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BECOME SOME BODY


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sport, fitness, and leisure have played an important part in shaping New Zealand's national identity, as they are part of a lifestyle that many New Zealanders enjoy. The pursuit of fitness is also something that most people attempt during their lives, either for the sporting challenge or simply to 'keep their weight down'. The Les Mills World of Fitness chain of gyms has played a substantial role in the New Zealand pursuit of fitness over the past fifteen years.

The gym is now a significant part of New Zealand urban society, and the experts have predicted that its importance will grow exponentially well into the next century.¹ The 1990 New Zealand Yearbook does not mention aerobics in the statistics on sports and leisure, but it does state that there was a concern that sports such as aerobics, which had experienced phenomenal growth over the last decade, may be depriving traditional team sports of their following.² By the end of 1990 a baseline study on New Zealand lifestyles found aerobics to be one of the top three most popular activities next to swimming and cycling.³

The fitness boom, it appears, is not a fad but an integral part of modern life. This essay will identify the development of one of New Zealand's most successful commercial gyms, Les Mills World of Fitness, and analyse

how and why one of the most popular activities, aerobics, has changed over the period 1980-1992. A major consequence of these changes has been the transformation in body culture of female instructors. From graceful and curvaceous bodies to solid, muscular hard bodies, the instructors, male and female, at Les Mills followed closely the fitness trends imported from overseas. The commercial gym operates in the modern capitalist world fuelled by hyper-consumption and profit, and the management at Les Mills ran the gym along the most commercial lines in order to survive in an industry based on image, results, and sweat. They encouraged instructors and members alike to 'Become Some Body' a motto that speaks volumes about the body culture they wanted to elicit.4

The method of inquiry for this study has been one of post-modern social analysis, to derive meaning from aerobics as a changing social and cultural phenomenon. Historically the body has been important as a site of social control. From the hanging tree in early modern Europe to Hitler's desire for the ultimate race, the body has been an important part of history. Only in recent years has there been a growing academic interest in the body. Its centrality as an object of study has risen from the effects of modernism, post-modernism and feminism. The body has come to be seen as a reflection of personality, an image of oneself, a part of consumer culture, and a project to be 'worked on'. Feminists asked for the right to control their bodies in the 1970s and at the same time, some women became obsessed with their body shape. Such women wanted their bodies to be sexy, young and beautiful, and thus to be a reflection of their personalities. New Zealand women could not escape the pressures of modernity, as capitalism and individualism filtered into the Pacific. The 'body

beautiful' became sought after in New Zealand, and Les Mills World of Fitness hoped to aid this search.

Modernity, the era of industrialisation and mass production, enshrined consumption as a crucial part of existence in society. With the rise of industrialism, there was a wide belief that the body was 'negated'. It was argued that human labour skills became unnecessary with the rise of the machine age. The body as a locus of human agency was overturned, people became sedentary and the concept of the body as a commodity or cultural object predominated. Far from being a negative entity 'the body' was rechannelled into areas which were less labour oriented, and more politically and socially useful in modern life. Indeed, modernity took a new form of power over the body, a new form of control, through discipline.

According to French historian and sociologist, Michel Foucault, the modern body became a site of social control. Foucault studied the prison and the asylum as institutions which discipline and control modern life. According to Foucault, each discipline has its own set of teaching methods, principles, and conditions through which a set of bodily practises are demanded. Using this Foucauldian framework, physical activity fits into the same category, where bodies are trained and coerced by the advocates of physical discipline and consumer culture, into a modern power structure. The aerobic dance phenomenon operates under the same conditions. The discipline of physical exercise enables the capitalist

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machine to operate perpetually, selling discipline in teaching methods, a
gym membership and the constant pursuit of knowledge in exercise
science. Towards the end of the 80s aerobics became a professional part of
the physical fitness discipline. No longer a relaxed and supportive
network of women exercising together, it became a specialised and
professional sport. At Les Mills, time and energy were devoted to research
in exercise science and product presentation, in order to give credibility to
aerobics as a fitness activity. The aerobics class also embraced technology,
another tenet of the discipline of physical activity. By the 1990s steps, hand
weights, dyna-bands, slides, and bar-bells were added to the traditional
classes. Moreover, important aspects of body culture, such as footwear,
became highly technical. The experts advised, for example, that
aerobicisers look for sufficient support for the foot, rear foot shock
absorption, lateral stability, a proper out sole, good flexibility, and a firm
heel counter in their aerobics shoe.7

Les Mills aerobics is active in the age of post-modernity; the age of hyper
consumption. As one finds it difficult to be influential in an increasingly
populated and complex society, at least people believe they can influence
the size, shape and appearance of their own body. The young, slim, and
sexual body is highly prized in contemporary culture as it has become a
means of expression and a site of unprecedented individualisation.
Commercial media have identified the body with a reflection of
individual accomplishment and personal success defined in terms of
beauty, fitness, health, pleasure, sexuality, vitality, and youthfulness.8 The
sports culture embodied at Les Mills World of Fitness grew out of this

consumer culture as the company promoted itself by building upon other commercial trends.

Physical health has increasingly become concerned with appearances and presentation of the 'self'. Self care regimes are not simply about preventing disease, rather how to feel good about how one's body appears. Edgley and Brissett believe that this health preoccupation has reached a level of fascism. The idea that almost anyone can be healthy given the proper combination of diet, exercise, and lifestyle has been translated into an ethic that everyone should be healthy. Edgley and Brissett claim that

In an AIDS, tobacco and cholesterol infested age, health fascism seems to be the emerging political order of the day, with various groups and agencies exercising increasing vigilance and control over what people put into their bodies and what they put their bodies into...

Out of this climate grew the cult of the perfect body. Neither medicine nor science can find the perfect body, yet popular culture continually fuels the myth that everyone should strive to obtain one. In Foucauldian terms, factual statistics like percentage body fat, strength development, nutritional balance, flexibility, lean muscle mass, and VO2 Max are all part of a scientific method of discipline and social control, that forces people go to the gym every day, to eat only rice and pasta, and to consult their personal trainer three times a week. Good things are said to come to people with perfect bodies.

