

# PEDAL SOFT



**nawaz modi singhania**  
**perfect fit**

**R**EMEMBER the days when exercise meant ruthless reps of sit-ups, jumping jacks and windmills? Well, sometimes it still does, but mostly in military camps!

Today, exercise can also mean a bunch of people literally climbing the walls, also known as rock climbing, bouncing around on a trampoline, or

## Some versions even come with internet access, yet the high-tech bike is a low tech sport

indulging in martial art classes. There are varied definitions of fitness.

Whatever you do for fitness will be limited by your competing urge toward laziness and boredom. Boredom is no longer a valid excuse, because today there's more than one way to get fit.

Indoor biking and spinning classes, which took off with great zeal, is one of the many.

A simple way to burn those calories, just hop on and pedal away! It's a great cardiovascular activity that needs no special skill, thought or coordination. It can fit right in with your schedule, allowing you to watch TV, catch up on your reading, or just chill out. Did you know that bikes even come in high-tech versions with internet access? The sport however is definitely low-tech.

There are so many reasons why this is an appealing workout. The risk of injury is very low. It's a good choice for first-time exercisers, and can also be a challenging workout for seasoned exercisers. You'll never have to worry about the rains making you miss your workout. You'll notice the difference in just four-five sessions. Ideally, biking should be combined with some other weight bearing activity, like jogging, walking or weight training. This way, bone density can be increased as well.

### Do's and Don'ts

1. The seat height is critical for comfort and maximum efficiency. It should be adjusted so that your knee is only slightly bent on the downstroke. When (and

if) leaning forward and placing the arms on the handlebars, the elbows should be slightly bent.

2. Try and get in 15-60 minutes a day. Whatever you've got is better than nothing.

Remember, that for fat or inch loss you need to stay on ideally for 40-60 minutes continuously. If you feel

the need to stop due to exhaustion, slow down instead. You're probably working too hard to be burning fat anyway. For fat loss, one needs to work within a low to moderate intensity range. If the intensity is too high, the body doesn't utilize fat for fuel; instead it switches over to other energy systems such as quick energy or glycogen. There are a

lot of health benefits here as well, but fat loss is just not one of them. So it's important not to lose sight of your goals by getting carried away with the workout.

3. Start up with thrice a week. You can gradually work your way up later.

4. If cycling is your main source of exercise, it would be a good idea to do some resistance training workouts that include the upper body, abs and back.

### Gear Up

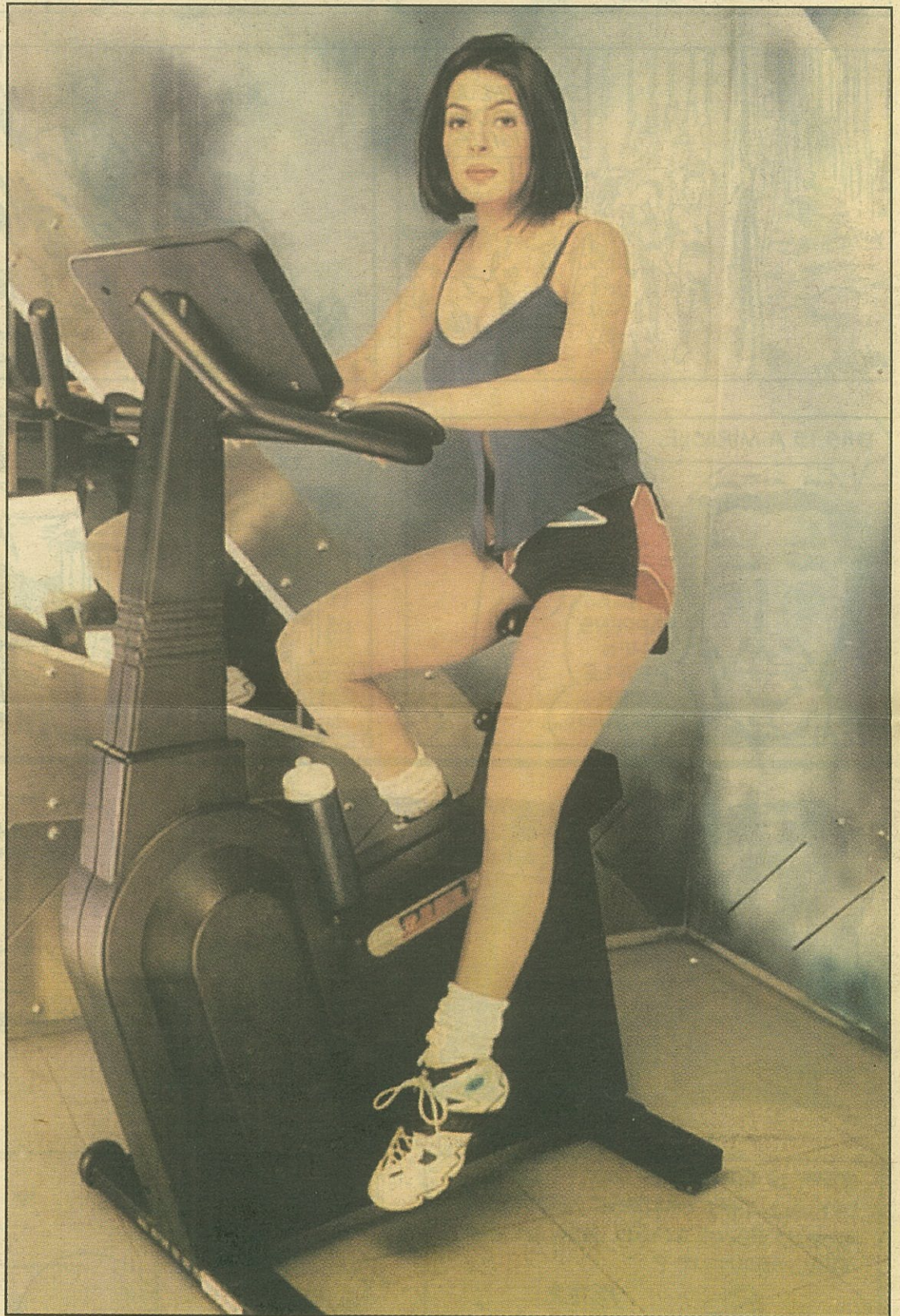
BESIDES the bike, you'll need a few things for a comfortable, safe and effective ride.

