring the digital cleanliness of cutting-edge microhouse to a sound palette that draws heavily on mid-80s New York disco. While the tracks on "Flashback!" are nonetheless firmly rooted in techno, the result is an album of smart, innovative songs that show their influences without sounding overly studied.

FERENC » Fraximal » Kompakt

Cologne-based label Kompakt roars back with the debut album from Ferenc, the duo behind "Yes Sir, I Can Hardcore," one of 2004's biggest club anthems. "Fraximal," however, holds up equally well in the gym and the living room, and distinguishes itself from most of Kompakt's output by eschewing the trademark shuffle tempo in favor of an acid-flavored early-90s sound with knee-deep melodies that recall the unabashed trance flourishes of Kaito. Tracks like "Vinagreta," with its stripped-bare bass line and icy French vocals, is as cool and sexy as anything the label has produced.

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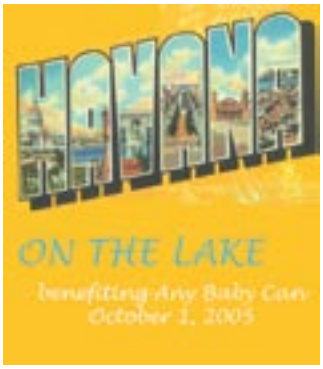

THANK YOU AUSTIN FROM ANY BABY CAN

Any Baby Can would like to thank Austin for another great year on the lake.

The third annual gala — Havana on the Lake — was a huge success due to the generous contributions of Austin sponsors, volunteers and patrons.

Thanks to all those who made it happen and we'll see you again next year!

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OCTOBER 2005

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
					Austin Farmers Market Yoga For Weight-Loss Workshop Austin In Motion 5K JDRF Walk To Cure Diabetes Austin Folk Dancing Concert (every Saturday) 01	IBM Uptown Classic 10K 02
Ladies Rock Climbing Clinic 03	Lupus Support Group 04	Treating Allergy with Chinese Medicine Lecture Healthy Lifestyle Series Games Night 05	06	Yoga Education In Schools Workshop/Seminar 07	Austin Farmers Market Bright Leaf Hike 08	Tough Cookies Ride To The Rescue (Katrina Benefit) Cedar Perk 5-Miler Bright Leaf Hike 09
Ladies Rock Climbing Clinic 10	Austin Skiers Monthly Meeting SVA Monthly Meeting/Social 11	Treating Allergy with Chinese Medicine Lecture Healthy Lifestyle Series How Foods Affect Health & Emotions Lecture 12	13	Climbing in Mexico Slideshow 14	Austin Farmers Market Texas Hill Country River Region Bicycle Classic Outlaw Trails 100 Lake Travis Swimming Relay 15	Lone Star Vegetarian Chili Cook-Off 16
Ladies Rock Climbing Clinic Luxury Car Raffle & Benefit 17	18	Healthy Lifestyle Series Overcoming Food Cravings 19	20	21	Austin Farmers Market Sixth Annual Sprint Walk 22	Academy of Oriental Medicine Open House Ride For The Roses 23
Ladies Rock Climbing Clinic 24	25	Healthy Lifestyle Series 26	27	28	Austin Farmers Market Toughest Race In Texas REI Service Project 29	30

HEALTH

OCTOBER 4 | Austin Lupus Support Group
Our free meetings provide support for Lupus patients and their loved ones on how to cope with Lupus. October is Lupus Awareness Month and this month's meeting will feature guest speaker Jamie Hodge, outreach coordinator at Yoga Yoga, to discuss the health benefits of Yoga. **7 p.m. to 8 p.m. Spicewood Springs Library, 8637 Spicewood | 217.6826**

OCTOBER 5 & 12 | Inroduction to Meditation
Calm the mind, control the senses and find fulfillment within. Two-part class. No charge. Reservations required by 3 p.m. **7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. | Austin Meditation Center, 2307 Rio Grande | 472.YOGA | www.austinmeditation.org**

OCTOBER 5 THRU 26 | Healthy Lifestyle Series
Free workshop offered every Wednesday in October. Topics covered are Headaches and Migraines, Seven Secrets to Living Longer, Rocket Fuel Nutrition and Simple Solutions To Managing Stress. The workshop is presented by Dr. Michele K. Gerard D.C. Call for reservations. **6 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Chiropractic Arts Center of Austin, 4131 Spicewood Springs Rd., Ste. L-3 | 346.3536**

