

Gifts, gadgets and gizmos for Christmas

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Christmas time is coming around fast and, this year, instead of unwrapping a mountain of less-than-inspiring need-not-haves, why not make a healthy Christmas list? But first, check out our guide to the latest in healthy life gifts, gadgets and gizmos...

Gifts under \$100

Portion plate

Are you having trouble getting your portions under control? The Portion Perfection plate might be the simple way to get the balance right. The plate is divided into areas such as proteins, carbohydrates, salads and fats, and you simply fill it up accordingly. To find out more, visit www.greatideas.net.au.

Pedometer

A quick, simple and easy way to make sure you are walking the recommended 10,000 steps daily is to put a pedometer on your Christmas wishlist. Basic models can be bought for under \$20 while more state-of-the-art models like the Omron HJ-113 utilise revolutionary acceleration sensor technology and can be worn around the neck or in a pocket. Pick up a pedometer from fitness and department stores or log onto www.10000steps.org.au.

Weights

Weight training is a great way to build muscle which revs up your metabolism. There are masses of affordable weights available, from sleek metal to Velcro wrapped wrist and ankle weights that you can strap on for when you take the dog for a walk or while you do the housework.

The gift of fashion

Now that you are transforming your size and your shape, you're bound to need new clothes – smaller in size but big on style. A gift card could be the perfect pressie. Drop some hints about the trendy fashion shops you favour – why not ask for a voucher from a store that you've never dared to shop in before?

Exercise DVDs

The Biggest Loser has recently released three new exercise DVDs which are a must-have this Christmas. Ask Santa for one or all three of the following workouts: Boot Camp, Fit & Firm and Cardio Blast.



Portion plate



Pedometer



The Biggest Loser Bootcamp,



The Biggest Loser Fit & Firm DVD,



Cardio Blast



MBT shoes

Gifts over \$100

Gym membership

Exercise is an important part of the mix when you're losing weight or trying to keep it off. If you want to workout at a gym, finding the right one is a must. So drop some hints about which gym (or yoga centre, karate group or tennis club) you would like to be a part of. Wherever you choose is up to you, but the more comfortable you are with your surroundings and the people around you, the more likely you are to get the most out of your membership.

21st century bathroom scales!

Regular weigh-ins gives you a good guide to how your weight loss is going, but that's not the whole picture. Your body composition i.e. the amount of body fat you're carrying relative to lean mass i.e. muscles and bones, body water, organs, etc, can be a real eye opener. Tanita produces a range of scales that measure weight, body fat and hydration levels. Find them at stores such as David Jones, Myer, Harvey Norman and Target or log onto www.tanita.com.

Gifts over \$200

MBT shoes

How about some state-of-the-art footwear? MBT (which stands for Massai Barefoot Technology) is a range of physiological shoes developed by Swiss engineer, Karl Muller. He developed MBTs to emulate the soft, uneven surfaces of the natural world and to lessen his own back problems. They look a bit like platform sneakers and both makers and fans of MBT say they strengthen and tone the legs, buttocks and stomach muscles, too. That's because they use a negative heel angle to unbalance the feet making muscles work harder. To use them to the best effect, you need to be taught how to walk in the MBT trainers by an expert, or follow the instructions from the DVD provided with each pair. Celebrity fans of MBT include Heidi Klum, Katherine Heigl and Madonna.

For stockists of MBT shoes in Australia, log onto www.swissmasai.com.au.

Nintendo Wii Fit

Today's computer games can really boost fun and fitness for all the family. The interactive Nintendo Wii Fit, for example, guides you through strength-building, yoga, aerobics and balance exercises. Activities range from virtual skiing and ski-jumping to step dancing and Beckham-esque soccer skills. The Wii Fit can even track your fitness progress by measuring your weight, body mass index and sense of balance at regular intervals plus it charts your results, too. Find Wii Fit and

other fitness computer games from department stores or at www.nintendo.com.au/wii.

Health and beauty spa

Possibly the ultimate indulgence is an hour, a day, a weekend or more at a health and beauty spa. A health spa Christmas gift package will leave you feeling pampered and relaxed and, no matter how busy the festive season might be, time at your favourite spa is sure to be relaxing and rewarding. Look up a local spa and put it on your Christmas list.

Treadmill

Love them or hate them, a treadmill might just be what you need to get moving, especially if you want to workout it in the privacy of your own home. If the price of a treadmill or other gym equipment is too steep, you might want to ask for a monthly or three-monthly home rental options. Find out more at fitness retailers such as Workout World: www.workoutworld.com.au.



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