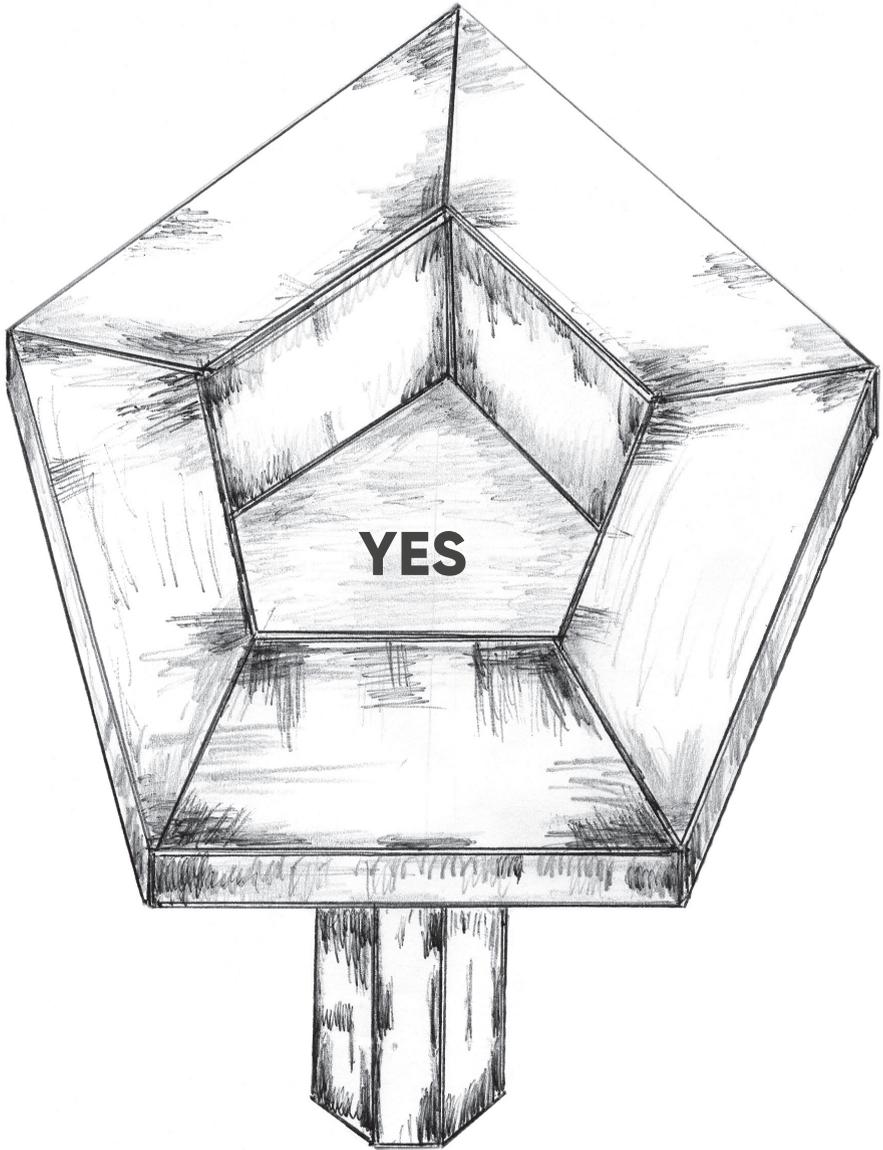


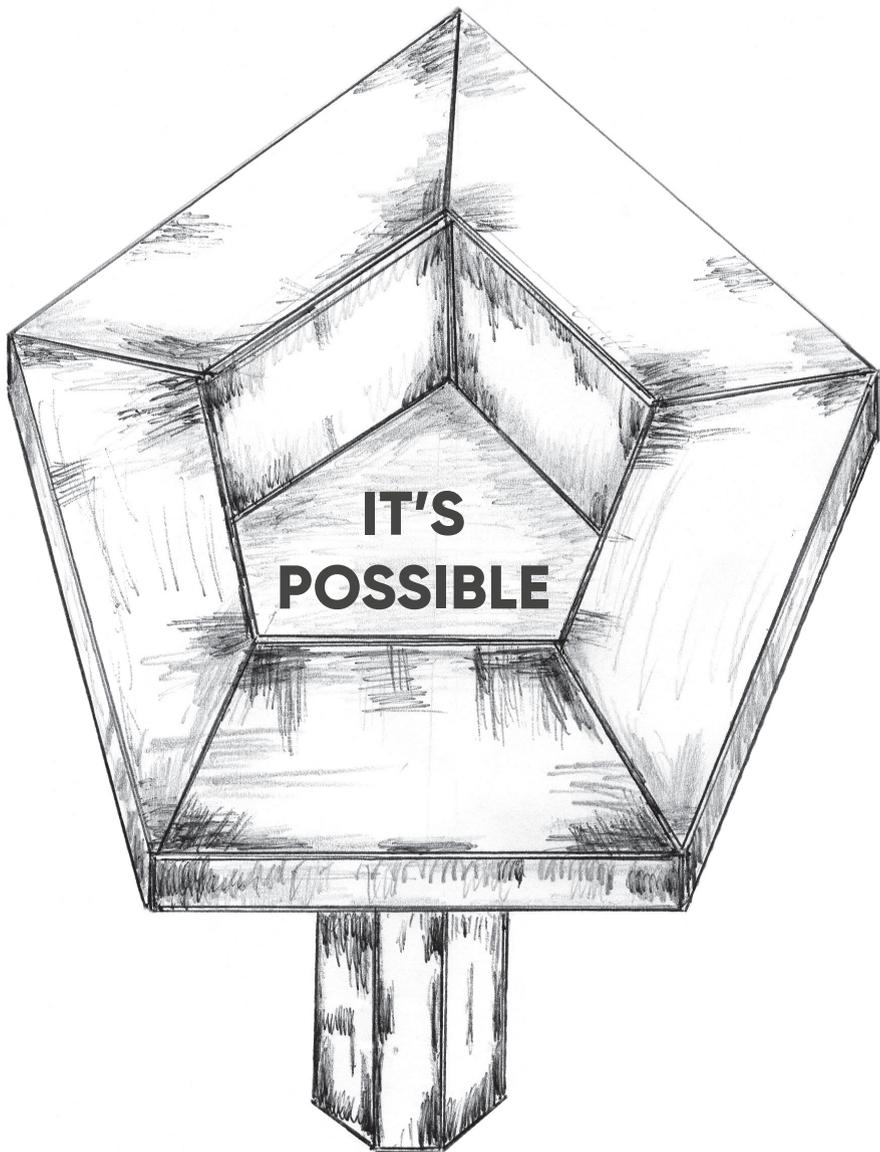
THE FLEX ABILITY REGIMEN

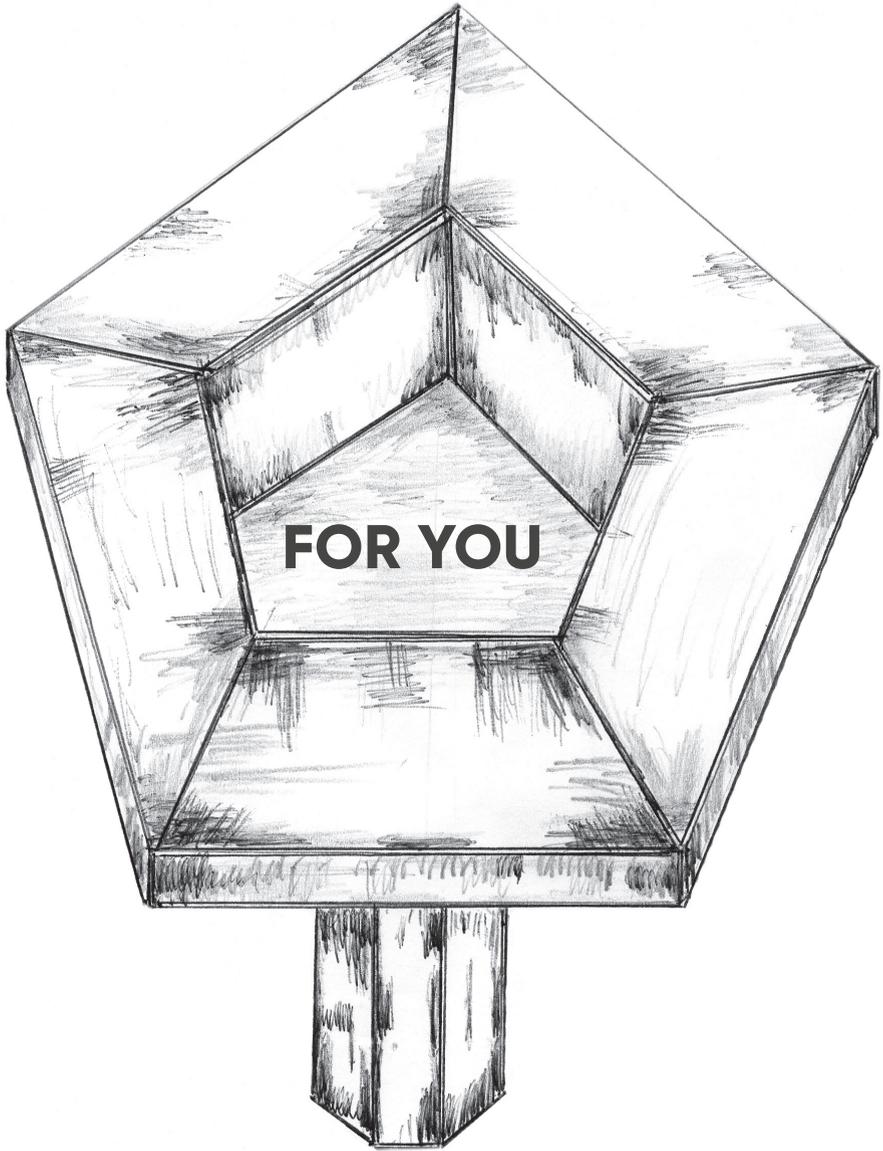
WITH A DISTINCTIVE FOCUS



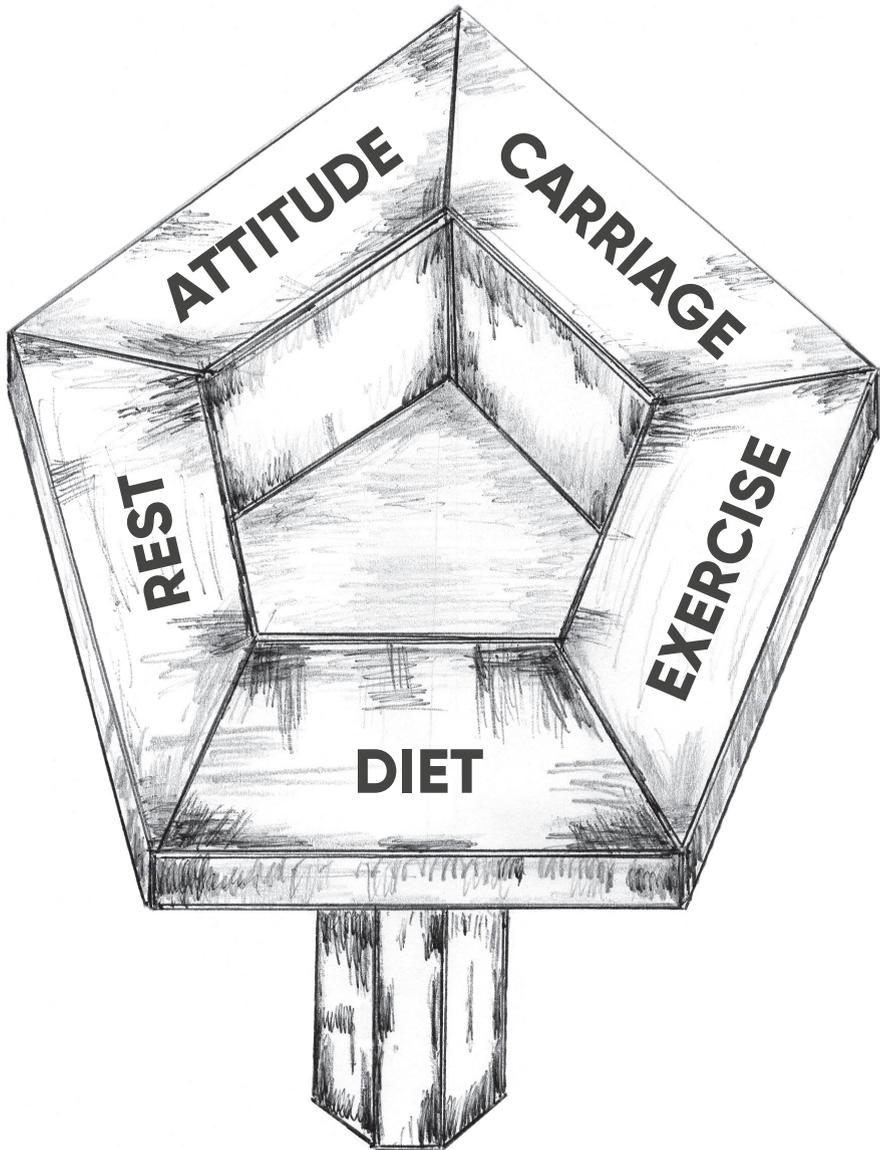
Holibert (Holly) Phillips







HOLLY'S HEALTH PENTAGON



DISCIPLINE

INTRODUCTORY

This guide has come about entirely because over the past two years or so, and as recently as a month ago, I was urged by a number of my friends, covering a wide age range, to celebrate and document for their benefit and others some of the things I do to get and stay physically and mentally fit. In each case I simply said no. Going unnecessarily public was just not my thing, I explained. Then I reflected that perhaps I was simply being very selfish. I recanted, and now you have before you the Flex Ability Regimen, a crucial part