

Runners' tools: 'That extra edge'

By RON ALEXANDER
N.Y. Times News Service

NEW YORK — See Dick and Jane. See Dick and Jane run. See Dick and Jane run with their Heavyhands, Lace Weights, weight vest, watch-wallet and Polarbands, while listening, on a Sony Walkman, to a cassette of run-motivating music.

Don't, however, look for Spot. While running, Dick and Jane have shooed him away with their laminated wood Joystks ("Run without fear," say the ads.)

Once there were just running shoes, shorts and a top. And people ran and they appeared happy.

Now it is the age of athletic accessories when runners can be seen bearing an array of equipment guaranteed to make a nonrunner sigh in exhaustion.

"We're selling tons of the stuff," said Sam Halbrecht, a buyer for Paragon Sporting Goods in Manhattan.

The most popular of the new accessories is Heavyhands, a red foam-covered solid steel rod and aluminum handle onto which cast-iron weights, ranging from 2 to 10 pounds, are attached. The idea behind the weights is to work on the muscles of the upper torso while exercising the legs. (An increasingly common sight on the city's streets are fashionably attired walkers toting Heavyhands.)

THE SUGGESTED retail price for Heavyhands is \$19.95 plus weights, which is still a lot cheaper than a shopping bag filled with merchandise from Gucci. At any rate, according to the manufacturers, AMF American, over a million sets have been sold since Heavyhands was introduced in the fall of 1982.

"They're selling as fast as we can get them," said George Walker, director of sales promotion for the 29 Herman's World of Sporting Goods stores in the New

York metropolitan area. For Michael Stern they are something more than a status symbol. "As long as I'm out 50 minutes a day exercising my arms and legs I may as well be doing something for my shoulders," said Stern, the

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president of Parfums Stern, who is up to three pounds per hand. Don't the weights slow him down? "I run so slowly that it doesn't matter," he said.

FOR THOSE who prefer something more formal and perhaps a bit more discreet, "training gloves" with five-pound weights are one alternative. Tom Sheehan, a model and actor, was sporting a pair of these as he ran around the Central Park Reservoir the other afternoon. "There's a whole new thing about what it does to your cardiovascular system," he explained breathlessly before he and Kim Schnurpfeil, his running companion, disappeared from sight.

Miss Schnurpfeil, a medical student who was wearing Lycra tights and a backpack containing dry clothes and a plastic water con-

tainer, favors the Heavyhands, even though they make adjusting her Sony Walkman a bit difficult.

Heather Spivak runs while clutching her Heavyhands and with half-pound Lace Weights tied to her Nikes. "I figure the extra stress will help shape my calves," she said.

BUT JILL Totenberg, a senior vice president of a public-relations firm, said she gave up running with Heavyhands because they created too much pressure on her legs. "What new tortures are they going to think up for us next?" she wondered.

Well, there's the Logjammer, a foam-lined canvas vest, which, says Jack Zack, its designer and manufacturer, "allows the wearer to build up strength in legs and torso." There are 36 pockets, front and back, in the Logjammer, each one capable of holding a one-and-three-eighths-pound steel weight. Zack says that he has sold 20 or 30 vests at \$89.95 each, including weights. It is, he contends, "just what a runner needs for that extra edge."

It is the newer runners, according to Fred Lebow, president of the New York Road Runners Club, who are inclined to use such things as the Polarband, a terry cloth headband with a cooling element. "The seasoned runner," he said, "wears a bicycle cap and sticks an ice cube under it."

CURRENTLY in the running for popularity are four-pound portable altitude simulators; a fitness monitor that, among other things, calculates the heart rate and number of calories burned, and watches that can be set to measure distance and elapsed time. At the end of a run one might very well be ready for Sweet Feet, sachets of balsam fir to stuff into empty shoes. ("Are your running shoes allowed in the house?" the ad inquires.)

For those not yet into the sport, take heart. A runner's self-hypnosis training kit is available for \$16.95.

Government publishes guide to shopping for computers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Checkbook balancing, home inventory, even letter writing can be simplified by using a home computer, but Americans are confronted by a bewildering array of machines, each claiming to be better or cheaper or both. The advertising can be enticing, and confusing, too.

Walking into a computer store when you don't know a baud from a modem or what you would do with 48 kilobytes sitting on your kitchen table can be hazardous to your pocketbook, the federal Consumer Information Center says.

Learn the language before you put down your money.

To help do that, the center and the Electronic Industries Association have gotten together and issued a 52-page booklet to serve as a primer on home computers.

It discusses what computers can do, what types may be best for home use and how much they should cost. Also included are definitions of more than 100 computer terms.

A copy of "How to Buy a Home Computer" can be obtained by sending 50 cents to the Consumer Information Center, Dept. 419M, Pueblo, Colo. 81009.

