

Month.... GET in SHAPE!

by Leah McClellan

ting that stereotype out of your mind and think of your body like the engine of a car. Would you put dirty oil into it? Or gasoline mixed with fillers? Of course not. Start thinking in terms of food as fuel for life and, of course, for skating.

Rule # 2 Move that Body!

Yeah, yeah, you know the story: 20 minutes, 3 times a week. That's sure to improve the cardiovascular fitness of someone who is otherwise an inert protoplasmic blob at a desk during the day and whose muscles twitch in response to the colorful beams of light emitted from their TVs at night. But if you really want to get in shape, you're going to have to up the ante. Set a goal for at least an hour of heart-pumping stuff *at least* 3 times a week. Keep in mind that serious amateurs and professionals train *daily* and for a lot longer than one hour. But we are mortals, so take it easy at first and don't overdo it. Stretch out easy and warm up before you try to break any records. And be sure to consult your doctor if exercise is a new thing for you!

What's the "heart-pumping" stuff?

The heart-pumping stuff is the kind of exercise that requires some effort! I'm

talking fast walking, jogging, biking, swimming—anything that keeps you going for an extended period of time. Inline skating is a great choice. But it doesn't count if you make a slow-moving social event out of it. A good rule of thumb to help avoid over-exertion but still keep the heart rate up: can talk, can't sing. You shouldn't be so out of breath that you can't talk, yet you shouldn't be able to sing comfortably (try it, it works).

How to make skating into a work out

First, find an area relatively free of hazards like pedestrians, traffic, and bikes, *especially* if you're a beginner. The Kelly Drive/West River Drive path is terrible when it's crowded, great when it's not (like very early morning). Sections of West River Drive itself is closed April-October on weekends; check out the Betzwood trail (Valley Forge Park), the Greentree Office Complex (Marlton, New Jersey), Washington Twsp Park, NJ, and other area parks for off-road workouts.

Second, increase your speed. But don't try skating fast if you aren't capable of stopping QUICKLY! Be sure of your braking abilities. Then, increase your speed by getting down low with knees bent and upper body and head down into the wind. Keeping your knees bent gives you greater length to your stride because it gives you more contact with the pavement. In addition, bending your knees lowers your center of gravity which gives you better balance at higher speeds. Remember to push off with your entire foot rather than just your toe, and aim your stroke out sideways. Pushing off with

your whole foot keeps all your wheels in contact with the road for more power per stroke, and pushing out sideways keeps you in contact with the road longer. Your arms should swing and reach forward with every stride in the same rhythm as they do when walking or running, except that they should end up going somewhat sideways because of the side-to-side motion of your legs.

When you get the hang of speed on skates, you'll be able to reap the benefits of skating as an aerobic workout equal to running but with less stress on your knees. It's the pace that determines the workout, and that's up to you! Remember, however, to take it easy at first. This goes for veterans just returning after a skateless winter *and* beginners. Build up little by little, and consult a reputable physician or other trained expert if you want to get really serious. And be sure to moderate your speed according to your route. Don't try to blitz through a crowded area like a sidewalk. Always, always, skate safe.

The word up is "Spring!" It's here! Get outside! Let's go skating! Let the games begin! It's gonna be a great season. Not only will we be the most awesome, most *fun* skate club ever, but we're also gonna be the healthiest, most in-shape, fastest skaters around.

**Look out Boston!
Look out New York and DC!
Here we come, and we're
gonna blow your
skates off!**

Nutrition information: USDA Guidelines