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A product of the capitalist system, 'individualism' developed the body as a project. The body has anatomical and biological features which are difficult to alter, however, the exterior of the body is like a piece of 'playdoh', the size, shape, and volume can easily be remodelled. Exercise science, genetic engineering, and plastic or reconstructive surgery can open the body to choices, while at the same time allowing it to be controlled by the ideal. Capitalism and individualisation allow the owner to believe that their body can be reconstructed thus giving one more self esteem. The body thus becomes a project that needs to be managed, maintained and altered to accomplish an individual self identity. Yet, to the delight of the capitalist machine, the individual’s body is never 'finished'. It is constantly pressured by social, cultural, and economic control through a never ending catalogue of consumer choices to alter oneself. Michel Foucault writing about sex and health, in his History of Sexuality, says:

...In short, the formidable 'pleasures of analysis' ...which the West has cleverly been fostering for several centuries: all of this constitutes something like the errant fragments of an erotic art that is secretly transmitted by confession and the science of sex...and if this transformation is true for sex in the West, it is rapidly becoming so for health in general. ... The more we talk about it, the more exciting and alluring it becomes both as an attraction and as taboo.

Les Mills thrives on the appeal of health. Over ten years, they have talked about, adapted, promoted, and sold the idea of the body as an exciting and alluring project. Their whole business depends on 'pulling' the consumer

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into constant maintenance of the self and conversion to the ‘Play doh’ theory.

S. Butler writing in late 80s, on ‘Revising femininity’, offers another useful prototype of the beautiful body; the body as a machine. Again, like the body as a project, individuals feel that their machine can be maintained by a finely tuned diet, regular exercise, and health checks. Similarly, sport science perfects the training techniques, used by individuals to isolate and transform important aspects of their bodies. Controlled not only by the discipline of physical activity, consumer culture has created the ‘performing self’, which also treats the body as a machine. The instructors at Les Mills openly regard the body as a machine. It is both a vehicle for elite performance and for everyday operation. The capitalist consumer culture fuels the fitness industry. It created ‘The Gaze’, that omniscient observer that so many women feel they have to conform to, and which is part of the Foucauldian idea of a controlling power over one’s thoughts and actions.

A problematicising of women’s bodies mandates closer gazing and scrutinising to an ever greater discipline, to a consuming attention to appearance.

Attention is brought to appearance in the post-modern world via images. Featherstone, Turner and Markula all agree that consumerism directs the

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images of aerobics and the images of body culture. Indeed the capitalist machine fashions the nature of body culture at Les Mills World of Fitness just as aerobics conveys popular consumer images.

This perfect body ideal must not be mistaken as a phenomenon which cuts across class boundaries. Bourdieu, a French sociologist, understands institutionalised activity such as sport and exercise as part of a system of class power. Wilkes, who discusses physical exercise as a part of Bourdieu’s system of class power, agrees that workers who have used their bodies all day in heavy manual labour tend to have little time for what they see as ‘the pretensions of health and fitness’. Often men of the working class are more concerned to spend their time in activities of weight lifting and strength development, to assert their manual dexterity. The dominant classes, according to Wilkes, are not concerned with producing a large strong body, rather, a slim body, which in their view is better suited to an expression of the self. By training their bodies in this manner, they find satisfaction in effort and mastery of the body as a meaningful part of existence. In a New Zealand context, Bourdieu’s and Wilkes’ theories can be accepted only partially. Statistics prove that the higher the socio-economic status, the more likely a New Zealander is to attend fitness class, given that socio-economic status is rated from income and education. By this information one would believe that aerobics was

a class phenomenon in New Zealand, however, Les Mills, founder of the 'World of Fitness' empire, did not have a class model in mind. He based his gymnasiums on attracting 'the average person off the street'.

Moreover, his business franchised out the Jazzercise/Aerobics service which gave those in the business the ability to enter into the lives of people from the Auckland suburbs right down to the Factory town of Milton and the wool sheds of Oturehua.

The founding of the Les Mills empire coincided with second wave feminism. Feminism is based on the advocacy of equality of the sexes and establishment of the political, social and economic rights of women. Second wave feminists in the 1970s sought a scholarly basis for understanding women’s situations in history, and realised they had to criticise and illuminate the forces which circumscribed women both intellectually and physically. It was not as simple as inserting women into mainstream historical paradigms, as most were formed on a patriarchal basis. Nor does emptying theories of sexism make a theory a feminist one. There is no one feminist theory; there are many diverse and changing feminist perspectives. Each feminist historian has their own approach, but they are united in their opposition to stereotypical images of women, in concern for a feminist methodology, in sympathy for the analytical centrality of gender, and in the idea of the subordination of women by men. Early feminists like Rowbotham and Firestone uncovered the idea that male dominance was evident in social, economic, political, and

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ideological practises, yet was accepted and judged normal by both male and female members of society.24

In the 1960s and 70s, women reclaimed their bodies from male control and abuse. These early feminists believed the body was important in gaining control. Only when women had control of their bodies, they argued could they begin to claim social control. Gender Lerner was correct in proclaiming that, although women found autonomy in this post-modern world, the essence of earlier myths still lives on.25 Aerobic dance, for instance was commonly a woman’s domain and body building a male one. The female body became a site for the struggle over male control as aerobic dance activities became increasingly attractive to males.26 According to Chris Shilling, men felt challenged in the 70s and 80s because body image was one of the few remaining areas in which men could differentiate themselves from women.27 The female instructors at Les Mills, however, contested this terrain and adapted physically to the demands of working and competing with males of biologically different physical strength. Indeed in most post-modern physical activity women began to examine sex specific behaviour. They produced evidence that the physiological limitations so often espoused by ‘experts’ were inappropriate and artificial. The Les Mills female instructors promoted themselves as equally skilled. In the words of Mary Duquin,

Those ‘girls’ push ups’ may have once kept women on their

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Feminism has created for women an opportunity in sport and physical exercise, to expand their physical freedom, to have confidence in physical competence and enjoy the power of self determination. This freedom, however, is constrained by the myth of the 'perfect body'. While in the 1960s and early 1970s, soft bodies were acceptable, in an 80s feminist context, the biological soft bodies of the 1960s and early 70s were replaced by the 'hard body' of the fit, firm and supposedly sexy female aeroberciser.

This study seeks to highlight men's and women's active role in creating social and cultural meanings inherent in aerobics. Little has been written on either the history of aerobics in New Zealand or body culture within the New Zealand fitness industry therefore the essence of historiographical inquiry has been simply to record the history of aerobics at Les Mills World of Fitness, and apply social and body theory to the analysis of the instructors and their body culture. Chapter one looks at the basis of the modern day aerobics industry and Les Mills aerobics from both an international and national perspective. It shows the roots of New Zealand aerobics body culture, and the philosophy behind the Les Mills empire. Chapter two highlights how aerobics instruction at Les Mills has developed and outlines the systems that the company's management has put in place to instil the fitness culture into its instructors. Chapters three, four and five demonstrate the changes in programming and body culture at the gym, and seek to analyse why these changes have occurred.