1. A bottle of water, because you're going to be sweating. You need to put that water back into your body so that you don't dehydrate and overheat. If this goes unchecked it could lead to heat cramps or heat exhaustion. Many bikes come with a water-bottle cage, so that water is available within easy reach.

2. Hard-soled shoes. Aerobic and running shoes have soft soles, which may leave your feet numb at the end of the session.

3. A towel, for wiping away sweat and draping over the handlebars, so your hands won't slip out of position.

4. Comfortable, non-restrictive clothing. Preferably cotton. Avoid synthetics such as nylon, lycra and spandex as they don't allow the body to breathe. We end up building up heat due to exercise, and the body removes this heat build up from the body's core through the periphery the skin. This is done when we perspire. Wearing synthetics means that the skin won't breathe, so you're unable to dis-



Good exercise: Nawaz Modi Singhania on an exercycle

pense of the same through sweat. So you get exhausted, and stay exhausted. This makes it very hard to continue exercising aerobically. Particularly during the rest of the year when it's not that hot, it doesn't make too much of a difference. In addition to this, as the sweat remains on the skin surface and does not evaporate due to the nature of the fabric, one may easily break out into a skin irritation or a sweat rash.

Spinning is an intense aerobic activity involving a room full of people of stationary indoor bikes, working to choreography and music.

Are you thinking - what choreography? What can possibly be choreographed on a stationary bike? You'll be surprised!

To challenge different muscle groups and intensify the workout, one can do a variety of things such as cycle while off the

seat, cycle with toes pointed or feet flexed, or cycle with the upper body weight tending forward on the handle bar. There are vast options. Changing the pace of cycling from half time to double-time or even otherwise can also be taxing.

### Before and after

WARMING up and cooling down adequately are very important segments of your workout. Don't rush through them.

The precise function of your warm up is to prepare the body for the rigors of exercise. The body's internal temperature needs to be raised. Blood and oxygen need to be directed to the working muscles and limbs. This is accomplished by stretching the large muscle groups, limbering exercises and whole body moves.

The purpose of the cool down is to gradually lower the pulse, return the oxygen debt (which is a result of exercise), remove the byproducts of exercise (such as carbon dioxide and lactic acid), and prevent the pooling of blood specially in the lower limbs.

The bike itself can be used to both warm up and cool down. Not just to gradually raise and eventually lower the heart rate, but also to stretch out different muscle groups, particularly those of the lower limbs.

Improper warm ups and cool downs are one of the main causes of injury. Injuries could be in the form of torn muscles or ligaments, muscle stiffness and soreness 24-48 hours post-exercise, and various other conditions such as Achilles tendinitis, Plantar fasciitis.

So be safe which way you pedal away!

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