TO BEGIN with, the publication advises assessing just what you want the computer to do.

Organizing files, writing letters, computing taxes, keeping inventory, running a business, compiling mailing lists and preparing charts and graphs are among the many functions.

But some computers are better at one than another, some are easier to use than others.

Once you have narrowed down the main uses of your computer, decide how much you want to spend.

Also remember there are more things to buy than the main computer.

In most cases you will also want or need to buy such things as a printer, a disk drive and programs that tell the computer what to do. And there are other options, such as a modem to connect the computer to the telephone.

When shopping for a computer, bring along a sample task, preferably something you plan to do every day. Ask the salesperson to let you try this task on differing computers. You'll find out quickly which one you can live with, and which you can't.



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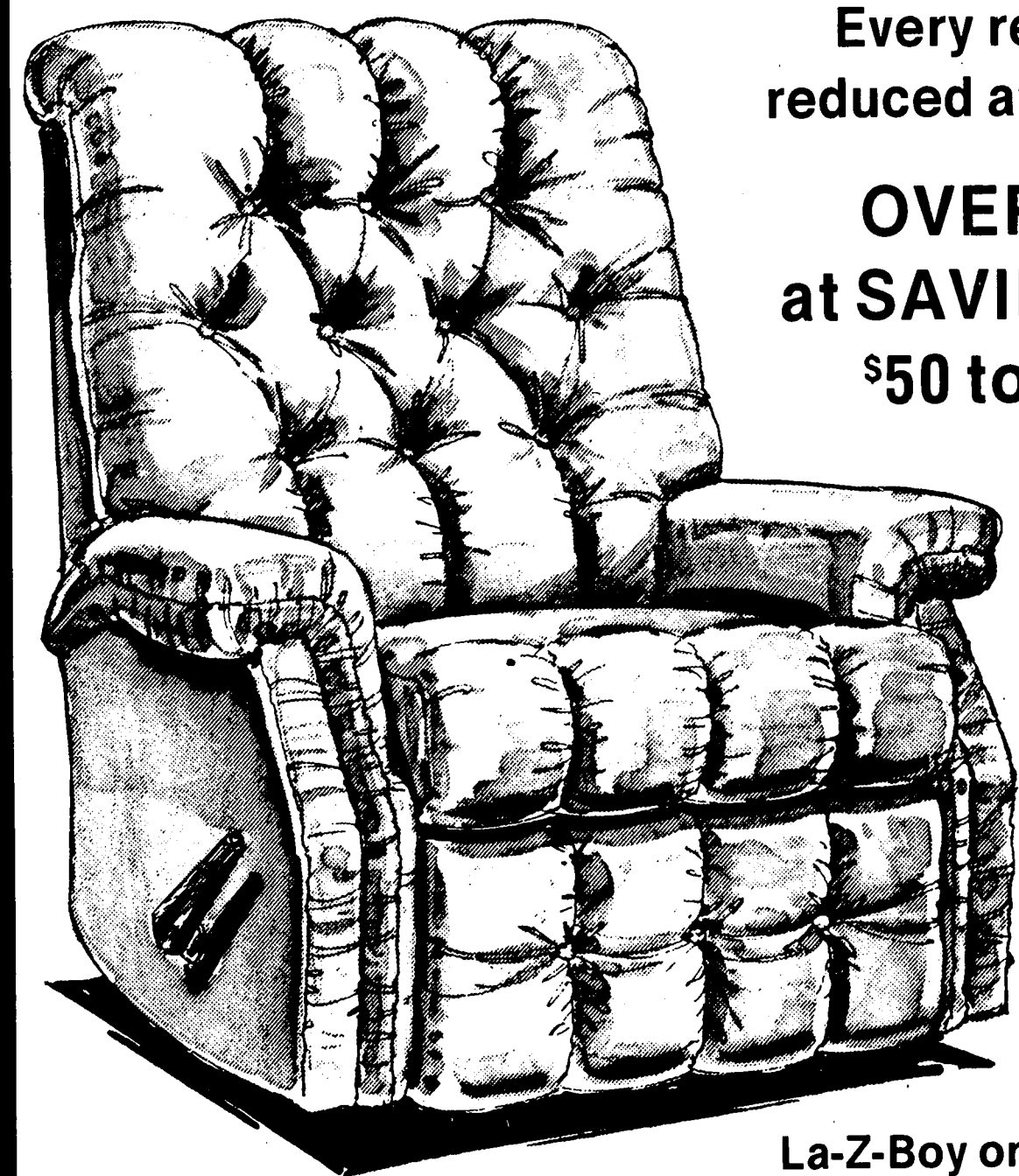
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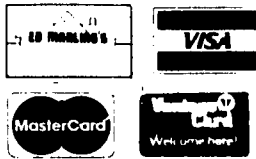
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