

LOVE AND LONGEVITY

BY MIMI BLUESTONE

MORE AEROBICS, MORE SEX

THE EXERCISE STIMULANT

Aerobics strengthens your heart, improves your health...and boosts your sex life. That's the word from Linda De Villers, Ph.D., a West Los Angeles psychologist who offers workshops on building sexual confidence through exercise.

De Villers studied responses from more than 8,000 women, ages 18 to 50, who had been exercising aerobically at least three times a week for three months or more. When she asked how it affected them sexually, 40 percent said they were more easily aroused, nearly 33 percent reported increased sexual activity and 26.5 percent said they now found it easier to climax.

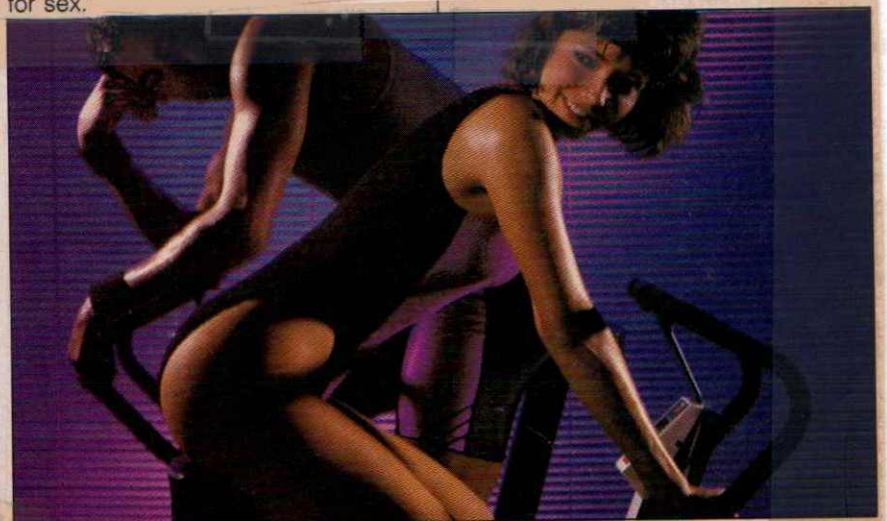
Only 7 percent said they had been less sexually active. De Villers speculates that those women may have been compulsive exercisers and notes that other research shows intense exercise often has that effect.

Why does exercise usually increase sexual desire? De Villers suggests part of the reason may be exercise-induced endorphins, natural pain relievers believed to produce the "runner's high"—a feeling of well-being that can extend to sexual desire.

To get the most out of your aerobics sexually, De Villers offers these tips:

Focus on the sensuality of exercising rather than on long-term benefits. It is "a way of heightening basic body awareness that can spill over into the bedroom." Also, work out as a two-some. Intimate relationships may suffer when just one partner exercises: The one who doesn't may feel bad about his or her body image because of not working to improve it. Plus, exercise done at the expense of time spent together "isn't going to help your sex life."

Above all, select a workout you enjoy, aerobics or not. "People who have fun doing whatever they do," De Villers notes, "are in the right mind-set for sex."



Aerobic exercise, like working out on a stationary bike, not only keeps your heart in ace shape, but may give your sex life a boost, too.