of what I originated and call Holly's Health Pentagon. Its form, and finish, and attention to detail reflect, I think, the fact that I have taught at every level of education. I am now a happily retired Professor of Philosophy Emeritus, Whitman College, WA.

As the Logo shows, what I call my Pentagon—Diet, Exercise, Rest, Attitude and Carriage—rests firmly on a massive pillar I call Discipline. Without discipline everything else in one's life falls apart. So for explanatory convenience, I capture the essence of what I do, or adhere to, by giving it the name DDERAC—pronounced Deederac. The name identifies all that really matters for a truly healthy lifestyle. So the Flex Ability Regimen demonstrated in the following pages is only a part, crucial though it is, of a much larger whole, that whole being the five interconnected buildings that constitute the Health Pentagon. Each building in the complex requires very thoughtful and detailed explanation but, for the present project, this is not the appropriate place for that level of discussion.

I hope this brief introduction answers some of the questions you may have.

Hollibert (Holly) Phillips
Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus
Whitman College, WA

THE DDERAC LIFESTYLE

Discipline | Diet | Exercise | Rest | Attitude | Carriage



Believe the Part. Dress the Part. Act the Part.



THE FLEX ABILITY REGIMEN

NOTES ON ALL SEGMENTS

SEGMENTS

1. Balance Squat
2. Kneeling Tension
3. Sitz/Haunches Squat
4. Rocker Massage
5. Torso/Arm Extension Stretch
6. Supine/Torso Retrogression
7. Supine/Torso Double-Flutter
8. Elbow/Torso Dive

OPTIONAL

9. Pulsating Palm/Floor Contact
10. Forehead/Floor Contact

NOTES ON DIET

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES ON ALL SEGMENTS

As will soon become very evident, the distinctive focus of the Flex Ability Regimen is its singling out and strengthening of the abdominal and lumbar muscles, *with particular emphasis on the upper and lower back*. The key to all this is a wonderfully effective method quite aptly designated dynamic tension. This method, which involves no catapulting of the torso, will be clearly explained and highlighted as we enter into Segment 5. Don't be surprised if, as you correctly and confidently engage in the segments, you not only attain, but also can maintain, the coveted six pack in the process. Over time, this result is very highly likely. As you well know, a very strong back is a bulwark against some lumbar pains, and much else besides.