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CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL CULTURE IN NEW ZEALAND

The commercial gym is now an active part of our modern society, but its beginnings were less than energetic. The New Zealand fitness industry evolved from American ‘physical culture clubs’ and the British ‘Women’s League for Health and Beauty’ into an institution that is a central part of many people’s lives in the 1990s.

The industrial revolution gave rise to the fitness boom as we know it today. Technology, modernisation, and the urban-rural drift created a life which required little physical effort. Many people’s lives became sedentary and they sought to exercise their bodies by means other than physical labour. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the physical culture movement sent hundreds of people outdoors walking and swimming, exposing their bodies to the sunlight for the first time. During the colder months physical culture clubs taught weight lifting, callisthenics, and Indian clubs. The great uncle of the modern day owner of the Les Mills empire opened one of the first physical culture clubs in New Zealand. Harry Baldock’s statue presides over Auckland’s Southern Motorway, as a reminder that our great grandparents were just as interested in exercise as we are today. Physical culture continued to boom until the First World War when its influence began to dull. After World War Two the baby boom generation came of age and the fitness revolution began.

29 Mills, P., ‘The Gym in the Nineties’, Fitness, 4. Spring/Summer, 1990, p.5. The Indian clubs were a pair of hand held clubs which were swung around the body to exercise the arms. Callisthenics was a system of exercises based on small repeated movements.
Another institution which gave rise to this country's aerobics culture was the British 'Women's League for Health and Beauty' which swept New Zealand during the inter-war period. The League advised that shaping and training a woman's body would give a new modern femininity and make her strong for motherhood. Activities that were previously associated with foreigners and alternative health specialists began to have mass popularity. Women began to sunbathe, go hiking, and restrict their food intake.

The Women's League for Health and Beauty transplanted its exercise and physical culture beliefs into New Zealand via the YWCA, (Young Women's Christian Association). The Association fully embraced the philosophies of the League which included the ideal of a strong body to equal the growing demands of womanhood, motherhood, and modernity. The exercises were thus designed for a woman who wanted to feel better, and more in control of her physical presence in a changing world.

The League's exercises were commonly known as 'fizzy jerks' designed to get results in a minimum of time. Mrs Bagot Stack's 'fizzy jerks' were developed under the advice of a professor at Melbourne University with the promotion of child bearing in mind. Bagot Stack's exercises were fondly named the 'wiggle waggle' or the 'seal' or 'tortoise' and were performed to the latest music, because she believed this would enhance the co-operation between the body and the mind.

In New Zealand, as in Britain, hundreds of girls were attracted to the League's promise of a

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new femininity. A series of short stories in the League’s magazine illustrate this attraction.

...[A] Young business woman, tired, lonely, unhappy and unfit, is talked into going to a League class with a friend, somewhat against her will; she is revitalised by the experience, makes wonderful friends, and finds a boyfriend, usually a League member’s brother, who is bowled over by her vitality and healthy beauty. 32

Classes for mothers during the day time were also an important offering of the YWCA. In 1912 the YWCA introduced dumb-bells into its classes and it became known as the place to go if you had flabby muscles, skinny limbs or broadening waistline. Quite obviously a precursor to our modern day aerobics, this physical culture further developed in the 1950s and 60s. According to Jill Matthews, the League delivered its promise to make members into new women in the face of the modern world. Mrs Bagot Stack produced new feminine bodies with new bright personalities. This is a promise which has passed through time; a promise that the modern gyms like Les Mills continue to offer today. 33

When the baby boomers reached their teens, the age of ‘Keep Fit’ dawned in New Zealand. The YWCA introduced ‘Keep Fit’ classes in the 1950s; they were much like ‘Fizzy Jerks’ but the emphasis on motherhood had disappeared. 34 These exercises were developed by May O’Rourke who used the Czechoslovakian Sokol method of movement, that was fluid and

rhythmic but still physically taxing. This method advocated stretching and relaxing as opposed to the modern ethic of exertion and effort. The classes were extremely popular with over 90 mothers and 160 children who attended O’Rourke’s first lesson in Otara.35

America, however, was the major initiator of what has been commonly known as ‘aerobics’. In 1968 Dr Kenneth Cooper, a Medical Doctor in the United States Air Force published a book on aerobics. Cooper defined aerobics as:

...a variety of exercises that stimulate the heart and lung activity for a time period sufficiently long to produce beneficial changes in the body. Running, swimming and jogging - these are typical aerobic exercises.36

Already in the 1960s physical culture experts like Jack Lalanne produced a programme of rhythmic stretching, ‘bouncing and bending’ to ‘work bulgy thighs and tone baggy underarms’ but it was not until Jackie Sorenson and Judi Sheppard Missett began an American-wide organisation of fitness programmes using the principals of Dr Cooper’s ‘aerobics’, that dance exercise began to be noticed.37 Sheppard Missett and Sorenson attempted to create an exercise form that appealed to women who did not find existing physical activities stimulating or inspiring. Their Jazzercise programme was closely related to dance, and women responded to the

gracefulness and effortlessness inherent in feminine activity. Furthermore, it was not entirely dance oriented so the Sheppart Missett - Sorenson programme did not require the discipline and constant training of ballet, jazz or modern dance. For Missett an important element of aerobic exercise was its playful attitude. The smiling faces, and vocalised whoops and giggles during the classes were an important and enjoyable part of the experience. This is an element which still exists today in some Les Mills aerobic programmes, where the instructor attempts through motivation to elicit whoops, laughter and smiles.

From these roots, Les Mills derived its own exercise programme. Physical culture and the Women’s League for Health and Beauty evolved into a physically challenging yet image based aerobics industry. The Jazzercise movement, however, was the American aerobic dance movement, from which the Mills family derived most of their inspiration.
THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LES MILLS EMPIRE

The fitness chain 'Les Mills World of Fitness' was begun by Les Mills, New Zealander, athlete and businessman. In order to understand the philosophy behind the business one must first understand the man who built the empire.

Brought up in Grey Lynn, Les Mills was one of those children who played every sport available and played them well. He was always organising a game of rugby with his mates or supervising a league team. After being educated at Mount Albert Grammar he went to the University of Auckland where he partially completed a Bachelor of Commerce. Dissatisfied he decided to seek his fortune in the business world. His first venture was a jewellery shop, and while unsuccessful, he insisted that it taught him valuable lessons about partnerships and people.38 Business, however, was secondary to his sporting desires. A world class athlete he represented New Zealand in shot put, discus, and weight lifting from 1958-1972. His position as National Director of Sport in Papua New Guinea perhaps helped develop his philosophy on fitness for the nation. "...it seems there is a fictitious belief that New Zealanders have some God given fitness they keep all their lives".39 "...Fitness I believe is the very basis of health in our society".40 He was adamant that there was no support for fitness in New Zealand in a non-sporting sense. The responsibility for a healthy society lay at a school level, yet physical education teachers were not involved in community activities. At the

roots of his 'World of Fitness' empire lay this philosophy. Les Mills wanted to cater to a broad spectrum of society, the everyday man or woman on the street. By doing so he combined his business and fitness interests, and made fitness into a commercial activity.

