

# Fit Is the New Fun

How physical exercise trains your brain for happiness

**I** WANT YOU TO DESCRIBE YOUR BEST summer ever, and I want you to do it in just one word. Ready? Okay, go.  
Was the word you came up with “fun”?  
**A.** Yes, of course, what else?  
**B.** No, I am the lead singer of an emo band. I prefer “bleak.”

Okay, sorry, Morrissey, “fun” it is. Next question: Are you having enough now? And more important, can you get your hands on more? Well, let me slide this idea down to your end of the bar.

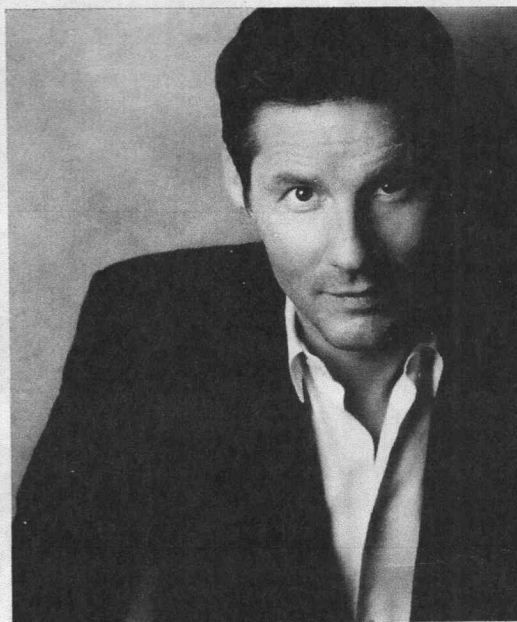
If you want more fun, you need more fitness. Simply put, fit people have more fun, for three reasons:

**Fit people are physically trained to have a good time.** Whether you want to take up waterskiing, learn to scuba dive, or just feel comfortable in the company of an attractive dinner date, body confidence lets you take off your shirt—or whatever—without worrying about whether your body will look and perform its very best.

**Fit people are mentally trained to have a good time.** In fact, when you hit the gym, you’re doing more than simply training your muscles to be hard. You’re training your brain to be happy. After strenuous exercise, your brain steps up its bonding with naturally occurring opioids, essentially making your emotional responses more positive.

**Fit people are more fun to be around.** Check this out: One study looked at kids who played outdoors and kids who spent most of their time indoors. The ones who went outside to play were more popular with other kids. And, oddly, their parents were more popular, too!

Hmmm . . . so here’s something that will make you more popular and more attractive to the opposite sex, help you live longer, and allow you to laugh at stress while enjoying more of the things you love? And you can get it for the cost of a pair of sneakers? (Can you



believe we still have to convince people to exercise?)

Of course, it’s the perfect feedback loop: Laughter, like exercise, cuts stress, boosts immunity, smacks around bad cholesterol, and lowers blood pressure. So if you want to be truly fit . . . have some fun.

Fortunately, that won’t be hard to do. This month, we’re offering you a complete summer package that integrates fun and fitness in all sorts of new and exciting ways. First, let *Twilight*’s Kellan Lutz help train you for the best days of the year. Then consider leaving town. Contributing editor Jim Thornton gives you dozens of great health reasons to do so (“Recapture Your Wild Side”), and senior editor Ben Court delivers “50 Guy Trips That Will Change Your Life.” Your adventures start on page 124.

What are you waiting for?