

FITNESS KIT

BORED WITH LOW-TECH JOGGING? BRIGHTEN UP YOUR FITNESS REGIME WITH THIS KIT

>1 EXERTRIS FITNESS BIKE • £3,500
Ergonomically designed chic, sleek, silver fitness machine with games console attached. Well, going nowhere fast is never fun, even when flab fighting is the goal. So sit, lean on the arm rest, grab the controller and begin. Games currently include a trippy take on Connect 4, a psychedelic jewel collector called Orbit, a space shoot 'em up and Solitaire. Instantly addictive, time does indeed whiz by and working up a sweat is a pleasure. The games are tied to the bike – resistance changes depending on play and you have to keep pedalling. Scores and fitness results can be downloaded to a website, ready for your next session, and bikes can be linked for multiplayer games. Still in its final prototype mode and coming to an upmarket gymnasium near you soon.
www.exertris.com

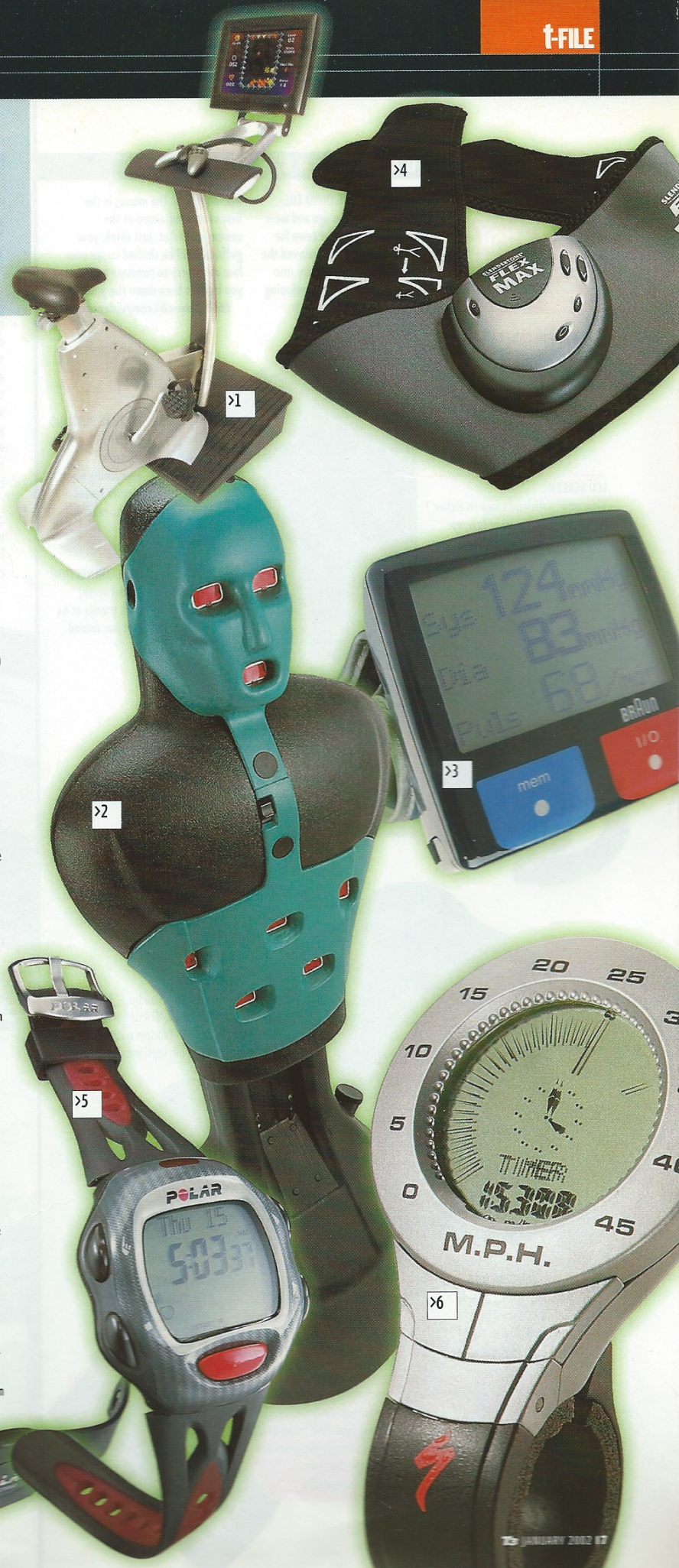
>2 SLAM MAN • £299
This menacing, man-sized and man-shaped piece of Polyethylene is the 21st century equivalent of the punch bag. Using it is simple: the base is weighted and the height is adjustable. Key points light up in sequence and, when they do, you sock it to Slam-features. Aimed at martial arts experts and stressed-out office vampire slayers alike, the Slam Man can speed up reflexes and improve your punching and kicking moves – for people who like to pack a punch without the punch being packed back at them. Ass-kicking, Buffy-tastic fun, this hi-tech golem comes complete with an instructional video, boxing gloves and 15 different preset programs.
www.boysstuff.co.uk

>3 BRAUN PRECISIONSENSOR • £55-£70
Are you stressed, or worried you might be, but don't know what the signs are? Does not knowing what being stressed feels like stress you out? Then the PrecisionSensor is definitely for you. This piece of personal diagnostic equipment measures your blood pressure and pulse – which is good because high blood pressure, or hypertension, affects around 20 per cent of the adult population. Cheap-looking, but functional, this is easy to use and read: simply strap it to your wrist and hold your arm just so, and there's a beep and a buzz as the wristband constricts. The results appear quickly and are thankfully explained in the manual. A little wasted on most of us, it's perfect for hypochondriacs and those in manic employ.
www.braun.de

