

Getting fit for a reason

By Bruce Miller

Better sex doesn't come from chemistry. It requires exercise.

Page through Scott Hays' new book, "Built for Sex," and you'll see diet and exercise play a crucial part in, um, all kinds of activity.

The book emerged, he says, from a survey of Men's Health magazine readers. "The No. 1 thing they wanted to know was how to improve their sex lives."

Given a four-and-one-half month deadline and a 100,000-word limit, Hays set out to interview experts and average guys about the issue. Interestingly, "it wasn't tough to talk about." Since the advent of erectile dysfunction drugs, "men are a lot more open."

Utilizing research from that magazine survey, Hays contacted nutritionists and personal trainers to provide core information for the book. Clearly, he says, there's a tie between fitness and sexual fitness. "If you do the exercises and hold to the nutritional program, you'll have better sex. It's like anything else...the more exercise you do, the more confidence you'll gain."

Hays, 47, thought he was in fairly good shape when he started asking questions.

"I learned quickly I wasn't. I have horrible back problems and I learned a lot of it had to do with my core exercises. I wasn't on the right program."

While specifics are different for everyone, certain exercises - for abdominals, back muscles, glutes and hamstrings - can help a man enjoy better sex.

"Flexibility is arguably the most important component of sexual fitness," Hays writes. "And it seems to be the easiest one to ignore." Stretching, then, is key.



Author **Scott Hays** says friends teased him when he got the assignment to write "Built for Sex."

Hays says a man's flexibility is at its peak when he's between 10 and 15 years old. "If you're over 35, you've probably already found yourself saying things like, 'Man, I'm stiff in the morning' or 'Honey, would you help me pick up my socks.'" Stretching, he writes, increases circulation, improves breathing and provides energy.

"Built for Sex" has plenty of illustra-

tions to help readers do the exercises correctly. Boil them all down to a handful for the least possible workout? "That's going to be hard to do," Hays says with a laugh. Still, the book doesn't insist on a bodybuilder's routine. Simple moves can add up.

What most men don't realize is how important exercise is at any age. "We don't think we need to do certain exercises when we're 21 or 31," Hays says. "But what we do when we're younger affects how we are when we're in our 40s, 50s or 60s."

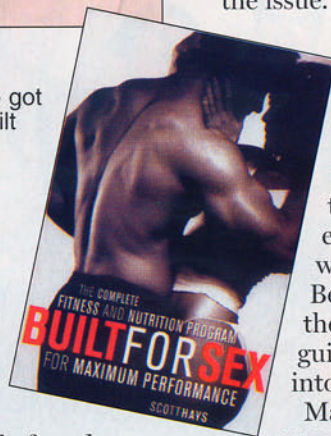
"Built for Sex," a primer of sorts, "belongs in the shelves of 21-year-olds," he adds.

But how many men are going to go to a store and ask for the book?

That's where wives and girlfriends figure in. "They're the ones buying it," Hays says. "If you bring the subject up in polite conversation, men are interested...and then they start discussing the issue."

Tobacco, alcohol and recreational drugs can take their toll, too, Hays says. That's why diet plays a key part in fitness. "Why is it that so many of us continue to eat the human equivalent of dog food?" he writes. "Boredom, maybe? Besides...who wants to take the time to cram even more guilt-producing information into the brain?"

Man needs plenty of water, very little junk food. Without some control, he may be susceptible to high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes - all contributors to poor sexual health. "Built for Sex" says a man needs equal amounts of protein, fats and carbohydrates - the right kinds. The more water, the better.



"Flexibility is arguably the most important component of sexual fitness. And it seems to be the easiest one to ignore."