After years of dedication to a sporting career, his jewellery business was stagnant and he had to make a choice between a professional sports career or a business career. He borrowed the money to build two shops at Point Chevalier, Auckland. In his first shop he put shoes and the other he put home appliances, he knew nothing about either but two shops rapidly grew into six. In 1968 he began a fitness business in downtown Auckland, and in 1979 moved to the present Les Mills World of Fitness site in Victoria Street. The decision to develop commercially in both New Zealand and overseas was made and by 1980 he had a centre in Christchurch, and in 1981 another two, in Sydney and Dunedin. In 1985 another opened in Hamilton, with a further 200 franchises sold throughout New Zealand and Australia. His equally talented family played a crucial role in developing the empire. His son, Phillip who had returned from studying sport and business in the United States, took over the management of the Sydney gym in the early 1980s. The company went public in 1985, only to be taken over by Chambard Holdings in 1987. After the stock market crash in October of 1987, Les's son Phillip was able to buy it back for only three million dollars, half of the six million dollars it was valued at.

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The World of Fitness chains have been and still are market leaders because of their commercial approach. This approach has been one of constant improvement, reassessment and development, which has filtered into all sections of the business, particularly staffing. By the end of the 80s the gym/fitness market had begun to be saturated, and the company had to market itself more aggressively to maintain members. Mills placed a large emphasis on research and development. Every year senior staff travelled to the United States and beyond for new ideas. Phillip says, “We take the best of what they have and do it better, - present it in its most commercial form”. Phillip Gould, a senior manager within the firm, agrees that there is little innovation in what the Mills do. They follow the American trends very closely. Indeed throughout their history the American influence can be seen.

The single greatest expansion of the Mills empire was the introduction of the Jazzercise (-exercise to music programme). Prior to the 1980s callisthenics or physical culture classes were the only exercise classes offered at gyms and these usually lacked excitement and enthusiastic presentation. The new craze made the class fun. The Jazzercise class was one of the first of its kind in the country. A representation of the American version, it combined both exercise and entertainment. The instructors had a combination of dance, theatre and sports talent, and they were continuously able to pull more and more people into their gyms. “The underlying principal was to make it a buzz to get a room jam packed with people, have a party”. Mills believes this approach was the single most successful this century. The Jazzercise phenomenon grew exponentially throughout the 1980s and continues to do so as the

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44 Gould, P., Interview Senior Manager LMWOF, Dunedin Head Office, 9/8/95.
managers repackage the exercise/fitness service to ward off the traditional limited product life cycle. From a business point of view, the Jazzercise or Aerobics phenomenon was valuable because it allowed economies of scale. In areas of staffing it allowed one staff member to service concurrently up to 100 exercisers, whereas traditionally, when gyms did not offer aerobics classes, each staff member could only service five or six people.

In 1990 the results of the biggest baseline study of New Zealand life styles was published by the University of Otago in conjunction with The Hillary Commission for Recreation and Sport. They listed the four most important things to participants of physical activity. They must feel good, have fun, keep healthy, and be able to exercise with friends or family. Les Mills aerobics satisfies all of these criteria which is one of the reasons why it became so successful. The Mills were business minded enough to realise that although the ideas came from America, New Zealand was different, and they were able to create aerobic dance ‘kiwi’ style, something that was based on vital instructors, and dynamic product presentation. They literally had to; New Zealanders are notorious for taking the home-grown approach to many things in life, including fitness.

Americans love fad whereas New Zealanders prefer the more pragmatic pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps approach to life...why pay someone to count your sit ups when you can easily count them out yourself - is the Kiwi attitude.  

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AEROBICS INSTRUCTION AT LES MILLS

In the 1970s aerobic dance was virtually unknown, but by the 80s the discipline had developed such that there was a specific scientific definition for each physiological process involved in the aerobics class. The Mills family had the necessary scientific background. Phillip was educated in sport and business, Les had practical business experience and a sports background and his wife, Colleen, was also a top class athlete. All they did was import aerobic dance, or exercise to music from America. Initially they copied an American version of choreographed aerobic dance, but within a few months they were threatened with a breach of copyright suit. 47 Phillip Mills decided in typical 'Kiwi' fashion, and out of necessity, to develop his own programme. With the help of his mother, Colleen they produced Jazzercise. This was a fully choreographed exercise to music programme, which issued new music and moves every three months. Quite different from the traditional freestyle (make it up as you go along) aerobics, Jazzercise was centred around popular or inspirational music, thematic or dramatic interpretation of music in movement and motivational instructors. The relevant theory was that movement is closely related to personality and emotional state. The routines were thus usually choreographed to bring about spatial or physical awareness or to fit to a dramatic theme or mood of music. 48 In fact Phillip Mills argued that the freestyle instructors were much less successful, even if they attended every aerobics seminar available, because they tended to focus on fads. The low impact phase was short lived as exercise science quickly found

47 Yvonne Darling managed the Dunedin Centre in the early days of aerobics, she was able to recall the memo which was sent to all instructors to cease immediately using the American music and choreography.
solutions to the injuries created by attending solely high impact aerobics. Phillip Mills attributes his business success in aerobics simply to the fact that the gyms have a choreographed programme. The choreography has constant input from the top creative minds, and the product presentation is of a very high standard as directed by management. This is not to say that he does not poach freestyle ideas:

over the last ten years we have constantly kept abreast of international trends, sending our people overseas and subscribing to all current industry journals, video tapes etc...we currently receive eight major American fitness industry journals and have a library of more than thirty overseas choreographed video tapes from all different sources.

There is great pressure from management for exceptional leadership from the instructors to sell and present their product, the aerobics class, in the best possible form. All of the Teachers' Manuals over the last ten years have explained in great detail how an instructor should do this. Their mission statement lists the objectives of all of the instructors.

MISSION STATEMENT

TO GIVE OUR MEMBERS AWESOME SERVICE THROUGH;

. providing them with the most effective possible delivery of improved body shape
. providing appealing equipment in the cleanest and most colourful environment
. delivering the above in the most fun, friendly and exciting way we can
. RESULTS, appeal, fun.

“you as the teacher are to give the work-out which makes them come back again and again”.52 Teachers were in effect front line salespeople for the business.

