

The Dallas Morning News

Just in time for April Fools' Day: No-joke workouts

Where do you go for fitness tips on how to deal with that pesky whiplash inherent in head-banging? How to stay slim by eating a diet of 80 percent fat? How to increase your arm size when nothing else has worked?

Until recently, nowhere. But luck is on your side and those goals are within reach, thanks to our annual April Fools' Day book roundup of No-Joke Workouts.

Snort-laugh your skepticism if you feel so inclined. Scoff away, but these are serious books from well-known publishers. Some might even have seriously helpful advice, though only you can decide how seriously you should take each.

The Rockstar Remedy

A Rock & Roll Doctor's Prescription for Living a Long, Healthy Life

Gabrielle Francis

(Harper Wave, \$25.99)

The premise: Our lives are a lot closer to those of rock stars than we might think. Thus, what works for them can work for us.

"When you think, 'Oh, yeah, my life is overbooked and overly scheduled. I do like to overindulge,' that gives satisfaction that 'I'm living like a rock star, too,'" says author Francis, a New York naturopathic doctor, acupuncturist, chiropractor and massage therapist who began working with rock stars 30 years ago. "We want to be indulgent, but we also want to be healthy."

Not many of us have to deal with spasmodic fingers from playing too many guitar chords, but our neck pain, lower back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome feel pretty much like those of the rock stars Francis treats. Plus, "They deal with anxiety, insomnia, digestive problems, also depression and loneliness being separated from their families and loved ones," she says.

Confidentiality issues keep her from naming names when it comes to patients, but she does say she interviewed 78 musicians, whose quotes are sprinkled throughout the book.

Here's what Foreigner bassist Jeff Pilson, for instance, says: "I find that meditation coupled with a fair amount of physical exercise does wonders for many conditions, including depression and the loneliness on the road."

For depression, Francis also suggests eating "brain-boosting foods" such as wild cold-water fish, olive oil, dark chocolate and dark leafy greens; reconnecting to your spiritual path; using ylang-ylang essential oil in a diffuser.

"For the most part, they're very open to alternative medicine because they're alternative-thinking people," she says.

They're also pretty health-conscious, she says. "When you think about these icons like the Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen and Santana — people who are still creating new music and touring every year and they're going into their 60s and 70s and look healthier than ever and are performing for four hours a night — it's really inspiring. They're healthier than a lot of people in their 20s, when you stop to think about it."

Plus, she says, "Being healthy inspires their creativity."

Her advice:

Make health fun. "Instead of drudgery, look at it as a new experiment," she says.

Read new labels, buy new things.

Give yourself an hour a day to not be connected to technology.

Do healthy things 90 percent of the time; indulge 10 percent.