OCTOBER 23 | Open House Interested in acupuncture? Engage your heart and mind at The Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin (AOMA). Experience a free demonstration, talk with alumni, staff and students, and take a tour of the campus. Free treats and teas will be provided. **2 p.m. to 5 p.m. AOMA, 2700 West Anderson Lane | 454.1188 | www.aoma.edu.**

FITNESS

OCTOBER 1 | Yoga For Weight-Loss and Stress Management Jogi Bhagat, RYT from Yoga Solutions will present a donation-based workshop on weight-loss through a combination of flowing Yogic postures and deep relaxation techniques. Registration required. **4 p.m. to 6 p.m. | 10008 Mt. Rainier Drive | 292.8093**

OCTOBER 7 & 8 | Workshop/Seminar: Y.E.S. (Yoga Education in Schools) Learn techniques that work for increasing and improving mental, physical and emotional balance. Appropriate for all children, including those with special needs. Helpful for educators and care-givers as well. Registration required. **Asian American Cultural Center, 11713 Jollyville Road | www.keepfitwithyoga.com**

DIET

OCTOBER 1 THRU 29 | Austin Farmers Market
Enjoy fresh fruits and vegetables direct from several farmers, ready-to-eat foods, drinks and limited crafts. Every Saturday. **9 a.m. to 1 p.m. | Republic Square, 4th St. and Guadalupe www.austinfarmersmarket.org**

OCTOBER 12 | Lecture: How Foods Affect Your Health and Emotions Macrobiotics, known worldwide for its use in healing and preventing cancer and chronic disease, is really just a holistic way of looking at your life, health and emotions. Come see how this can be useful to you. **7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Casa de Luz, 1701 Toomey Rd. | www.naturalepicurean.com**

OCTOBER 16 | The Lone Star Vegetarian Chili Cook-Off Come out to this wonderful all-vegetarian event. $7 per person to taste all chili recipes. Children under 12 enter free. Hosted by the Vegetarian Network of Austin and the Lone Star Vegetarian Network. **12 p.m. to 4 p.m. | The Austin Zoo, 10807 Rawhide Trail | www.vegnetaustin.org**

OCTOBER 19 | Overcoming Food Cravings Learn to control cravings that lead you to the refrigerator or snack machine when you aren't hungry. Identify personal eating triggers and apply the C.A.L.M. plan to change eating behavior. Pre-registration required. **5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. | 4131 Spicewood Springs Rd., Ste. M-1 | 257.0898 | www.mindhunger.com**

SPORTS

OCTOBER 3 THRU 31 | Ladies Climbing Clinic
Austin Rock Gym has a free climbing clinic on Monday nights at both North and South locations. This is an informal hands-on interactive clinic and will cover basic to advanced climbing techniques. **7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. | www.austinrockgym.com**

OCTOBER 8 & 9 | Bright Leaf Hike Two 4-mile hikes will be offered at Bright Leaf State Natural Area. This central Austin gem is only open to the public through guided hikes. **8:30 a.m. | Bright Leaf Park, Creek Mountain Rd. | 323.0544**

OCTOBER 11 | Austin Skiers Monthly Meeting Join us for our monthly meeting for refreshments, socializing and to learn about Austin's winter sports club. Learn about the exciting trips we have planned for the coming winter season. Austin Skiers is a friendly group of people who enjoy outdoor sports, particularly winter sports. **6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. | Sun & Ski Sports, 2438 West Anderson Lane | www.austinskiers.org**

OCTOBER 15 | Lake Travis Swimming Relay
A six-person open water, swimming relay race. Point-to-point course, approximately 12 miles. No wet-suits, fins, snorkels or any other artificial aids permitted. **9 a.m. | Mansfield Dam Park www.americanswimmingassociation.com**

LIFE

OCTOBER 1 THRU 29 | Austin International Folk Dancers This is a recreational group that dances a wide variety of ethnic folk dances from around the world. Every Saturday night. No partner needed. Dress is casual. **7:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Hancock Recreation Center, 811 E. 41st Street**

OCTOBER 5 | Games Night "No Kidding!" is a free social organization for couples and singles who, for whatever reason, are not parents. **7 p.m. to 9 p.m. | Central Market, 4001 Lamar Blvd. | 294.7930 | www.austinnokidding.org**

