

Get Fit by the Sofa; Your Popcorn Work-Out!

By Christina Fernandes

Growing bored with your gym routine? Having trouble rousing yourself for daily runs? Interested in exercise classes but can't fit them into your schedule? A workout DVD might be just what you need. *WTM* tells you which ones to pop into your player and which to dump in the bin.

THE ENTIRE COLLECTION ON ONE DVD

RICHARD SIMMONS AND THE SILVER FOXES



There are certainly many celebrity fitness DVDs that give you a great workout and many more that don't. Who could forget Jane Fonda's lycra-clad body leading its audience through high-powered aerobics routines in the 80s? It's a classic that in many ways kicked off the celebrity fitness craze. But why, oh why would George Foreman (American two-time world heavyweight boxing champion) eternalise his gut and clumsy moves on an exercise tape? He should have stuck to hawking grills.

Bunt 'em in the Bin Blunders

There are so many bad celebrity workouts that I could write a book on the subject. So I will just share the extra-special gems.

First up, *Bubba until it hurts*. That's the actual title; I'm not making it up! The video features Bubba Smith, a former professional American

football player and actor who is perhaps best known for his role as Moses Hightower in the *Police Academy* films.

Looking at the cover of this baby, it's hard to decide whether to laugh or cry. Bubba sports a shiny red unitard stretched so tightly across his well-oiled muscles that it looks about ready to burst. This fashion may have been acceptable for about two seconds in 1985, but it's just a bad idea all around for a 6 foot 7 strapping lad.

To be honest though, after you get past the title and cover, this video is genius. It features an inspirational speech by Bubba that could pump up the laziest couch potato and the soundtrack is pure

80s brilliance. I might have put this one in the "pop it in your player" category if it wasn't for its poor availability.

Next on the list is *Positive Moves: a Personal Plan for Fitness and Well-Being at Any Age* by actress Angela Lansbury who played Jessica Fletcher in the long-running mystery series *Murder, She Wrote*.

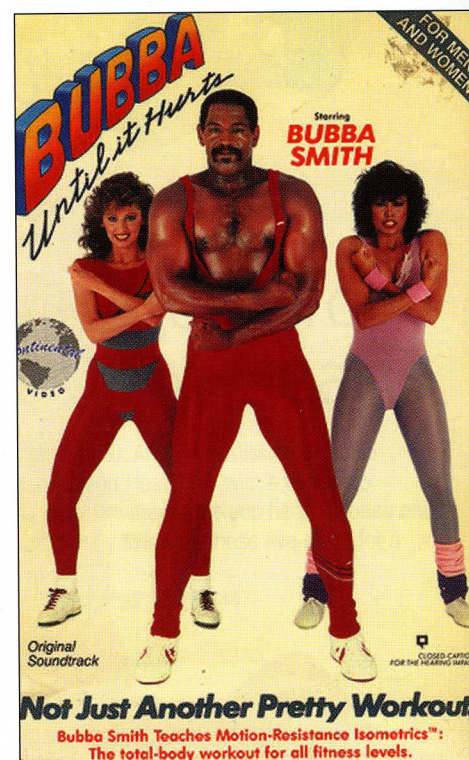
Don't get me wrong, Jessie's crime-solving skills were awesome and the way she stuck her nose into everyone's business and put all those condescending sheriffs in their place was brilliant. But does she strike you as a fitness guru? Me neither. With her soft voice and kindly nature she just cannot convincingly bring across the "drop and give me 20" routine. Best stick to solving murders, Angie.

From gumshoes to geriatrics. That's right, not only celebrities can make workout videos, their parents can get in on the action as well. In *Richard Simmons and the Silverfoxes*, the trainer leads Sal Pacino (Al Pacino's dad), Jacqueline Stallone (Sylvester Stallone's mum),

Harry Hoffman (Dustin Hoffman's dad) and Pauline Fawcett (Farrah Fawcett's mum) through a hilarious workout routine. The pastel coloured sweat suits are enough to send you into a fit of laughter. However, I wouldn't recommend it for anyone, even the over 60s.

After the last tame treat, I felt ready to bring out my wild side. So I turned to Carmen Electra's *Fit to Strip*. Oh, how I would regret my decision. This is possibly the most boring, least animating exercise video I have ever seen — and I'm saying this after sweatin' it with Sylvester Stallone's mum!

While some of the dance moves are kind of cute and Carmen sure looks good performing them, you will hardly break a sweat or start breathing heavily. It's a bad workout.



Last but not least on our list of celebrity blunders is Zsa Zsa Gabor's *It's Simple, Darling*. It features the goddess of old Hollywood performing her exercise routine flanked by an enormous beefcake of a man on either side.

If you want to have an evening at home with the girls, open a bottle of bubbly, put on some pink fluffy slippers and crack up to Zsa Zsa talking about love, life and all of her husbands, this is a great video. If you're looking for a workout, I'd recommend you go somewhere else. It's a series of very bad exercises and Zsa Zsa's belly flopping out while she's workout out somewhat less than enthusiastically is not exactly inspirational.

Just as there are scores of other celebrities that have made bad videos – from Fabio to Claudia Schiffer and OJ Simpson to Cher, there are also plenty of bad DVDs that don't feature any stars. In the interest of saving us all some time, I will forego the lot of them. Let me just share the one I consider the pinnacle of bad fitness crazes. It's not only ineffective, it's downright dangerous. And it's one of the latest

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As the title suggests, it's to be performed in high heels. Supposedly it will sculpt your legs and train your core because your muscles will be more engaged in stabilising your body than they would be if you were wearing flats.

Fair enough. But while you may get perfect calves from this workout, you will also have the feet of a 90-year old. Your tendons will claw up from the pressure high heels exert on them. This

will cause your toes to claw up as well. Bunions, hammertoes and permanent bending are some other side effects.

Also, stilettos put your body out of its natural alignment, exerting immense pressure on your intervertebral disks. This can lead to serious back problems.

Aside from these long-term effects, you also run a high risk of injury when you exercise on high heels — it's easy to twist your ankle and sprain it or tear a ligament. So while this latest craze is flooding the DVD market and infiltrating gyms, you would do best to stay away from it and find a healthier option.

Pop 'em in Your Player Programmes

After all these no-nos, you may ask yourself whether you will

ever find a proper workout DVD. But don't fret — there are some great ones on the market.

If you are looking for a workout that is gentle on your joints Pilates or yoga and their various offshoots are a good choice.

Ashtanga, or dynamic, yoga exercises virtually every muscle in your body and gets your heart rate pumping. A great option is Richard Freeman's *Ashtanga Yoga Collection*. It's a series of three DVDs for beginner to intermediate levels. Freeman guides you through the poses step by step and the exercises are great for everyone because you can tailor them to your own skill level.

Another low-impact option is Pilates. And with Jennifer Kries you are pretty much guaranteed a great workout that is really enjoyable. Kries is known for a routine she calls "The Method", which is Pilates infused with yoga and ballet movements. Don't worry; it's not a

complicated as it sounds. I would especially recommend *New Method Precision Pilates* and *Pilates Method: Perfect Mix*.

Kries explains and demonstrates the exercises very well and she frequently reminds her audience to work at their own levels. You will be surprised how much your strength and flexibility improves with these workouts.

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If you are looking for something a bit more upbeat, dance aerobics, cardio kickboxing and other such exercise to music workouts may be a better option for you.

The absolute best dance aerobics workout on DVD has got to be the Ministry of Sound's *Pump it Up! The Ultimate Dance Workout*. Remember the music video to Eric Prydz's song