During the 1980s, the fitness industry came under intense competition.53 The Mills were aware of this and they informed their staff that they had to be the best. Excellence was their objective through customer service and professionalism. Management thus used the enticement of elite status; the idea that instructors will gain all of the benefits of being noticed, of working for the best gym in New Zealand and of being lifestyle leaders: “...go on to fulfil your personal potential and let this achievement contribute to our mutual success”.54 In a Foucauldian sense the body of the instructor is a source of power. Since it has been invested with meticulous insistent work their body image becomes the powerful ideal. Just like the Women’s League for Health and Beauty, this marked the teacher as socially superior to the members or class participants. The instructor had health, beauty, and pedagogic power which easily made them objects of adoration. Often the ‘Fanatic Syndrome’, adoration, attention, and flattery, was the instructor’s form of reward. Since financial remuneration, for the average instructor, was never as high as at the other gyms, the Les Mills instructor could be said to do it all for love and attention.55

55 Darling, Y., Interview, ex manager Les Mills World of Fitness, Dunedin, ex head teacher, senior instructor, Moreau Street, St Clair, Dunedin, March 1995.
Another method which the managers used to inspire instructors to
greatness was by giving them the power of influence. As fitness leaders
they were the front runners of a lifestyle, one which promoted health and
exercise. An aerobics class may be somebody’s first step to a new way of
living, a physical and mental change in direction:

> your class can do more to bring people out of themselves and
> improve their general health and well being better than any
> prescription.56

Les Mills ensures that the instructors believe completely in the service
they are delivering, so that they can deliver it with commitment and
enthusiasm. The inspirational and motivational aspects of instructing at
Les Mills can be likened to a religion. Conversion to the Les Mills way can
often involve a change in one’s identity and a new vocabulary which
justifies this transformation. Charles Edgley and Dennis Brissett’s article
on ‘Health Nazis’, argues that much the same phenomena occurred
within the jogging culture:

> Running has its gurus, testimonials, places of worship,
> conversion stories, rituals, forms of self denial and sacrifice,
> taboos, holy Scriptures, penances and ways of dealing with
> backsliders. Moreover, it seems much of the rest of the health
> ideology seems to have been inspired by, associated with, and
> followed the same pattern laid down by the running movement,
> for healthism at large is filled with spiritual rhetoric.57

Les Mills instructors were guided and cajoled by managers, head teachers,
star instructors, systems of quality controls, workshops and images from

57 Edgley, C., and Brissett, D., ‘Health Nazis and the Cult of the Perfect Body: Some
the international commercial fitness industry. They emerged both mentally and physically committed to the challenge of being an instructor at Les Mills.

Many of the physical and mental demands on Les Mills instructors went undocumented, however, the teaching manuals and memos alone speak vast amounts about the management's expectations. The pressure on physical appearance was great because the industry has traditionally been very image based. Jazzercise, Jazz Aerobics, Jazzergetics and Step New Body, were forms of exercise which were based on cosmetic appearance: how trim and fit the instructor's body looked, how tanned this body was, and how much visual impact their clothing had. The instructor's most basic tool after all was his or her own body. The 1992 Instructors Manual concludes that:

while we are all different shapes and sizes a high body fat percentage is not acceptable. Many of our members will initially become involved because they want to reduce fat and seeing a teacher on stage obviously overweight is not going to inspire them to continue their attendance.58

Phillip Mills also sent out a pamphlet containing sentiments to the effect that the teacher should always physically look his or her best. The instructor was the centre of intense class attention, both their body and their movements, and through example and inspiration they were expected to be a positive reinforcement to the Les Mills World of Fitness model of a healthy lifestyle.59

Moreover instructors must be in peak physical condition because the energy demands on the instructor were thrice fold those of the class. The manual also advises instructors to supplement their exercise with weight training, jogging and cycling. This is an understatement, as many of the instructors over the past decade have trained extremely hard at supplementary exercise on top of many classes. It was, however, often a personal choice for the instructors, as most actively lived the sporting, outdoor and physical lifestyle anyway.

The Mills used quarterly updates of music and choreography to inspire and instruct their aerobics staff in the direction they wanted them. These three monthly meetings were called Workshops, they were held in the four main centres and attended by all teachers from that centre as well as all of the franchises. New routines, music and choreography were presented, practised and broken down into basic movements, so that each instructor could polish their performance before the class saw them teach:

by presenting the new music and choreography in an exciting way, [workshops also] provide educative input....and are an opportunity for teachers to meet and share ideas. 61

Workshops were spread over a whole day, often a whole weekend, because they also involved a certain amount of administrative work, the signing of contracts, lectures on motivation or physiology and, an essential part of instructing at Les Mills, the social function in the evening.62 After

60 Darling, Y., Ex Manager Les Mills World of Fitness, Dunedin, Ex Head Teacher, Senior Aerobics instructor, Moreau Street, St Clair, Dunedin, March 1995. Goad, D., Head Teacher, Trainee Manager, Deputy Aerobics Manager, Senior Aerobics Instructor, Dunedin, North Road, North East Valley, Dunedin, October 1994. and Renata, S., Senior Aerobics Instructor, Dunedin and Auckland, and Head Teacher Dunedin, Interviews with instructors who have taught through out the 1980-1992 period.  
workshops the staff have to go through one more filtering system before they could teach the routines to the class. Known as ‘tuition’, each programme had a head teacher who was in charge of that programme, they were responsible for this final phase of tutelage, whereby technique, form, presentation, and style were corrected. This was also an avenue for discussion where any problems with the new material were resolved. Tuition was also used to standardise the teaching of the new routines and to commit the instructor to a proper learning of each track. The instructors from all around New Zealand looked forward to the workshops as fresh new sounds, movements and inspiration would always be delivered.63

The Quality Control (QC) system was set up very early in the Les Mills history of Jazzercise and aerobics. Quality controls were, and still are an evaluation of the Les Mills product through the assessment of its delivery. This constant monitoring has had a great influence on maintaining and improving individual instructor’s performance. The QC occurred ideally at three monthly intervals whereby a senior or head teacher with appropriate experience observes and provides comment on an instructor’s class. This information was then used as a basis for discussion. The QC covered every aspect of instructing and teaching but of the most interest are the categories of motivation and appearance.

Personal presentation was often given special consideration by the management team because if an instructor looked good, (the fitness ideal shape and size) this positive aura will be seen and felt by the class. The instructor was scored out of four: 4 = excellent, 3 = good, 2 = needs

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† An aerobic ‘track’ is one exercise routine to one song or piece of music.

