

By MICHAEL TENNESEN

## Is That a Reebok in Your Pocket?

Here's a new wrinkle to cross-training: According to a recent survey in *Runner's World* magazine, two out of three runners surveyed said they fantasized about sex while running. More odd: One out of 11 said they fantasized about running while having sex. So what gives?

Well, it seems a growing number of studies confirm a connection between exercise and increased sexual pleasure. Researchers at UC San Diego recently put 95 sedentary men on a program of vigorous exercise; after nine months, nearly 80 percent said they made love more frequently and had better orgasms. And Linda De Villers, a sex therapist and psychologist in Santa Monica, surveyed 8,000 women and found that among those who were regular exercisers, 31 percent had sex more often than before they started exercising, 25 percent reported climaxes came faster, 5 percent said orgasms intensified and 25 percent reported sexual desire increased after workouts.

It seems regular exercise has both short- and long-term effects on a runner's libido. On the short-term side, some studies report a rise in testosterone after exercise. Others report a rise in beta-endorphins (those "happy hormones" we keep hearing about). Says De Villers, "Working out gives you a sexual second wind."

On the long-term side, there's an increase in flexibility, stamina and muscle tone and a corresponding increase in self-image. "When people feel good about their body," says De Villers, "they're more likely to share it."

But watch out for over-training, she warns. One *New England Journal of Medicine* study of "obsessive" male runners found that when given a choice between running or sex, the obsessive ones chose running. She says 30 to 60 minutes of exercise, three to five times a week, should keep you pretty balanced.

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