



Trainer Joe's Fitness Gift List

By Joe Stein, President



The Holidays are almost upon us. If your shopping list is incomplete, gifts with a fitness theme are a great way to say you really care. Whether you spend \$1 or a few thousand dollars, you can find something for everyone...even yourself. Submitted for your consideration is Trainer Joe's list of the top ten fitness gifts:

- 1) Sneakers: Walking is a great low-impact cardiovascular exercise. Having proper footwear makes exercise safe and effective. Not sure what type to get? Cross-trainers are good for just about anything except running more than a couple of miles.
- 2) Cardio equipment: If walking outdoors is not your preferred method of cardiovascular exercise, then a treadmill, elliptical trainer or stationary bike makes a wonderful gift. If you've shopped for these years ago and were scared off by high prices, take a look now. There are numerous high quality, feature-rich models at reasonable prices.
- 3) Water bottle holder: You can get a chic leather one for \$35 or a simple mesh one for about a dollar. This gift serves as a reminder to stay hydrated, especially in cold, dry weather. A shoulder strap or belt loop attachment will help keep water at hand.
- 4) Complete Physical Exam: Before starting any program of exercise, get a complete physical. Also, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure: many illnesses can be cured or treated less invasively in their early stages.
- 5) Gift boxes of fruit: Many mail-order companies will send a box containing a different selection of fruit to a lucky recipient each month. This fruit is generally of high quality, delicious, and will help to meet the five-a-day minimum.
- 6) An exercise and food journal: There is research to show studying and recording an activity will change its outcome. Keeping a journal will help you gain insight into your exercise and eating behavior. If you are honest in your recording, the analysis can help you to make improvements.
- 7) Exercise attire: Nothing says "let's get fit," like new workout duds. High tech fabrics keep you warm, dry, visible and looking great.

- 8) New cookbook: There are numerous cookbooks written with an eye toward healthy eating. My wife and I are fond of *Betty Crocker's Healthy New Choices*. Whether you desire low fat, low carb, Mediterranean diet, fast food or gourmet fare, many new cookbooks offer recipes designed to satisfy your taste buds with healthier choices.
- 9) Personal training sessions: If you have not been successful in achieving your fitness goals in the past, perhaps it was because the same inputs have yielded the same outputs. Maybe it's time to "shake it up" by getting professional help. A personal trainer will design a custom-tailored exercise program to meet your needs. Not just for movie stars, professional athletes and the rich and famous, personal trainers have helped regular people to tone up, slim down and increase their energy. Whether you choose to exercise in your home or at the gym, having professional assistance can make the difference between success and failure.
- 10) A daily planner: It can be a low tech, paper-based system like Franklin Planner, or it can be an electronic high tech system like Palm Pilot. The key is to use a proven method to organize your time in an effective way. You don't find time to exercise; you *make* time to exercise! List it as a daily priority, just as you would other important appointments.

Hopefully a gift on this list will be the spark that helps you or someone you love kindle the fitness flame. Hit the stores running! Best wishes for a healthy and happy Holiday Season.

Joe Stein, B.S., M.B.A., is a certified personal trainer, weight management and lifestyle consultant and owner of Renaissance Fitness & Wellness. Call 732.345.5151 or e-mail Joe@RenaissanceFitness.com with questions or to receive a complimentary fitness consultation and session.