

Nick and Choose {NICK ALTSCHULLER}

SOLE MAN

Toning without the legwork



MAKE YOUR BOOBS jealous." It's the tagline in an ad for Reebok EasyTone shoes starring a pair of spectacular talking breasts. Perhaps you've seen the one with a woman writhing in bed wearing nothing but her briefs and sneakers? The voice-over, I discovered after repeat viewing, promises up to 28 percent more of a workout for the butt and 11 percent more for the hamstrings and calves. While watching these commercials, one thing immediately came to mind: This objectification of women must stop! No, sadly the material prompted a desire much more indecent: I must have this women's clothing for my own!

Purely for the sake of a shortcut. I think both sexes like things quick and easy, and if these fitness shoes can

boost strength with minimal effort, I was going to give 'em a shot. There are three brands that produce them, and as Reebok doesn't yet make EasyTones for men, and not owning the Lee jeans necessary to pull off Skechers, I went with a pair of MBT boots.

A Swiss company, MBT bills itself as "the anti-shoe." Unlike EasyTone's balance pod design, the MBT line creates instability with a curved sole. As all the companies claim, constantly working to stay balanced strengthens the supporting muscles. What they conveniently leave out is that their products look ridiculous.

"I feel like you have something wrong with you, like one of your legs is shorter than the other," critiqued one coworker, as I modeled the latest trend. "Those are probably the shoes Tom Cruise wears to be as tall as the actresses."

True, they're not going to win you cool points, but on an ugly-as-sin scale, MBTs are more coveting your neighbor's wife as opposed to sleeping with her. And besides, looking stylish was a petty concern. I had a tush to tone.

So I took off walking. With their hefty bowed sole, MBTs give new meaning to the term "boat shoe," and on the 1.7-mile trek from the office to

my apartment, I developed a pleasant bobbing rhythm. But I didn't really feel anything. The next day I picked up the pace, thinking my stabilizing muscles may have just needed a warm-up, but in the morning I didn't feel the tightness or fatigue associated with actual exercise. Staying centered while standing required a small amount of effort, but in terms of muscle work, it's nothing my Restless Leg Syndrome wasn't taking care of anyway.

The problem with these shoes is they have a great design for walking and a terrible shape for anything else. Shooting hoops in MBTs would be like playing soccer on a pogo stick. As I'm about 30

years away from walking actually counting as exercise, I felt hamstrung by my two-week trial. So I devised new ways to feel the burn.

One night I cranked the treadmill up to that ungainly limbo where walking teeters uncomfortably close to jogging and your oddly shaped shoes

are maybe the fifth reason you look like an idiot. Over 30 minutes I walked 2.1 miles with the incline set as high as 15 percent. On the MBT Web site, the company equates walking in their shoes to walking on sand. Through experience, I know that the day after a hard hike on the beach, my calves should feel like they've been rubbed with honey and set upon by fire ants.

But my chicken legs went unslaughtered. The reason may be that as an active person, I'm ahead of the game. Professional research shows that balance balls have little effect on consistent exercisers. Some dodgy research proves these shoes stimulate your stems. While the MBT Web site provides scientific abstracts that support their claims, Reebok's sole study tested just five people. In terms of credible sample sizes, that's as if I set out to prove I was the world's fastest man by racing four geriatrics from the local rest home.

There may, in fact, be some benefit to this new fashion in fitness, but in this expert's opinion: Walk to work. Take the stairs, and be comfortable with what's on your feet. ***

Send your stories and suggestions to nick@improper.com.



Shape that booty!

Impersonals

WOMAN SCORNE

TO THE NURSE AT B.I.:

You're a pathetic cliché for sleeping with the married doctor. Screwing you in your car because you still live at home with your mommy and daddy wasn't my husband's idea of a good time. The second I found out, he dropped you and never looked back. He also said you weren't a good lay, so what a disappointment—you weren't even worth it. Note that any man who only communicates via text and screws you in a car is not treating you "damn good." I think you already know that no man will ever love you because it's clear you don't respect yourself. I don't need your apology, little girl, and don't you EVER come to my house again. *Anonymous*

To the woman who took my suitcase:

On my many business trips, I have never had someone take my suitcase in error. I understand that mistakes can happen, but considering my suitcase was at least 30 pounds lighter than yours and clearly marked with MY name, I do not understand why you would take it. Then to scream at me because it cost you \$35 to come back to Logan to get your own suitcase... how is that my problem? Luggage tags were invented for a reason.

A traveler who thought she had seen it all

To the truck driver of a local seafood restaurant (not Legals):

I was on Beacon at the intersection of Park. I was in the middle lane. You were in the right lane, which has to merge to the left. That means that you signal and merge when you are able, since you do NOT have the right of way. Instead you tried to cut me off and run me out of my lane. When none of that worked, you tailgated me. I realize a macho man like yourself must have a testosterone-clouded brain, so maybe that is why you have so much trouble on the road. What are you packing in there? Shrimp? *Fed Up*

Unrequited crush? Bad hair? Need to vent? Send your e-mails of love and spleen to impersonals@improper.com, or fax 617-859-1446.