

The Exercise craze

Old and young, men and women are jogging, dancing, jumping up and down, bending and stretching. Exercise is in fashion. Everybody wants to be fit, feel good, look slim, and stay young.

It started with jogging. Millions of Americans put on their new coloured sports shoes and fashionable jogging suits and ran through the parks or along the streets for half an hour a day. Then the joggers got the marathon craze. Popular marathons are now held everywhere. Lots of people want to see if they can run 42 kms and do it faster than everyone else. The big city marathons, in London and New York, are important sporting events. Television cameras and newspapers report them in detail. Some remarkable people take part in the marathons: seventy-five year old grandfathers and nine year old grandchildren, and even disabled in wheelchairs.

But marathons are not for everyone. Some prefer to get fit at home. For them, there 's a big choice of books, cassettes and video programmers with music and instructions. Sometimes the action is more like dancing than exercises. That's why one big company calls it 'Dancercise'.

Taking exercise is only one part of keeping fit. You've got to get slim too. Books and magazines about slimming are bestsellers and these days.

Food problems

Most British and American state schools provide their students with the option to eat lunch at school, but do they provide them with the option to eat well? Jamie Oliver is one of Britain's most popular stars. He's a young cook whose TV and cookery programmes are watched by TA S K 20 85 millions. In his last TV series, he tried to make British school dinner both eatable and healthy. He showed just how poor many school diets were. Many of them contained too many fats and carbohydrates and not enough vitamins. His campaign to get tastier and healthier school meals called Feed me better has caused politicians to take the problem seriously and promise to improve the quality of food on school dinner plates. Obesity is on the increase in all western countries. The biggest causes are bad diet and people being less active than they were in the past. Some people allege that schools also make the problem worse because they allow the sale of fizzy drinks and sugary snacks in school tuck shops and vending machines. Other people believe that advertising is to blame. UK politicians are promoting a voluntary agreement to stop junk food advertising at times when younger children watch the television.

The pack of biscuits

One night there was a woman at the airport who had to wait for several hours before catching her next flight. While she waited she bought a book and a pack of biscuits to spend the time. She looked for a place to sit and waited. She was deep into her book, when suddenly she realized that there was a young man sitting next to her who was stretching his hand, with no concern whatsoever, and grabbing the pack of cookies lying between them. He started to eat them one by one. Not wanting to make a fuss about it she decided to ignore him. The woman, slightly bothered, ate the cookies and watched the clock, while the young and shameless thief of biscuits was also finishing them. The woman started to get really angry at this point and thought, "If I wasn't such a good and educated person, I would have given this daring man a black eye by now." Every time she ate a biscuit, he had one too. The dialogue between their eyes continued and when only one biscuit was left, she wondered what was he going to do. Softly and with a nervous smile, the young man grabbed the last biscuit and broke it in two. He offered one half to the woman while he ate the other half. Briskly she took the biscuit and thought, "What an insolent man! How uneducated! He didn't even thank me!" She had never met anybody so fresh and sighed relieved to hear her flight announced. She grabbed her bags and went towards the boarding gate refusing to look back to where that insolent thief was. After boarding the plane and nicely seated, she looked for her book, which was nearly finished by now. While looking into her bag she was totally surprised to find her pack of biscuits nearly intact. "If my biscuits are here", she thought feeling terribly, "those others were his and he tried to share them with me. Too 88 Глава II. Reading late to apologize to the young man". She realized with pain, that it was her who had been insolent, uneducated and a thief, and not him!

The shoebox

A man and woman had been married for more than 60 years. They had shared everything. They had talked about everything. They had kept no secrets from each other except that the little old woman had a shoebox in the top of her closet that she had cautioned her husband never to open or ask her about.

For all of these years, he had never thought about the box, but one day the little old woman got very sick and the doctor said she would not recover.

In trying to sort out their affairs, the little old man took down the shoebox and took it to his wife's bedside. She agreed that it was time TA S K 23 89 that he should know what was in the box. When he opened it, he found two knitted dolls and a stack of money totaling \$95,000.

He asked her about the contents.

‘When we were to be married,’ she said, ‘ my grandmother told me the secret of a happy marriage was to never argue. She told me that if I ever got angry with you, I should just keep quiet and knit a doll.’

The little old man was so moved; he had to fight back tears. Only two precious dolls were in the box. She had only been angry with him two times in all those years of living and loving. He almost burst with happiness.

‘Honey,’ he said, ‘that explains the dolls, but what about all of this money? Where did it come from?’

‘Oh,’ she said, ‘that’s the money I made from selling the dolls.’