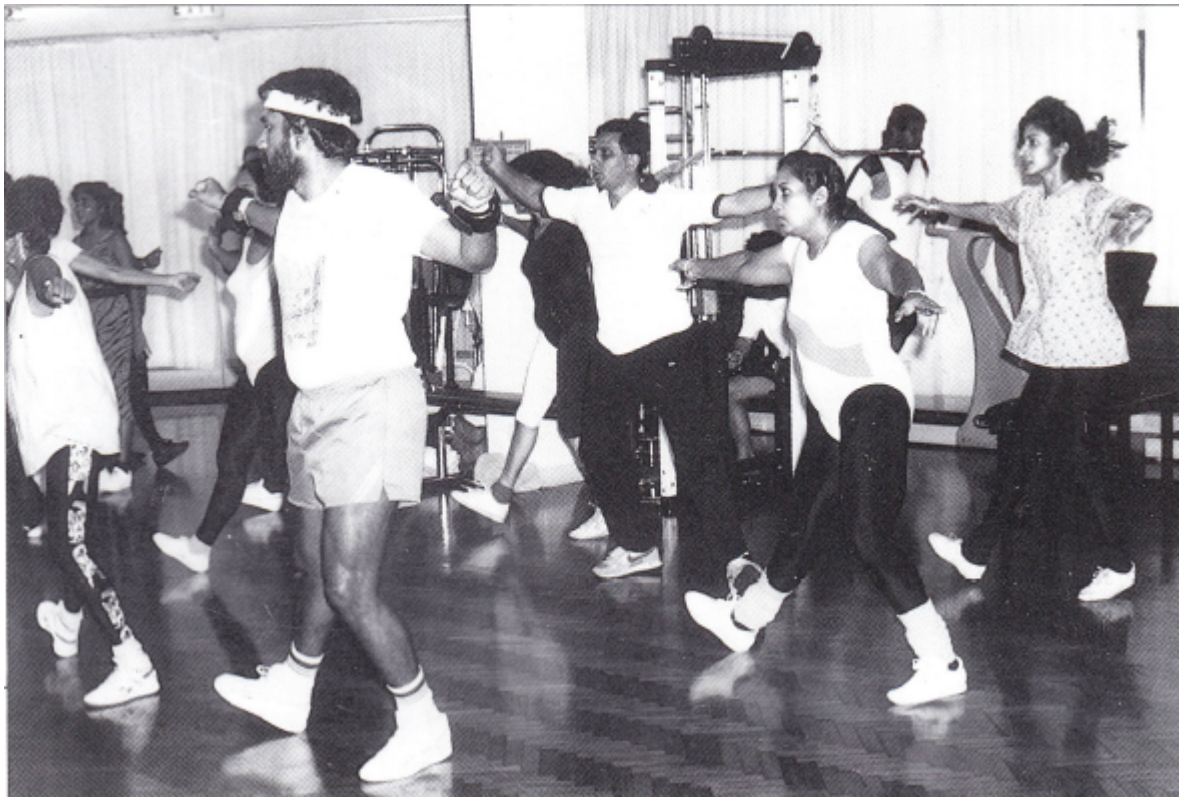
Fitness on Holiday

Posted on

Enku attends an aerobics session.



As I entered the aerobics session, I heard the booming voice of the instructor and wondered what was in store. This was the fir t time I had attended an aerobics class. I was surprised to see the person shouting orders was a svelte female of small proportions. Yet the participants, both slender and stout and in age ranging from 16 to 60, writhed and wriggled obediently to her commands to the accompaniment of stereo music.

Aerobics has hit Sri Lanka and seems here to stay. To cater to the need of visitors and fitness conscious residents, major hotels have set up regular aerobic sessions under trained instructors, male and female. at their sports centres.

What exactly is aerobics? Physical exercises which exert virtually all the muscles in the body and use up more oxygen in the process, are called aerobic exercises. Although there are numerous ways of keeping fit, such as jogging, gymnastics, tennis, cycling and rowing, they do not give overall muscle tone. To achieve complete, physical fitness you have to combine two or more exercises or you can do aerobics.

An aerobics workout session starts with a warming up period of five to ten minutes, followed by 20 to 30 minutes of aerobic (cardio vascular) training and a further five to ten minutes of cooling down. The cooling down is necessary to prevent the dizziness and nausea which can occur with the sudden cessation of any vigorous activity.

Who should attend aerobic sessions? Anyone who is physically fit and without any sign of heart disease can benefit. The people of different age groups I saw performing the aerobic workouts seemed to find the exercises productive and fun.

Aerobics has become a way of life for such people as male executives who need some muscle tone after hours of sedentary office work and business lunches. Lissome females find the classes ideal for maintaining their figures and relieving the stress and strain of living in the city. I spoke to Inga Swenson, a Norwegian whose tan indicated her love of tropical sunshine. She is a self-confessed fitness freak who has been doing aerobics for years.

I wanted to continue aerobics while on holiday in Sri Lanka, she said, “so when I

found there are regular sessions I enrolled immediately.” She attends daily classes of one hour duration, except on Sundays either in the morning or evening.

Relief from stress.

“Aerobics has given me relief from the stress I have undergone in recent times,” she said. “It has really boosted my ego and image. Here I have come to know people who have the same attitude towards life and things in general that I have. Most of all, doing aerobics helps me adjust to the tropical climate.” Inga added that she found the classes fun. “It is first rate group therapy if you are feeling down and out.” A pregnant woman in her twenties was taking part in the session. She said she was there on her doctor’s orders since he believed the exercises would help her to have an easy child birth. Aerobic classes are designed to give the ultimate objective of a target heart rate of 70 to 85 percent of the maximum heart rate. For example, a beginner’s heart rate is calculated according to the formula (220 – age) x 60%. For an intermediate student the formula is (220 – age) x 70%. For the advanced student, it is (220 – age) x 85%.