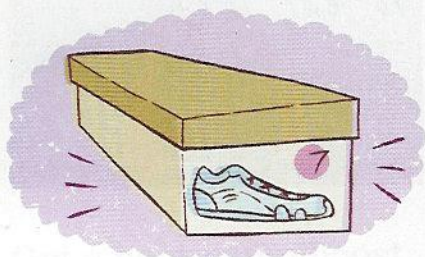


{FITNESS Rx}

Spring-clean your exercise routine

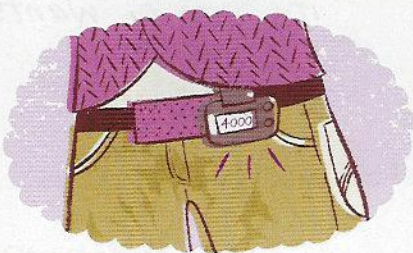
You spruce up your house when the seasons change, so why not do the same with your workout? From gear to attitude, here's what to toss—and the best way to replace it. *By Judi Ketteler*

Ditch: Old walking or running shoes



Instead: Invest in a new pair of kicks, because worn-out soles are a quick path to injury. Write the purchase date on the tongue or side of your shoes and let your weekly mileage be your guide. If you walk or run 10 miles per week, replace your shoes every 12 months; 15 miles, every 8 months; 20 miles, every 6 months; 30 miles, every 4 months.

Ditch: Your freebie pedometer



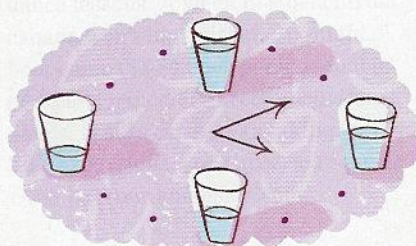
Instead: Spend \$20 to \$25 for a better-quality one. A study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* tested nearly 1,000 low-end pedometers and found almost three-quarters of them were inaccurate—with most of them overestimating step counts.

Ditch: Lightweight dumbbells



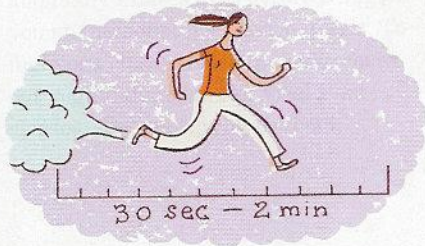
Instead: Use heavier weights that challenge you, says Tim Davis, director of personal training at Peak Performance in New York. Your body has an amazing ability to adapt quickly, so if you don't regularly increase the weight you're lifting, you'll eventually plateau. Lift as much as you can, as long as it isn't painful and you feel in control throughout the move.

Ditch: Sipping only when thirsty



Instead: Drink 4 to 6 ounces of water for every 15 minutes of exercise. Sweating away even a tiny portion of your body weight can doom your workout by making your heart beat faster and causing you to feel weak and tired.

Ditch: The idea that more is better



Instead: Focus on the quality, not length, of your workout, Davis says. Instead of walking or biking at one speed for an hour, halve your workout (and burn the same amount of calories) by doing sprint intervals—30 seconds to 2 minutes at a very fast pace, followed by 2 minutes at normal pace.

Ditch: That old cotton T-shirt



Instead: Go high-tech and invest in workout clothing made from wicking fabrics. Why? Synthetics do a better job of keeping you drier and cooler while you exercise (but you knew that already). Visit Health.com and click on "Best of Fitness" for a few of our favorites. ☺