OCTOBER 11 | SVA Monthly Meeting/Social Single Volunteers of Austin is a non-profit organization where single people can connect by helping others. **6:30 p.m. | Waterloo Ice House, 1106 W. 38th Street | www.singlevolunteers.org/austin**

OCTOBER 14 | Climbing in Mexico Slideshow REI will host a free slideshow behind the store on the night before their next garage sale. Come join the crowd camping out for the garage sale and see a wonderful presentation on climbing in Mexico. **7 p.m. | REI Loading Dock | 343.5550**

OCTOBER 17 | Luxury Car Raffle and Benefit The Friends of Christopher Guild is kicking off its 14th annual event to help abused children. The top prize is a 2006 Lexus IS 250. All proceeds benefit the Center for Child Protection. Winners will be determined on December 11. **472.1164 | www.centerforchildprotection.org**

OCTOBER 29 | REI Service Project This 16th Annual Service Project is looking for 100 volunteers for trail building to extend the existing trail system at Doeskin Ranch. Afterward, there will be a "Feast for the Hungry" work day appreciation party. The first 100 volunteers will receive a free REI Service Project T-Shirt. **9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. | Balcones Canyonlands Doeskin Ranch | 343.5550 | khill@rei.com**

To have your event listed please send info to events@austinfitmagazine.com

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RIDES

OCTOBER 9 | Tough Cookies Ride To The Rescue This benefit, featuring rides of 12, 20, 34 and 62 miles, will honor the victims of hurricane Katrina and help survivors now living in central Texas. One hundred percent of all entry fees will be donated to the Red Cross of Central Texas. **8 a.m. | Walburg, TX www.tcdcfitness.com**

OCTOBER 15 | Texas Hill Country River Region Bicycle Classic Experience the rugged beauty of the Texas Hill Country River Region during the 7th Annual Bicycle Classic, boasting the steepest hill climb and descent of any central Texas ride, breathtaking hill country views and numerous scenic river crossings. **Garner State Park | Visitor Center | 8 a.m. 1.800.210.0380 | www.thcrr.com**

OCTOBER 15 | Outlaw Trails 100 This ride isn't competitive, but an opportunity to join more than 600 cyclists from all over Texas for a ride across Williamson County. **8 a.m. | Old Settler's Park, 3300 E. Palm Valley Blvd. | http://ci.round-rock.tx.us/parks-rec/outlaw_trail.html**

OCTOBER 23 | Ride For The Roses Come out to this big event where thousands join Lance and cancer survivors for a ride throughout the beautiful countryside surrounding Austin. With distances ranging from 7, 25, 40, 70 and 100 miles, the ride is suitable for individuals of all cycling levels. There will be a great post-ride party celebration with food, drinks and live musical entertainment. **7:30 a.m. | Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road | www.livestrong.org**

RUNS & WALKS

OCTOBER 1 | Austin In Motion 5K The Travis County Medical Society is sponsoring the second annual "Walk With Your Doctor" event. Physician members hope that participation in the walk will inspire their patients, staff and other Austin residents to take the steps necessary to leading a healthier lifestyle. **8:30 a.m. | Zilker Park Hillside Theater | www.tcms.com**

WALK TO CURE DIABETES

JDRF Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International

dedicated to finding a cure

OCTOBER 1 | JDRF Walk To Cure Diabetes This is a 5K walk and fun run to build community and diabetes awareness, as well as help the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation in their mission to raise money for diabetes research. **9:30 a.m. | Dell Diamond, Round Rock | 343.0663 | www.jdrfaustin.org**

OCTOBER 2 | IBM Uptown Classic 10K Sponsored by Mangia Pizza, this race takes runners along a flat and quick course, with a fun run/walk for kids and lots of pizza. Part of the Austin Distance Challenge Series. **8 a.m. | Northcross Mall, Anderson Lane and Burnet Rd. 823.6394 | www.uptownclassic.com**

OCTOBER 9 | Cedar Perk 5-Miler This fun run celebrates its 10th year and is appropriate for the entire family. Proceeds benefit local park development, community policing initiatives and scholarship assistance for area youth at Cedar Park's brand new YMCA location. **7:30 a.m. Cedar Perk Coffee Company, Cedar Park, TX | 257.7088 | www.cedarperk.com**

OCTOBER 22 | Sixth Annual Sprint Walk This race benefits four Austin area service organizations for the deaf. Walkers, pledges and participants are needed. **8 a.m. | Texas School for the Deaf | www.sprintwalk.com**