63 Darling, Y., Renata, S., and Goad, D., Interviews with Senior Instructors who taught during the 1980-1992 period.
improvement, 1 = poor. Appearance was assessed under the categories of effort/appropriateness/impact. Physical appearance was concerned with a fit, healthy role model not too skinny or fat, but appropriate to the programme which they taught. The Jazzergetics instructor may be bigger and stronger because of the strength and endurance needs of the class, whereas a Jazzercise instructor was primarily a dance exercise instructor, with a toned but smaller physique more appropriate to dance movements. Aesthetic appearance was concerned with supportive and tidy body lines, which had visual impact and colour.

The appearance category appears first and foremost on the QC sheet, indicating its importance. Presentation also takes up considerable space in the instruction manuals, where there is a detailed list of what one may and may not wear. According to the instructors of the period, the policing of these rules slackened over time. The request that all female teachers wore a little make-up to emphasise the facial focal point perpetuated traditional gender roles when there was no such request made of males in the history of Les Mills aerobics.

Closely related to physical and aesthetic appearance was the ability of the instructor to motivate the class. Motivation at Les Mills was not simply vocalisation, but a combination of voice, body and visual energy. Motivation was scored in the same way as appearance in the QCs. The public needed convincing of the benefits of Jazzercise and Jazzergetics, and this was done through constant motivation and coercion. Les Mills appeared to place exceptional pressure on the physical appearance of their instructors, if they did not fit their standards then the instructor’s quality

64 DMS, 'Quality Control Sheets', (1980s and 1990s), and Davis, M., Les Mills World of Fitness Aerobic Teachers' Manual, Auckland, 1992, p.27.
controls reflected this. A poor QC was the stimulus to action. In an industry developed around self improvement, and both mental and physical commitment, the instructor was invited to seek to improve their score by working harder in class, training their body more intensely outside of class, and by drawing on the knowledge and experience of popular or senior teachers. Moreover, in a business where large class numbers meant profit, a large class dictated how an instructor was treated with regards to opportunity, how many classes they taught and how much status they acquired. The fact remains that as front line staff members, the expectation on instructors’ bodies was high, and it appeared that there was more pressure on females than males. The next chapter reveals exactly how this pressure manifested itself over time.

CHAPTER III

JAZZERCISE

In the early 1980s the Jazzercise craze hit New Zealand. Parallel only to the jogging revolution, it offered similar exercise benefits but with a great deal more excitement. Jazzercise was Phillip Mills’ version of the aerobic dance phenomena which swept the United States in the 70s and 80s. It offered a stimulating combination of dance routines and exercise that was scientifically balanced to give total physical and mental fitness.66 Jazzercise was different from other sporting pursuits because it was theoretically non-competitive, had the benefit of a highly trained motivator, and was simple to participate in. Like a stage production it had its compelling personalities, fashionably beautiful bodies, and dynamic presentation.67

From the first days of its inception, Aerobics was touted as a big craze which would last for only a short time. The critics were wrong. Aerobics is now over 15 years old and remains a major part of the fitness industry.68 During those 15 years, however, both the human face and the aesthetics of Jazzercise have diversified considerably. The programmes have changed and developed with current exercise trends, just as the commercialisation of aerobic dance has changed the clothes, accessories, and even body parts of instructors. Most importantly the body of the instructor has undergone a radical change, from the graceful, curvaceous but slim lines of the Jazzercise instructor to the masculine hard, and muscular bodies of the

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68 Mills, P., Jazzfitness Teachers Bulletin, 1.1, May, 1989, p.1. Also seen in the fact that the aerobics programmes at Les Mills nationwide in 1995 remain one of the strongest parts of the Les Mills empire today.
Step or Jazzercise instructor. These aspects of Jazzercise all equate to a certain body culture unique to Les Mills World of Fitness. Body culture is all that incorporates the physical nature of the discipline; the aerobics image and its commercialisation, the physical and aesthetic nature of aerobic dance.

The body is the instructor’s main tool. Through their bodies they express personality, lifestyle, commitment and motivation but more significantly they bear the marks of time and change. The earliest video and choreographic records show in detail the culture that was associated with the Jazzercise phenomenon. It must be realised, however, that the instructors who are seen on each of the videos are not the average instructor at Les Mills, in the eyes of the company management they are the ‘best of the best’. The various instructors who feature on the videos reveal much of their personality, drive, ambition and their own ideas of body culture. Phillip Mills, Colleen Mills, Jackie Bull (later Mills) and Lennie, were dedicated to the programme, to the extent that they invested their bodies, personalities, and self image into its production.

The first thing that one notices about an aerobics instructor in a class is what he or she is wearing. Thus the functional adornments and garments of the aerobics instructor are an important aspect of body culture. Jazzercise pioneers owed much to ballet and modern dance for their

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69 In order to analyse the changes in body culture I have looked at all of the old choreography, teaching videos and notes relating to the aforementioned from 1980-1992. I have analysed them for five different aspects of body culture; clothing, language, body composition, movement and music. Christchurch Les Mills World of Fitness Archives, Collection held by Maureen Baker, hereinafter, (ChChLMWOFA.) Jazzercise, Jazz Aerobics, Cardio Funk, Meltdown Choreography. Jazzercise, Jazz Aerobics, Cardio Funk, Step New Body, Pump, Meltdown Videos, Auckland, 1980-1992.

70 This is my working definition of body culture in relation to the Les Mills fitness activities.
clothing and accessories. Lennie was dressed in a blue ballet or modern dance style leotard, full bottomed, with shoestring shoulder straps, a ballet neck line, a red elastic band tied around her waist. She had a matching red scarf in her hair, red, shiny, long legged, lycra stirrup pants and bare feet. These pioneer instructors did not have hi-tech designer footwear, they either performed their exercise class in bare feet or ballet pumps.71 See figure I

By 1985 the Jazzercise culture had survived the first stages of its introduction to New Zealand and Les Mills continued to send staff overseas to research the world fitness market. The staff at Les Mills followed closely these imported trends in body culture which changed dramatically over time. The clothing of the instructors for instance, became more flamboyant and exotic, the more accessories and bright colours, the better. Sombre dance leotards were replaced by bright colours, frills and ruffles, polka dots, leg warmers, waistbands and a higher cut around the leg of the leotard reinforced the fashion trends of the 80s. See figure II Phillip Mills appeared as an instructor, and he introduced the male attire: shorts, athletic singlet and the sand shoe, for stability around the foot.72 This was quite a basic body culture compared to that of the female instructors.