Incidentally, I will not anywhere use the word core as a shortcut to refer to anything this Regimen aims at. It is a term much misunderstood, and easily lends itself to much pretentious blather. Instead, where necessary, I will specify which muscle or muscle groups are the primary targets of any segment.

Each of the following twelve segments is designed to address a specific facet of the Flex Ability Regimen. They are carefully sequenced so as to accomplish optimal results. Therefore, as you enter the regimen, it is highly recommended that, as much as possible, the sequence be strictly followed. Later on, as you become familiar with the flow of the regimen, you may find it useful to isolate and concentrate on one or the other segment so as to develop proficiency in it.

Every segment concentrates on four things:

1) Its Purpose, 2) Its Form, 3) Its Duration, and 4) Its Execution.

In each case, the purpose tells you exactly why it is you are doing what you are doing, how it fits in with the overall objective of the Regimen. The form describes the correct configuration or configurations of your body throughout a routine. Duration refers to the breath/timed during which the segment should last, or to intervals within the segment. It's called breath/time because, for this Regimen, duration is measured or counted not by minutes on a clock but by even and unhurried breaths. So think of this new measure as breath timed units, which, for convenience, we will henceforth refer to as btu's. Execution shows in careful detail how ideally the facets of the segment you are engaged in come together. This is the how-its-done aspect of the segment. Mission accomplished, this is when you congratulate yourself for a job well done.

A final note: You are very strongly recommended to wear athletic tights as standard attire. They will make a great difference in how you feel and in how you negotiate the segments. Anywhere in your home where there is room works fine for this Regimen.

SEGMENT 1

THE BALANCE SQUAT



PURPOSE: As the name suggests, this segment seeks in a simple way to promote balance.

FORM: A simple squat with back straight, head up, heels comfortably elevated while balls of the feet carry the full weight of the body, lower arms resting on thighs, hands closed almost like a fist with thumbs and forefingers touching and resting on knee. Feet should be about shoulder width apart, somewhat less if that's more comfortable.

DURATION: This can vary between ten and seventy btu's. Incidentally, I personally find it extremely convenient to use my ten fingers to count of sets of ten btu's. In that way it is easy to keep track of my progress.

EXECUTION: The back should be kept straight, that is, erect, throughout. The balls of the feet should bear the full weight of the body. Feet should be more or less a shoulder's width apart. Looking straight ahead, with gaze fixed on some object at eye level in front of you, can help you to hold a steady balance. If necessary, use a chair as a temporary prop. Please see the associated photograph.

SEGMENT 2

THE KNEELING TENSION



PURPOSE: Primarily, to tighten and strengthen the muscles in the buttocks, and to develop the habit of keeping the back straight. Like the first segment, this is a fairly simple, but demanding routine.

FORM: Kneel on a comfortable surface, with heels together and touching, back/torso erect, head up, arms straight down along the sides.

DURATION: Count off sets of ten to seventy btu's.

EXECUTION: Under constant and progressively increasing tension for the duration of the segment, tighten and hold the muscles of the buttocks. Release the tension only at the end of the segment, however long that takes you. To keep and hold the tension, it helps greatly to press the fingers firmly against the outer thighs throughout the segment. Please see associated photograph.

SEGMENT 3

THE SITZ/HAUNCHES SQUAT



PURPOSE: Twofold: to strengthen ankle and instep muscles, but primarily to develop, foster and encourage the habit of keeping the back/torso erect in sitting situations. Essentially, the emphasis here is on good posture.

FORM: On a comfortable flat surface—carpet or mat—sit directly on heels with heels together, back/torso erect, head up, and gaze looking straight ahead.

DURATION: Count off sets of fifty to seventy btu's.

EXECUTION: The form just described vividly captures what is involved in the execution of this segment. At the outset, a bit of discomfort may be experienced around the instep, but over time that disappears. After some time, that posture comes as second nature. Indeed, after a while, for most of the remaining segments, don't be surprised if you found yourself closing your eyes. That may simply mean that you are internalizing the experience. You're, so to say, zoning in. See the two photographs associated with this segment.