OCTOBER 29 | The Toughest Race In Texas Quick turns, narrow paths and steep limestone slopes make these 10K, 5K and one-mile courses as challenging as they are beautiful. Offering a Hill Country panorama with oak and cedar bluffs interspersed with native grass and cactus meadows. **8 a.m. | St. Stephen's Episcopal School, 2900 Bunny Run | www.sstx.org**

ThunderCloud Subs Turkey Trot

5 Mi. Run, Walk

Stepping Stone School Kids' K

CARITAS

ThunderCloud Subs

Stepping Stone School Turkey Trot Kids K

Thanksgiving Day / Waterloo Park

8:45 (Kids K) 9:30 am / Austin, TX

Register at ThunderCloud Subs Oct. 31 - Nov. 10

or

Register on-line through 11/22

www.thundercloud.com

Compass Bank's

The Toughest Race in Texas

Saturday 8 a.m. Oct. 29, 2005

Quick turns, narrow paths and steep limestone slopes make these race courses as challenging as they are beautiful. Each course (10K, 5K and one mile) is contained within the 300+-acre St. Stephen's Episcopal School campus between Capital of Texas Highway and Lake Austin.

A SSES Financial Aid Program Benefit

Last year, St. Stephen's provided $1.9 million in financial aid to 123 students – 19 percent of the student body.

Register today at www.runtex.com!

THE TOUGHEST RACE IN TEXAS

ST. STEPHEN'S EPSICOPAL SCHOOL FINANCIAL AID

MISS INFORMATION by Amy Bauer

LIVING LA VIDA YOGA

WHILE SITTING CROSS-LEGGED on my yoga mat, forearms resting gently on my knees, middle fingertips kissing the tip of my thumbs, I try to calm my mile-a-minute mind down to a leisurely stroll so that I may get in touch with my inner self and fully enjoy the benefits of yoga.

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm. Ummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm?

I concentrate on being present in the moment, yet the more I concentrate the more my mind wanders. Did I remember to write the rent check? Do matinee prices cut off at 5 p.m. or 6 p.m.? Wow, I really need a pedicure. Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

I am no stranger to yoga, but yoga is still strange to me. The poses, the people, the language. It all feels very foreign — like walking in high heels on grass. One minute I'm completely in my Zen zone, feeling at one with myself. The next minute I am wobbling around on one foot, trying to keep my balance and win a staring contest with myself in the mirror.

I am a tree…I am a frog…I am a goat…I am a toy for ages 3 and under.

Mirroring my teacher, I try to feel centered and spiritual, not hokey and ridiculous.

By not plunging into the depths of all that is yoga I must admit I feel a bit of an imposter. Sure, I have done my fair share of sun salutations and if you stir up a batch of Chai tea, I can drink pretty much anyone under the table. But I have yet to learn the background on chakras and connecting with my "jivatma." I'm not sure how or where yoga originated or how it quickly came to be westernized, condensed into DVDs containing 80 minutes of widescreen exercise and enlightenment in the privacy of your own living room.

I move into the warrior pose, and try to focus on my breathing, making the connection between mind, body and spirit. I envision myself as strong, serene and invincible. Before finding yoga, I never would have considered becoming an exalted warrior, but why not? I'm a twenty-something gal trying to find my true self. I wonder if an exalted warrior gets paid a salary or hourly?

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

I sink into the child's pose and rest my aching warrior bones, feeling peaceful and accomplished. Maybe it's the fact that yoga is a magical combination of meditation and fitness that keeps calling me back to the studio. Who knew it was possible to combine relaxation and exercise? When I relax on the stationary bike I just end up with thirty minutes of wasted time and saddle sores. Yet when I relax into my flow series, my body bends and twists more easily, giving me an even more intense workout.

What I do know is that there's something about practicing yoga that just makes me feel like a better person, and it seems I'm not alone in my appreciation. Legions of gym-goers are side-stepping the cardio room to experience classes in dimly lit studios off to the side of the gym. They enter as sport drink guzzling, iron pumping gym junkies and emerge as tea drinking, mantra chanting, gravity defying, solid muscle yogis.

I bring my hands to prayer position at the end of an hour class and instantly feel stronger physically and mentally mellowed. Just as class is about to let out, my levels of stress flatline and my mind finally comes to a place of rest.

Ommmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

Zzzz

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by C. Covert Darbyshire

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