That’s How I Roll

Quad skates workout adds fun spin to fitness

By Stephanie Weichert, Certified personal trainer

Want to get in shape, but bored with working out day after day at a gym? Luckily, you can find tons of fitness options outside the walls of a health club; here’s one I just discovered.

Quad skates

In the ‘80s, much to the delight of little girls everywhere, Baby Skates made her entrance into the world. This motorized plastic doll teetered clumsily back and forth on her skates, magically inching forward and occasionally tottering over. Now, imagine a 5’10” woman, who once played with that doll, doing exactly the same thing.

Today was my first foray into “Skatesville.” I laced up my brand-new quad skates with their ginormous 100 mm wheels and maneuvered my way down the driveway of my condo toward the street, gripping my neighbor’s broken-down green truck as I tentatively stepped down.

The exact slope of the driveway had never occurred to me until now. Baby Skates would have me beat at this juncture; at least she was able to use her body weight to move forward. For me, it was all about gravity.

Gravity had a vicious grip on me and was pulling me toward the pavement. But I kept moving, and after losing the truck to hang onto, I had no choice but to bond with the skates.

Getting in the groove

Twenty minutes later, I’d somehow figured out how to utilize the rubber stopper located at the front of my white skates. Within 30 minutes, I was drawing stares from the 5- to 10-year-old crowd, who watched as I flew through the neighborhood. I began to realize that skating requires quite a bit of kinetic energy from my glutes minimus and maximus—you know, the backside. I realized that “core work” on skates is quite different from static gym exercise.

Forty minutes later, I mounted the last slope home. I had never realized before that a small Mount Everest sat just steps outside my front door, or that my condo rested in a valley between two hills.

I was cruising at speeds illegal in some residential areas—and a little horrified at how fast I was traveling.

With my arms flailing, I tried to recall a skiing maneuver—the “snowplow”—in an effort to reduce my speed while staying in one piece. Luckily, I was still standing when—a football field later, it seemed—I arrived at the foot of my Mount Everest.

When I sat down to remove the skates that evening, I thanked my lucky stars that I had made it back in one piece. Luckily, I was lucky stars that I had made it back in one piece and looked forward to more fun the next day.

So can you get fit outside of the gym? Must you really jog in place for an hour while going nowhere? No way! Grab some quad skates, get out and start skating! Chances are you may even meet a few neighbors you never knew you had.

Always wear protective gear when skating, such as helmets and pads.

Energy Enhancers

By Emily McMackin

Can’t get through a conversation without yawning? You may look bored, but maybe you’re not getting enough sleep. Health experts agree that teens should get eight to nine hours of shut-eye every night. Skimping on sleep can hurt your concentration and make you irritable and prone to illness, a study from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says. Over time, it can also put you at risk for high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease. How do you get the sleep you need? Here are three secrets from the National Sleep Foundation:

1. Wind down. Avoid any caffeine or strenuous exercise a few hours before bed. Coffee, tea and some sodas and chocolate contain stimulants that keep your mind racing when it should be drifting off. While a good afternoon workout can help deepen your sleep, anything two hours before bedtime can have the opposite affect.

2. Lights out. Before hitting the sack, shut off your laptop, MP3 player and cell phone, and make sure that your room is slightly dark, cool and quiet. Light acts as a stimulant, which can keep you from falling asleep quickly.

3. Rise and shine. Keep your bedtime consistent, and try to get up close to your regular wake time on weekends, plus or minus an hour. If you wake up at 6 a.m. on Mondays but sleep until noon on Saturdays, you’ll give yourself the equivalent of jet lag.

Work these tips into your bedtime routine, and you’ll wake up feeling more rested and alert.

Struggling to stay awake through most of your classes?