

EDITED BY TODDI GUTNER

FITNESS

AND NOW, THE HANDHELD TRAINER

AS THE IPOD, NANO, TREO, and other handheld devices get smarter, they're taking on a new job: fitness trainer. Companies are creating exercise routines, yoga classes, and soon even triathlon training regimens that capitalize on these devices' music, color picture, and now video capabilities. Just download a program to your PC or Mac, then transfer it to your handheld.

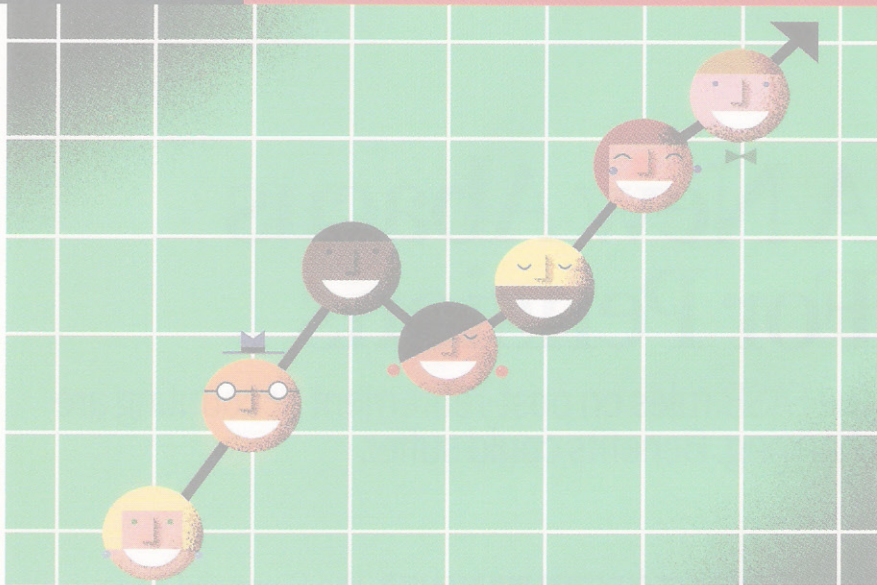
PumpPod (pumppod.com) has more than 70 digital exercise cheat sheets to take to the gym or on a business trip. Its \$19, one-hour workouts include photo-illustrated, step-by-step instructions on how to do, say, a back squat with barbells, and guidelines for reps, sets, and rest times. You can switch

around or drop exercises on your PC to customize. The programs don't include audio, letting you play your own music.

Meanwhile, **Companion Worlds'** Progio programs, starting at \$24.95 (progio.com), made for mobile digital devices such as Hewlett-Packard's iPAQ, give you a choice of video or still photo instructions. The programs track which exercises you do and the time it takes you to do them, so you'll have a record of your progress. The first of four Dave Scott triathlon regimens, which build up to competition, is available now for \$49.95. The others will be out early in 2006.

For straight audio podcasts, **iAmplify** (iamplify.com) offers Pilates, yoga, and other fitness programs for as little as \$1.99 for a single download; a monthly subscription is \$69.99.

One of the more idiosyncratic sites is **Alive Yoga** (aliveyoga.com). It records actual classes from seven yoga studios from New York to New Orleans. A download costs \$9—and the file you get may even come with a poetry reading. —*Lourdes Lee Valeriano*



STOCKS

The Helpful Index

THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE STUCK on infinite hold waiting for a customer service rep, think about whether you'd want to invest in that company. A new study shows that companies with high customer satisfaction ratings beat the market handily.

A portfolio of some 20 companies with the best marks delivered a return of 40% (excluding dividends and transaction costs), compared with 13% for the **Standard & Poor's 500-stock index** for the five-year period ended May, 2003, according to research from the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business. The portfolio also had less volatility than the index. "Customers know something about stock prices before investors do," says Claes Fornell, the study's lead researcher and director of the University's National Quality Research Center.

Topping the list of 200 companies (rated from 1 to 100) are **Apple, Yahoo!, VF Corp., and Toyota**. The complete list is at theacsi.org. If you're scouting for investments, make sure you compare companies with their peers, says Fornell. And take a pass on any company with a rating below 50. —*Lauren Young*

WINTER SPORTS

IF YOUR FAMILY'S winter gear includes skis and snowboards, you can buy a car rack that will adjust for the thickness of both. The best part is it fits on the back, so you don't have to climb onto the roof to load it.

Yakima Products' \$169 HitchSki attaches to the rear of the car and holds up to six pairs of regular skis, four snowboards, or a combination of both (yakima.com). A lock sells separately for \$23. **Thule** (www.thule.com) also offers a similar carrier for the same price. Check the Web sites for dealers. —*Susan Garland*



(CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT) ILLUSTRATIONS BY INGO FAST; TERRY ALLEN