SEGMENT 4

THE ROCKER MASSAGE



PURPOSE: Twofold: First, to facilitate a fluid motion of the torso forwards and backwards from the waist as hinge; and second, to warm up the thigh and calf muscles in preparation for segment 5.

FORM: On a comfortable flat surface—carpet or mat—sit with back/torso erect, head up, and hands resting on knees.

DURATION: For thighs, count off sets of forty to fifty btu's, and for the calves about thirty btu's. These are rough minimums.

EXECUTION: With back straight, and hands placed on the knees, smoothly rock the torso forwards and backwards, while using the tips of the fingers on both hands to very firmly massage the calve muscles of both legs. As much as possible, try to keep the elbows in a locked position. Keep rocking. Don't scrimp on the btu's! Keep them even and unhurried.

The procedure is essentially the same for the thighs, except that now, for complete coverage, you use primarily the heels of the hands on the top and sides of the thighs and the fingers underneath. The elbows will now naturally be flexed. Please see the associated photographs.

SEGMENT 5

THE TORSO/ARM EXTENSION STRETCH



PURPOSE: To significantly stretch the lateral muscles of the back and torso in fluid, almost rhythmic, motions.

FORM: On a comfortable flat surface—carpet or mat—sit up straight, legs extended flat in front of you, heels together, knees locked, palms on knees.

DURATION: Count off sets of about two hundred fifty plus btu's.

EXECUTION: Keep your knees locked, and back straight. Now, bending forward and lowering your torso as far out front as it would go, reach for your toes and hook or grasp them with your fingers. (Should you find that your toes are a bit beyond your reach, then hold on to your ankles as far as your reach will take you. Remember, this is going to be work in progress, but be assured you can do it, and do it well! The crucial stage of this segment is reached when you can slide your fingers down over your soles until they can touch the floor. This will happen in many small increments).

Now, having hooked or grasped your toes hold fingers and toes in tension for about three btu's. Next in progressive and unhurried stages, each taking about three btu's, alternate and constantly increase the tension between right arm and right foot, between left arm and left foot, all the while sliding the fingers farther and farther down the soles. In the process, arm and lumbar muscles are heavily taxed and stretched. Complete the routine by keeping the torso down as low as possible or, better still, by "parking" the forehead on the knee, and remaining in that position for a count of fifty to one hundred btu's. In this routine you would notice that your waist functions as a hinge that links your torso to your lower body! Repeat two or three times, each time to a count of fifty to one hundred btu's.

This was dynamic tension at work. You had two opposing forces one pushing for all its worth, the other pulling, neither quite winning but in the process they are stretched to their limit. Done correctly, the physical benefit is immediately apparent. You feel the result in all the right places. Please see the associated photographs.

SEGMENT 6

THE SUPINE/TORSO RETROGRESSION



PURPOSE: To very significantly strengthen the abdominal muscles. This is a singularly effective routine. Outperforms the competition hands down.

FORM: Very simple. Sit with back/torso straight, head up, legs extended with feet touching in front of you, knees locked, arms stretched out and resting on thighs.

DURATION: Optimally, two hundred ten plus btu's. Work at it, with diligence you will get there sooner than you imagine.

EXECUTION: This routine involves ten retrogressive stages each marked off by seven btu's in the following way. From the sitting upright position, move the torso about five degrees back—this is now the starting stage—count seven btu's (remember to keep the back straight, knees locked, arms resting lightly on thighs, and do not lift your heels from the floor; that's cheating!) And keep on moving retrogressively, counting btu's all the way down at every stage, until at the tenth stage your back is almost parallel to the floor. To end the routine, return to the original position without ever lifting the feet. To finish with a flourish, touch your knee with your forehead! Repeat this routine three times. This is a very challenging but extremely rewarding routine. The reason: by dynamic tension the abdomen does all the heavy lifting! Here comes the six-pack! Please see the associated photographs.

