

IRON Maidens

Student Recreation Center encourages women to utilize free weights

Men always pay for dinner, women raise children, the Mr. America competition is a bodybuilding contest and the Ms. America contest is a beauty pageant — gender roles at work. Men and women are brought into the world with a particular set of expectations determined by little more than the God-given equipment between their legs. These roles impact much of what people do, and nowhere are gender roles more present than in the gym.

With that fact in mind, the Student Recreation Center staff is making an effort to help women look past gender roles and concentrate on fitness with the "Women on Weights" seminar. The seminar aims to show women how to use free weights and debunk some of the myths surrounding free weights.

DeAun Woosley, fitness director at the Student Rec, said women are often intimidated by the "testosterone zone" that surrounds the free weight area at the Rec Center.

"We are trying to acquaint women with the free weight area," she said.

"Normally, women just do the machines; free weights are usually associated with the really serious lifters, who are usually men."

Woosley said women generally want to be strong and defined, but not bulky. However, muscle mass is necessary for definition because the more muscle mass a person has, the more calories he or she burns and the more defined his or her muscles can become. The Women on Weights program will give women a chance to learn to use free weights, which are particularly useful for gaining size.

Since most women have not had contact with free weights before, Woosley said, the seminar will be very basic.

"A lot of women do not know how to put plates on or what posture they should use, so we will try to teach them how to do the basics safely. We will have 15 personal trainers at the seminar, so we will be able to work with people one on one."

Tom Kennedy, personal training coordinator for the Rec Center, said the seminar will likely be set up in stations

— trainers will teach their specialties to participants one at a time. Kennedy said this program is necessary because women need to learn to use free weights safely. However, safety is not the only reason for the seminar.

"There is definitely a gender barrier when it comes to free weights," Kennedy said. "We want to show women that there is more to the Rec Center than the machines. There is something on the other side of that brick wall that they can use."

Kennedy said women avoid certain machines or exercises because even exercises can have gender identities.

"Certain machines are associated with femininity. You will never see a man queezing his thighs together, but the bench press is a big testosterone exercise. It is just that most of the male-associated exercises are done with free weights. Women want to avoid that bodybuilder look, which is a free weight association," she said.

Barbara Finlay, director of the women's studies program at Texas A&M, said women have traditionally

avoided some activities because of the gender association that goes along with them, but the current generation of women is eliminating those old barriers.

"Younger women have not been brought up in a world where they were taught they could not do certain things," Finlay said. "So women are exploring things they have never explored and doing things they have never done in the past."

Finlay said it is not surprising that free weight training is being opened to women as society as a whole changes its views on gender roles.

"Women are more independent and are becoming a much more powerful group economically on their own," she said. "For example, today, ad agencies target women specifically. Ten or 15 years ago they would not have thought of it."

With such liberation, it is only a matter of time until the entire A&M campus is covered with Amazons.



Story by Jason Bennyhoff and Illustration by Ruben Deluna

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You are Worthless
Oswald T. Pratt and Scott Dikkers
Andrews McMeel Publishing

You are Worthless is a self-help book for those who think self-help books are ridiculous. Co-written by "Dr." Scott Dikkers, Editor-in-chief of *The Onion*, *You are Worthless* follows in the newspaper's footsteps of off-color and sometimes malicious humor.

In its send-up of self-help books and those who read them, *You are Worthless* pokes fun at the reader's fragile self-esteem and comes through with the "Depressing Nuggets of Wisdom Sure to Ruin Your Day" promised in the book's subtitle. Quips like "Tomorrow is going to be even worse than today" and "You will die lonely" pull no punches in their assault on the reader's soft spots.

You are Worthless takes aim at easy

targets like depression and loneliness, and, more often than not, scores a direct hit. The more than 200 pages of painful tidbits are bitterly funny in their mockery of not only sadness, but love, marriage, pets and work. Readers will find themselves feeling guilty about laughing at subject matter not normally regarded as open for humor. For example, the chapter entitled "The Nightmare That is Love" is full of memorable quick jabs like: "You have nothing to offer a potential mate," "You are not very good in bed," and "Screaming and yelling will make you feel better, especially if you direct your anger at someone you care about."

Obviously, *You are Worthless* is not a humor book for everybody. For readers who are still haunted at night by visions of the divorce or Mom's suicide, the self-help farce will probably hit too close to home and should be avoided. But for those who enjoy biting sarcasm and wit on par with "The Simpsons" and *The Onion*, *You are*

Worthless is a seemingly endless string of guilty laughs. (Grade: A)

—Eric Dickens

The Man Who Loved Only Numbers
Paul Hoffman
Hyperion Publishing

A singularly devoted mathematician who revolutionized number theory but could not learn to tie his own shoes until age 11, Paul Erdős often toed the line between idiot savant and weirdo genius. Erdős, whose epitaph read, "Finally I am becoming stupider no more," showed no interest in any non-mathematic subject

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