



Fitness Fashion Gone Wild

By Joe Stein, President



Growing up I was taught there were no scary monsters, no goblins that go bump in the night. Now I'm not so sure. I have witnessed Health Club Hell and I am afraid, very afraid. Listed below are some modern incarnations of Dante's Inferno of Fitness Fashion:

Swamp Thing: In order to exercise at the level of intensity required for the effort to be beneficial, one must perspire. This fact does not give license for one to reek. If your gym clothes are stained, smelly or dirty when you enter the gym, by the time your workout is over, a HazMat team may need to be deployed.

Rock Stars and Superheroes gone bad: The donning of underwear is mandatory. Also, unless you are Superman or a rock star with one name like Cher, Madonna or Prince, please wear your underwear next to your skin and the exercise apparel on the outside.

Wicked Wardrobe Malfunctions: Many years ago I trained a wonderful man named Harvey. He viewed our trainer/client role as a teacher/student relationship. He was not simply old-school, at 95 he was old. As a sign of respect to me, he wore chinos, a white shirt, tie and cardigan sweater to our training sessions. After convincing him he was overdressed for the occasion and ties could become entangled in the equipment, Harvey dressed more appropriately. Just as one could be overdressed by wearing work clothes to the gym, one could be underdressed by wearing PJs, hot pants, skimpy sports bras, Speedos or other inappropriate attire.

The Beast from Prehistoric Time: Exercise science has proven there is nothing inherently unsafe about wearing workout apparel from another century. If you are proud of your closet full of bell bottoms, Nehru jackets and polyester leisure suits, then leg warmers and iridescent leotards may be right for you. However if you take any pride in your appearance, you should update your exercise wardrobe immediately. Appropriate workout duds need not cost you a biceps and a quadriceps: old tee shirts and well-worn shorts are fine and give you that Old

Money look.

Bizarro Robin Hood: Why do the decedents of Robin Hood exercise in my gym? Not since Sherwood Forest have so many men worn tight so often? If you ran to the gym in running tights or biked to the gym in bike shorts, you have a pass. But please guys, give the rest of us a break.

The Big Stink: If you overdose on perfume, cologne or aftershave, you may send the person next to you to the ER with an allergic reaction. The heat you generate when exercising will intensify the fragrance.

Gigantic Gym Bags: Often carried by teams of Sherpa bearers, these capacious carryalls have been the source of many trip and fall lawsuits. If you do not want to use the lockers, stow your stuff in the truck of your car.

Metal Mania: Body piercings, especially those with chains and large rings, may be a source of increased risk of injury if you engage in boxing or limit your flexibility in Yoga class. In addition they may become entangled in machine-based strength training equipment. How embarrassing would it be to have the fire department separate your belly ring from the Cybex seated row machine with the Jaws of Life?

By avoiding these fashion faux pas, you can be comfortable and still enjoy your workout without attracting gossip, gasps and gapes.

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