SEGMENT 7

SUPINE/TORSO DOUBLE FLUTTER



PURPOSE: To very significantly strengthen both lumbar and abdominal muscles.

FORM: Quite simple, exactly as in the preceding segment.

DURATION: Count off sets of one hundred fifty btu's.

EXECUTION: With back held straight, knees locked, and arms resting on thighs, lean the torso backwards to about five to eight degrees of the floor, move the torso up and down, i.e., back and forth, within a five degree range for a count of five btu's. This movement constitutes a single flutter. Then, in a seamless motion downwards lower the torso to the floor. Now, sliding your arms along your thighs and over your head, bring them together and stretch them out on the floor as far back as they would go. After a brief rest, still with knees locked and heels securely on the floor, return your arms to your thighs. Now raise your torso to within five to eight degrees of the floor and move it up and down, i.e., back and forth, within a five degree range—the second flutter—and continue up to your original sitting upright position or, beyond that, to “parking” your forehead on a knee. Bravo! You have just done a double flutter! Demanding stuff! Repeat ten times. This is perhaps the most challenging routine of them all. Please see the associated photographs.

SEGMENT 8

THE ELBOW/TORSO DIVE



PURPOSE: To facilitate ease of movement and fluid articulation between torso and lower body, the waist functioning as a connecting hinge between two distinct units.

FORM: Very simple. Sitting up straight, legs apart about thirty degrees, knees locked relax arms and body.

DURATION: Count off sets of about ninety to one hundred btu's.

EXECUTION: Place both arms on the floor directly in front of you, palms facing down, and knees locked. Move the torso slowly and gently forward, while sliding the palms forward in a rocking motion in sync with the torso movement until you can rest the lower arm flat on the floor. Once there, proceed to slide the arms very slowly forward with a pulsating or rocking and rhythmic motion to the count of ten as follows: one, one, one, one; two, two, two, two, and so on to ten, ten, ten, ten. Rest briefly at this stage. Now return to the sitting position, and with hands securely clasped and resting on the head, but slightly forward, proceed to dive downward to the floor so as to touch the floor with your elbows. Five dives, with a four-some repetition count as just described, complete this routine. Bravo! You've done it again! Please see the associated photographs.

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed The Flex Ability Regimen.

Telling points: Unique, very demanding, but extremely rewarding with great immediate and long-term benefits. Will make your body very, very pleasingly different for a long time to come!



The following two segments, 9 and 10, are optional and are included to show what, with perseverance, you will be able to do. No description is provided but the associated photographs designating each should fully suffice.

SEGMENT 9

THE PULSATING PALM/FLOOR CONTACT



Note that the knees are very firmly locked. Count out sets of about forty btu's. See the associated photographs.

SEGMENT 10

THE FOREHEAD/FLOOR CONTACT



Note that the knees are very firmly locked. From one btu to two hundred btu's. Please see the associated three photographs.



NOTES ON DIET

Include:

- » skim/nonfat milk and or almond milk
- » extra-virgin olive oil
- » canola oil for cooking
- » red, yellow and green sweet peppers—cooked or raw
- » kale—cooked or raw
- » cabbage, broccoli, spinach
- » unsalted or very lightly salted kidney beans
- » lentils, lima beans, split peas, garbanzo peas
- » perhaps two or three helpings per week of sardines in water
- » soy meat-substitutes—chicken style, etc.
- » very, very small amounts of salt or sugar
- » minimal amounts of sugar delivery systems or preparations such as cookies, cakes, pies, desserts, juices
- » whole wheat bread
- » oatmeal
- » zero percent fat Greek yogurt

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My most grateful thanks go to my friend Dr. Linda Felipez who not only gave me great encouragement as I contemplated this project, but also directed me to the right entity in Walla Walla University who could be entrusted with its production. She was right.

Pictor Graphics has been extremely generous and gracious in devoting time and talent to the undertaking. This beautifully produced book is the result of their palpable interest and dedication. I thank all who contributed to the project's development.

I also express special thanks to Mr. Larry Canaday for the excellent exercise photography. I needed his professional touch.

h.e.p.