

Fitness Quickies Add Up

Joan Price says exercise anytime, anywhere

By Jennie Orvino (word count: 909)

Get up off the couch to change the channel. Do calf raises as you brush your teeth. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Pace while talking on the phone. If you think you can't squeeze a workout into your busy day, you'll think again after reading Joan Price's *THE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE EXERCISE BOOK*.

This 59-year-old fitness motivator, author and dance teacher will be at Petaluma Copperfield's on Thursday, May 15 at 7 p.m. to demonstrate how even an exercise-averse skeptic can develop strength, flexibility and aerobic fitness while performing everyday tasks such as cleaning the house, shopping, working at the computer, socializing with friends.

Fewer than 25 percent of American adults engage in even light-to-moderate physical activity for the recommended 30 minutes per day. Price cites longevity studies which look at factors like what diseases people get over a lifetime and how they die. These studies show that the greatest, most dramatic health benefit comes from taking the *FIRST STEP* from being sedentary to being moderately active.

"I'm speaking to those who can't spare a half hour for exercise or who don't want to," says Price. "By doing ordinary activities in ways that burn more calories, and by focusing 5 minutes here, 10 minutes there, research shows that body tone and health improves. It isn't the length of the particular exercise that has the biggest impact, it is how many calories are burned over the course of the day. And it doesn't have to happen all at once."

Price taught English at Petaluma High School for about 15 years before she left in 1991 to devote full time to writing and fitness education. She taught aerobics, was published in minor magazines, then authored four books before the 2003 publication of her *ANYTIME, ANYWHERE* guide.

This compact, 6" x 6" book includes more than 300 quick and easy "fitness quickies" in chapters designated for practicing at home (morning, before dinner, or anytime), in the car, at work, and during family time. Most of the exercises require little or no equipment, but good shoes and clothes that facilitate movement are recommended. A jump rope, pedometer or resistance bands (an alternative to weights for building muscle strength) are some of the inexpensive tools that could enhance your regimen.

Price points out that the "tips, suggestions and subtle, loving coaxing" in her book are not designed only for those who are short on time, who don't have the stamina for sustained workouts, or who are reluctant to don leotards or shorts in public.

"The book is also a backup for people who are already trying to keep fit, and a way for them to keep progressing during times when holidays, travel, family, illness or visitors make their regular workout impossible."

Price's personal journey has some elements of a made-for-TV movie. In 1979 an unlicensed driver hit her head-on in a near-fatal auto accident. She suffered many injuries, including a smashed face, neck fracture and a shattered heel and ankle.

“My doctors were amazed that I survived the impact; and I believe it was because I had strengthened my heart from taking aerobics classes. As I recovered and struggled so hard to get out of a wheelchair, I watched people sitting, choosing not to move. I decided that when—not if—I was able to move again, I had a mission to share the joy of fitness.”

Sixteen years after her first accident, she was again hit by an out-of-control driver and the same damaged leg and ankle were severely fractured.

“After months of excruciating pain and distress, I taught myself (literally one step at a time) to walk, bicycle and dance again. I toured the park on crutches and worked out on any machine at the health club that could be done with two arms and one leg. I was in pain whether I stayed in bed or not, so I went out and did the things I loved.”

Having gone through all this, Price is empathetic to the range of human desires and excuses, and thus is a sensitive, effective mentor and consultant. Through her business enterprise, Unconventional Moves, she designs individualized fitness programs, and is in demand as a speaker at health expositions and corporate management seminars. She is also a passionate instructor of line dance.

“Line dancing is the most fun you can have without a partner,” Price says, “and it helps many people recapture the joy of being physical.” She says that line dancing is not just country/western any more. It has modern, urban sophistication, swing syncopations, and music from many genres. Dancing devotees at her Monday and Friday evening classes at Coaches Corner in Sebastopol refer to Price as their “favorite teacher, stand-up comic and fitness maven” and “a five-foot powerhouse who can coax the athlete out of the inveterate slug.”

The audience won’t be dancing at Price’s appearance on Thursday evening at Copperfield’s, but folks will see her demonstrate many of the “fitness minutes” described in THE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE EXERCISE BOOK. The “fitness maven” guarantees that getting active will help anyone feel better, pump up energy, and be more productive mentally and physically. “I hope some of my former students show up,” Price said with a smile.

[For sidebar or caption] Joan Price will be discussing and signing copies of her new book, THE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE EXERCISE BOOK at Petaluma Copperfield’s, 140 Kentucky St., on Thursday, May 15 at 7 p.m. Her website is: www.joanprice.com.