The human body was designed to move, and much of body culture is related to the aesthetics of movement. The routines echoed modern dance trends, where movements were explained in the language of dance and ballet. The company issued movement glossaries which represented

72 ChChLMWOFA, Jazzercise Video, Tape 30 and 31, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
Jazzercise moves in relation to the classical and modern dance steps, for instance "arm position jazz first", "jazz flex", "classical second". Although the warm up and the cool down were very similar to modern dance, Jazzercise was vigorous in the execution of its movements, which helped differentiate it from the discipline of dance. Movements in the early Jazzercise era were predominantly stretching, flexion and extension exercises, where the class was focused around stomach, pelvic, lumbar\textsuperscript{fl}, gluteal\textsuperscript{§} and hip isolation exercises on the floor. These were exercises which reflected the needs and wants of the female exercising population. The desire to work the pelvic region, for instance, is a particularly female terrain, because women carry more fat in the abdominal and pelvic region.

Indeed, much of the long lever\textsuperscript{∞} work on the floor also reflected the desires of the female exercising population. Long lever work involved the extension and flexion of the limbs of the body, in this instance the legs, to give them tone and grace. The placement of the instructor's body on the stage was such that the legs were the focus of class attention and this accentuated the often long legs of female instructors. Pirkko Markula, sports historian, argues that:

this kind of spot exercising gives the impression of the female body being constructed of small but troublesome parts.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{73} DMS, \textit{Jazzercise Glossary}, Auckland, 1980. and ChChLMWOFA, \textit{Jazzercise Video}, Summer, October, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, 1981'.
\textsuperscript{fl} See Glossary of Terms.
\textsuperscript{§} See Glossary of Terms.
\textsuperscript{∞} See Glossary of Terms.
Les Mills has cashed in on the media representation of troublesome parts by offering women a solution to these problems. Jazzercise was their first answer to the consumers’ demands.

Aerobic exercise at Les Mills became increasingly ‘scientific’, in the mid-80s. Jazzercise classes paid close attention to exercise physiology. Classes were organised into the safest and most physiologically sound order of exertion. The entire body was thoroughly warmed up, then pre-floor stretching and flexing routines were executed, followed by floor isolation exercises† for the pelvic region, abdominals, hips, buttocks and thighs. The class would come off the floor and work their heart in a cardio-vascular routine+++ with jumping actions and more vigorous flexion and extension of the limbs. The session was always finished with a thorough cool down and stretch. This was also a period in the Les Mills history of aerobics where safe and effective exercise was stressed. This was probably due to the high injury rates which were occurring in aerobics classes, often because of bad shoes, a bad floor or bad instruction.75 Les Mills was determined to eliminate the ‘bad instruction’ element of the causes of injury and educated their instructors in exercise physiology, anatomy and kinesiology.Ω One senior instructor with the company commented that he believed aerobics at Les Mills World of Fitness nearly changed entirely to low impact aerobics.76 This was because management, especially in Dunedin, believed the only way to prevent injury was to remove the

† See Glossary of Terms.
+++ See Glossary of Terms.
Ω See Glossary of Terms.
76 Renata, S., Interview with a senior instructor who were with the company during the period, 1980-1992.
†† See Glossary of Terms.
impact or jumping from aerobics. Moreover, many of the exercises which were prevalent in the Jazzercise class were rendered contra indicated and either disallowed or reinterpreted so as not to cause injury. At a class level the scientification of aerobics meant the class members had to record their pulse rates before, during and after their work-out, to ensure that they were exercising effectively. The ‘scientification’ of Jazzercise did not detract from the overall theatrics and dramatic interpretation of a class. The cardio-vascular routine, ‘Time Warp’ which used music from the Rocky Horror Picture Show would not have had any audience effect without the hip wiggles, pelvic thrusts, and jumps to the left and the right!

Instruction embraced all of the aspects of vocalisation, cues, safety messages, motivation, entertainment, and non-verbal cues and demonstration. The early instructors at Les Mills placed more emphasis on vocalisation and sound effects. A memo which was circulated around the South Island centres listed pages and pages of useful and appropriate sound effects for exercise motivation. The ‘hah’, ‘cha’, ‘hup-hut’, ‘yeeha’, ‘1 and 2 and reach’, an international trademark of the aerobics instructor, was also a mark of the Jazzercise instructor. The male instructors, however, who taught the more physically demanding programmes, did not feel this need to screech, squawk and sing to the music and aerobic beat.

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77 Renata, S., Interview with a senior instructor during the period (1980-1992).
78 See Glossary of Terms.
80 DMS, ‘Ideas and Helpful Hints’, notes following Dunedin Workshop, 26 June, (no date or origin), pp.1-6.
The earliest choreography was very instructional, where the routine necessarily was not. Choreographic notes contained pictures from movement glossaries, and often a comment about the routine.

...a cardio vascular-routine with easy extensions of the arms to side...take off on this ‘Maggie’ spectacular.81

...let that old fashioned rock music slice off those tummies and don’t say maybe because its really gonna work.82

...the gracefully moving arms and step out movements are specially choreographed so that you can breathe and fly like angels.83

Ballet and dance movement descriptions were combined with metaphor to use images to their fullest advantage: “...hands reaching for a rope”, “like a prayer, pulsing, carry arms down”, and “reaching forward to a tabletop”.84 See figure III The video too, offered a full demonstration of the movements and combinations of movements before each routine, something which was dropped two years later.

The instruction style of the early 1980s Jazzercise instructor was vastly different to the mid 80s. Vocal instruction only involved basic movement cues and sound effects, because the music was dominant vocalisation was kept to a minimum. As time progressed there was more of an intimate, conversational style of instruction. Undoubtedly aided by the introduction of the ‘shot gun’ and ‘floor’ microphones and later the

81 ChChLMWOFA, Golden Oldie 2a ‘Choreography notes’, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland, p.7.
83 ChChLMWOFA, Jazzercise, Tape 4, routine, “Angel of the Morning” by Juice Newton, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland, p.12.
Figure III
'headset' roving microphone in the 1990s. Now everything the instructor of the 90s says can be heard over very loud music.

The music used in Les Mills aerobics from 1980-1992, has uncategorically reflected the current trends on the popular charts, in the discos, night clubs and on the radio. The Les Mills key to success, however, was to be selective in what they used. All of the routines were overdubbed with an aerobic beat for copyright reasons and they were only used if they had the capacity to be inspirational, motivational or to be dramatically interpreted. Titles such as 'The Greatest American Hero', 'Lady (you bring me up when I am Down)', 'Release the Tension', 'Hold on tight to your dreams', 'I'm so Excited', and 'You Can Do Magic', are typical of the Jazzercise archives.

