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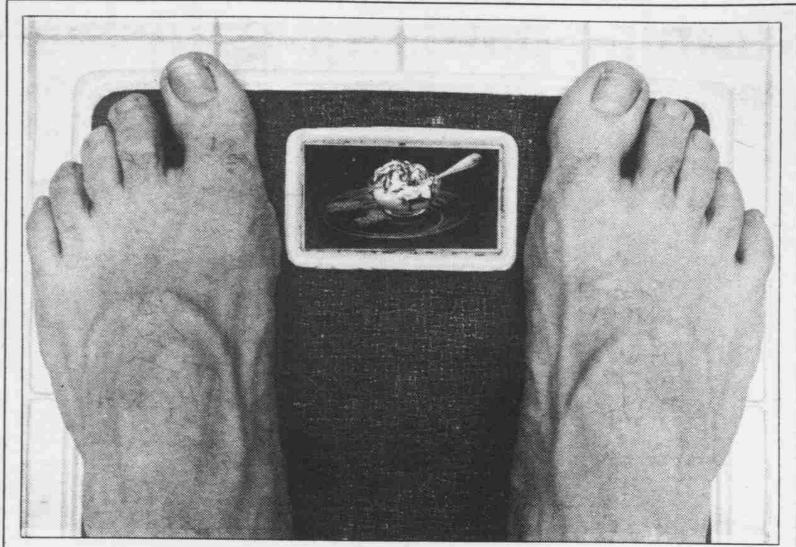


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Tar Heel file photo

Medical experts recommend beginning fitness programs at a young age to prevent obesity

Doctors advise children to start exercising early

From Associated Press report

DURHAM — While college students and adults may be on a health kick, one quarter of the children in America are obese, and most do not get enough exercise, a pediatrician at Duke University Medical Center says.

"Children need to have regular periods of aerobic activity as part of their lifestyles," said Deborah Squire, associate in the Division of General Pediatrics and a specialist in pediatric sports medicine.

Today's exercise-conscious parents may try to push their children into exercise regimens such as those in the latest toddler-parent exercise videos, Squire said. These programs are more helpful in teaching parents how to interact with their babies than in producing a physically fit child, she said.

"If parents seek to start their infants on an exercise program solely to develop athletic prowess in later life, I have a problem with that," Squire said. "The key is that

it should be fun and something the child wants to do.

"My message is not that every child should be an athlete. But we have the physical ability for exercise, and that's important to our health," she said.

Squire said anaerobic exericise, which is marked by bursts of activity, is not sufficient exercise. In general, children should do the aerobic exercise of their choice three or four times a week for 20 to 30 minutes, she said.

Indoor health clubs offer variety of fitness services for customers

By CYNTHIA HOWARD

Although summer is a time when many people head outdoors, there are many advantages to indoor health clubs. They have a lot to offer anyone who wants to tone up, slim down or just enjoy some healthy exercise.

The most attractive aspects of a health club are the several alternatives available to the exerciser, according to club employees.

Eastgate Shopping Center's Spa Health Club, the oldest health club in the area, is one example. Spa Health Club offers weightlifting, aerobics, bicycles and pool activities,

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said Dianna Bradley, a fitness counselor at the club. Customers can easily expand their programs to use a sauna or tanning booth as well, she said.

The availability of fitness counselors is also a major advantage over exercising alone, Bradley said. Fitness counselors are able to give clients professional, personalized service, she said

"Every client is interviewed, weighed and measured to help determine his personal needs," Bradley said.

Counselors can also give important information on exercise and on how to use unfamiliar equipment, and they can help exercisers create their own personal fitness programs, she said.

Marty Weeks, a fitness instructor at The Nautilus Fitness Center in Chapel Hill, said, "One of the main advantages of a health club is that people don't have to buy the Nautilus equipment, which is very expensive."

Pat Jones, manager of The Gym on Main Street in Carrboro, said motivation is the most important aspect in a health club. People accomplish very little if they try to work out on their own Jones said

work out on their own, Jones said.
"It's hard to keep the motivation

up when you do it by yourself," he said.

The health club has experienced phenomenal growth in the past few years, he said. People are becoming more health conscious and exercise is becoming a very important part of everyday life.

Jim Grissom, manager of Nautilus, said, "People who work out on a regular basis find that exercising is a way of releasing tension, and generally, they feel better."

And the growth in the health club industry should continue, Grissom said. "There is a lot of room for growth, and major improvements are being made in the types of equipment," he said.

More than ever, people are associating physical fitness with longer life, he said. As the competition grows in the business world, the health spa will continue to serve a large market of men and women who will seek to improve their health and looks, he said.

Jones also said he believes the health club industry will continue to grow. "The health club will expand into larger facilities and offer a wider diversification of activities," he said.