

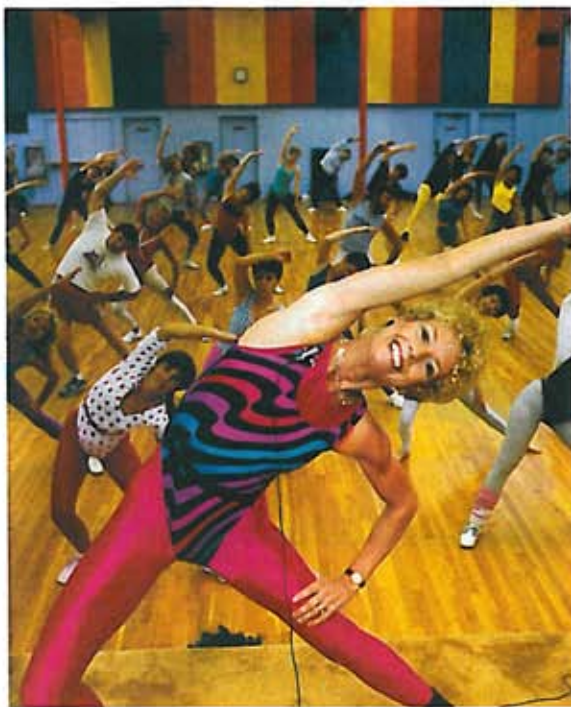
What a Feeling!

Why the era of belted thong leotards and braided headbands is working its way back onto fitness schedules. BY SARAH BERNARD

GEORGE MICHAEL is singing "Wake Me Up Before You Go Go." The instructor is wearing leg warmers and spandex short-shorts. Your fellow exercisers, sweating profusely, are doing a grapevine to the left—clap!—grapevine to the right. What is this, 1984? Actually, it's the present day, at the New York Sports Club in midtown, and the class is Tim Keightley's Aerobics Through the Ages.

Though they may look (and sound) like Off Broadway send-ups, eighties-inspired workouts like Keightley's are proliferating. Just as bat-winged sweaters and pegged pants are reappearing on runways, classic cardio burns from the eighties are back in fashion, too. The primary appeal: They're simple and they make you sweat. "Gym classes have gotten so high-concept—Yogalates plus spinning plus meditation, all in 45 minutes!" says Keightley, whose classes are held at NYSC locations all over town. "It's hard to know if you're burning enough calories to make a difference."

Crunch's group-fitness director, Marc Santa Maria, just added more step aerobics to the gym's spring schedule to meet demand. Equinox has been moving throwback classes into prime-time morning hours. Last week, the gym launched a new step class called Climax using newfangled slanted risers (14 Wall St., nr. Nassau St.; 212-964-6688). The choreography is classic Jane Fonda—lots of knee lifts, toe taps, and traveling "around the



worlds" across the bench—but the pace is a little less frenetic. "The reason these classes died out the first time is because instructors were going too fast—classes were too choreographed, and people couldn't keep up," says Carol Espel, Equinox's national group-fitness director. "We know what we did wrong."

The eighties never really ended at the New York Health & Racquet Club, where the schedule includes twenty step classes and as many high- and low-impact-aerobics slots. A retro aerobics class at the 76th Street location (1433 York Ave.; 212-737-6666) has been attended by the same group of "Let's Get Physical" fanatics since 1982. "They're very social, very sing-along," says fitness director Maryann Donner, "and they get that runner's high."

At Crunch, the eighties made a comeback last fall, when at an Awesome 80s spin class instructors passed out jelly bracelets and Rubik's Cubes. Santa Maria is repackaging what he calls "bread and butter" dance-based aerobics with contemporary (if not necessarily cool) tie-ins. His Evolution of Dance class is inspired by a YouTube video of the same name; Step It Up and Dance is based on a new Bravo reality show (both are held at the gym's East Village location, 404 Lafayette St., nr. 4th St.; 212-614-0120). People are clamoring for the nonstop cardio, he notes, but also for the music. "American Idol has been doing a lot of eighties songs right now," he says. "That helps."

SALES & BARGAINS April 9-15

Yoko Devereaux creative director Andy Salzer is celebrating his birthday by taking 25 percent off his menswear—and serving up free booze across the street at Trophy Bar this Friday from 9 to 11 p.m. 338 Broadway, nr. Keap St., Williamsburg (718-302-1450); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/11 (noon-10).

Save 30 to 70 percent on contemporary furniture at the **BoConcept** warehouse sale. 180 Pulaski St., nr. Port Jersey Blvd., Bayonne, N.J. (201-433-4461); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/12 (10-3).

Hickey—the more youthful, less expensive spinoff of Hickey Freeman—is taking up to 75

percent off suits and casualwear. 261 W. 36th St., nr. Seventh Ave., second fl.; A.E., M.C., V.; 4/13 (11-6); 4/14 and 4/16 (10-6); 4/15 and 4/17 (10-7).

Sumptuous Italian linens from **Frette** are marked down by up to 75 percent. 317 W. 33rd St., nr. Eighth Ave. (718-747-1656);

A.E., M.C., V.; 4/12-4/15 (9-6:30); 4/16 (9-5).

Madame Alexander collectible dolls and figurines are up to 80 percent off; the Cissy dolls are now from \$100. 615 W. 131st St., nr. Broadway (212-283-5900); A.E., M.C., V.; 4/11 (9-6) and 4/12 (9-4).

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