>4 SLENDERTONE FLEX MAX • £200
Slendertone appears to have cornered the market in minimum-effort-required toning equipment but, while fitness without the fuss is indeed a fine thing, you can't help but think of that link between the pain and the gain. Still, slim and slinky Flex Max – designed to trim and tone your stomach muscles – is yet another milestone on the road to sexy without the sweaty. Vibrating belt around your midriff aside (oddly both sensual and discomforting) the Flex Max is certainly discreet. Significant results are supposedly achievable in between four and eight weeks but, for self-satisfaction and a six-pack to die for, you may prefer a few sessions down the local gymnasium.
www.slendertone.com

>5 POLAR S710 HEART RATE MONITOR • £200
Initially scary – arriving with a bundle of bits and pieces, together with a dazzling array of jargon – the Polar S710 soon settles down to life as a tool for seasoned cyclists. The watch itself is the wrist receiver, the big rubber strap a transmitter, and the little black blocky thing is a speed sensor. With these in place, you're ready to roll: calculate calorie consumption and cadence (the speed at which you're turning the peddles), monitor speed, altitude and temperature, be guided through a training session, test and assess fitness levels, even tell the time! And, by using the software included – which was the trickiest bit of all – all this information can be downloaded to your PC.
www.polar-uk.com

>6 SPEEDZONE PRO • £100
Those cyclists have all the fun and this is a bike computer that's got the lot: a funky retro design (based on a tachometer), a pack full of features and a waterproof housing. Previous models have proved an almighty bugger to fit and this one errs on the wrong side of fiddly, even though it's wireless (it works through a magnetic sensor on the fork). But once it's on, you're away. The large display can show five of the 17 functions simultaneously (not exactly suitable for heavy city centre traffic then) and can show things such as cadence, distance, temperature and speed. Containing an altimeter, inclinometer, odometer and loads of other stuff ending in 'meter', Speedzone Pro comes in a rather nifty black tin to boot.
www.specialized.com



CONTROL FREAK

BY LAND, SEA OR AIR, IF YOU CAN'T AFFORD THE REAL THING, TRAVEL BY RADIO CONTROL

>1 INTERCEPTOR 650 RTR • £110
You may not need a tall ship or a star to sail her by, but if you hanker for life on the open seas or, failing that, a park pond, then try this entry-level power boat. Fast and manoeuvrable, the 650 has been designed specifically for beginners and comes in two versions: one that needs some assembly and the other ready to run (RTR). The latter arrives pre-assembled; just slap in the batteries and put it in the water. Easy to use, with a 540 electric motor and a two-channel radio-receiver included, you'll be making waves at 15mph in no time.

www.ripmax.com

>2 GERMAN TIGER I TANK • £800
The worst thing about kits is you have to build them yourself, and building a radio controlled replica of a WWII German Tiger Tank is a task as mammoth as the model itself. Once you've got the fiddly stuff out the way and you've mastered the less-than-tricky controls, you'll be ready to play with the rest of the features on this 1:16 scale model of the 57-ton original: realistic engine and gunnery sound, rotating turret, flashing gun and independent suspension. Then, providing you've got a mate with the money, link up two or more tanks for realistic engagements and turn your town into a warzone.

www.tamiya.com

>3 AUDI TT MINI-Z RACER • £129.95
Little isn't just lovely, it's lightning fast with the Mini-Z range: six-inch long radio controlled beauties – perfectly formed 1:28 scale replicas of the real thing – that can really shift it. Giggle with glee as you take charge of the trigger control for speed and get to grips with the initially fiddly side-on, thumb-handy steering wheel. The Audi TT will have you taking bite-size chunks out of the skirting board, scaring the hell out of the cat and turning the kitchen floor into Brands Hatch. A tasty little number, but thirsty for juice, so rechargeable batteries are advisable. The Mini-Z range also comes in Porsche 911, Dodge Viper and Mercedes CLK-D2 flavours.

www.firebox.com

>4 S2 EK4 NITRO TRUCK • £500
This is a 1:8-scale meaty off-road monster truck that's got the lot and then some: four-wheel-drive, oversize tyres, seven shock absorbers, double disc brakes and a nifty little number called the PRO-70 high torque nitro engine. It doesn't actually take nitrous oxide, but a high-grade model vehicle fuel that adds a bucket-load of extra 'oomph' to the EK4. Based on the Ford F-350 heavy duty truck, the EK4 is rough and tough enough to take a heavy pounding on road, off road and on any building site or quarry you care to throw at it.

www.thundertiger.com

>5 RADIO CONTROLLED AIRSHIP • £70
Indoor fun comes courtesy of an impressively large, sleek and shiny radio controlled airship. This particular model comes in two styles – a Zeppelin-style blimp and a frankly tacky UFO design. Avoid any home-grown, hydrogen-related, Hindenberg-esque disasters by filling the balloon with helium (available from stockists, florists and party shops alike). Set-up is initially tricky as you need to balance weight with gas for lift, but once you've done this, the easy-peasy handset, simple instructions and three directional propellers give you all-round flight control. A word or two of caution is advised: do not take one outside or it'll be up, up and away before you can say "beautiful balloon".

www.firebox.com

>6 SHUTTLE SCEADU • £270+
Here's one to shoot shivers down your spine and send you scurrying for the nearest park. However, while the Shuttle Sceadu helicopter is designed for ease, the hover can cause actually you quite a lot of bother – the set-back to instant airborne joy being that handling the Sceadu is tricky and requires practice. So, unless you want to crash it or decapitate your girlfriend, training is highly advised. A build-your-own from scratch kit can come quite cheap, but add-ons and necessary extras, or a complete ready-to-fly version can cause the costs to soar almost as high as the 'copter itself.

<http://model.hirobo.co.jp/english/>