The body composition of the Les Mills instructor follows the consumer fashion trends closely. Remembering that the instructors that appear on teaching videos have exceptional physiques, they are presented as the ideal and are meant to be inspirational to other instructors. The first Jazzercise instructors were ectomorphs in shape. The ectomorph is long and rectangular, flat chested, slender in hips with little defined waist. The limbs of the ectomorph instructor tend to be longer in relation to the trunk. Since the instructor tends to have well developed muscles they also carry a low body fat percentage. See Glossary of Body Types. This body was the ideal twenty years ago. Jackie Mills, Colleen Mills, and Lennie were all ectomorphs.

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The clothes which these instructors wore accentuated their femaleness with full bottomed leotards, and plunged and gathered neck lines around the bust. Lycra fabrics enabled the instructors to wear entirely figure hugging clothes, which revealed every bump and bulge. Many of the Les Mills instructors, however, had no bulges, they showed only clean bodily lines. Another clue as to the body culture at Les Mills in the early 80s period is revealed in the presentation of the choreography notes. See figure VI. The women here show the slim ectomorph like figures, the facial expression of excitement and enthusiasm and the clothing and hair styles of the fitness industry during that era.

The hairstyles of pioneer instructors reinforced the predominance of the floor exercises, and the intensity of exercise. The Jazzercise instructor was encouraged to have ribbons, head bands, flowers and all manner of glitzy accessories in order to present a bright, positive, energetic image. Many of the styles left a lot of loose hair, and dangling accessories. As the intensity of the exercise increased, the hairstyles became more functional, either all tied back or cut short to combat the stinging, whip-like motions of hair drenched in sweat.

The title pages of the Les Mills official choreography notes also began to include the male figure in the summer of 1983/84. Dressed in shorts, singlet and shoes, his attire was less revealing than the female image. He was well muscled, smiling but not as ebullient as the female. See figure IV. The presenting instructor's bodies also changed over time. Colleen,
Figure IV
Jackie and Lennie all became leaner and more muscular. Soft curvaceous body lines were replaced by hard, lean and developed muscles. The upper torsos of all three show obvious triceps, biceps, deltoid and pectoral development. See figure V.

At this time there was also more of an emphasis on the aerobic qualities of Jazzercise. The routines were all given the effective beats per minute (bpm)#, so that a class could be structured around the dramatic flow of the music. In comparison with the earliest Jazzercise routines there were many more cardio-vascular routines where the heart rate was raised by high intensity jumping movements, and fewer floor isolations for the abdominals, gluteals and thighs. The whole body became involved in more vigorous and ballistic movements such as high leg kicks, high knee runs and ski jumps. These movements, however, were still interspersed with low impact (no jumping), or less intense cardio-vascular activity.

For the regular Jazzerciser, they gave higher impact options which offered the gym goer a continual challenge.

Instruction within the programme also developed during the mid 80s. There was more encouragement, more energy and vitality in presentation. Much of this change can be attributed to the removal of movement demonstrations which accompanied each routine in the early years of Jazzercise. Movement demonstrations occurred before each routine was presented. This introduced the class to any new or difficult movements as well as giving them a chance to practise the dance style combinations of movements. The movement demonstrations, however, compromised the energy flow of the class, because of the stopping and starting of the tape. Once this demonstration had been removed the presentation of the

# See Glossary of Terms.
class as a whole seemed more vital. Furthermore, the removal of the movement demonstration relieved several minutes of the traditional hour long class, which was utilised for more cardio-vascular routines.

By eliminating the demonstration, the vocalisation of the instructor had to be more than simple direction changes and 'sound words'. Cues became increasingly motivational, like, 'go hard', 'reach for the stars' while they also had to include safety cues like 'knees bent'. The last references to the dance background of Jazzercise were dropped, and they no longer used the classical ballet and modern dance terminology to describe movements. The choreographers created their own names for movements and combinations of movements which were based on function, form or images; for instance, 'grape vine', 'wide arms', 'hands on hips' or 'superman'.

The late 1980s saw the curtain draw on the Jazzercise programme. The company realised the limited product life cycle and saw the need to revamp Jazzercise. Jazzercise became known as Jazz Aerobics. With the same style exercises and dramatics, Jazz Aerobics followed the international aerobics trends of the mid 80s. Ballet pumps gave way to 'hi-tech' shoes, ballet leotards were discarded for new specifically designed aerobics leotards in shiny lycra, and the legs on footless tights were cut shorter. The bum walks, hip rolls and swinging stretches of the early 80s were replaced with ballistic high leg kicks, jumps and leaps. For the instructor, the body culture within which they worked had changed.

89 ChChLMWOFA, Jazzercise Video, Autumn Term, Tape 35, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland, 1985.
90 ChChLMWOFA, Jazzercise Video, Autumn Term, Tape 35 - 37, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland, 1985.
The Jazzercise of Les Mills World of Fitness was open to outside influence as the managers themselves sought to produce the most appealing form of exercise that kept people returning to their centres. This directed a change to a new more energetic and physically challenging presentation of aerobic dance which ultimately stimulated a change in the instructors' bodies. The ideal ectomorphic shape of the 1970s and 80s became more of an ecto-mesomorphic shape in the late 80s and early 90s. See *Glossary of Body Types*.

Just like a project, the instructors trained their bodies paying evermore attention to their physical self. The body of the instructor became loaded with meaning. 'Firm but shapely, fit but sexy', their bodies apparently reflected a whole lifestyle.91

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JAZZ AEROBICS

Jazz Aerobics was created to fill 'a gap in the aerobic dance market'. Management believed that there were people who were misplaced in either the Jazzergetics or the Jazzercise programme. With only two programmes offered at Les Mills, the creative dance programme and the sports based exercise programme, the clientele were dissatisfied. Many customers did not have the stamina to complete a Jazzergetics class, nor the co-ordination for an effective Jazzercise work-out. Jazz Aerobics was thus a combination of aerobic tracks from both of the programmes which were simple and fun to participate in. Initially, the company issued category sheets to guide instructors as to what was suitable, but quickly special routines were choreographed, and a Jazz Aerobics administration was created.

Jazz Aerobics carried with it the spirit of Jazzercise. The clothes reflected the same delightful excess of the mid 80s as female instructors wore all manner of earrings, head bands, leg warmers, waist bands and ribbons on their increasingly complex, yet more revealing leotards. See figure II, p.33. Full length tights were chopped to knee length, the legs on the leotards were cut so high that bottoms were out and the era of the G-string leotard began. The males wore little shorts, usually athletic shorts, loose singlets, shoes and socks. They did not wear adornments like the females, nor were they encouraged to. Clothing styles for men were linked to athletics, so as not to risk their masculinity, whereas women's apparel was

92 DMS., Memo, from Christchurch LMWOF, (no date nor origin given).
93 DMS., Memo, from Christchurch LMWOF, (no date nor origin given).
94 ChChLMWOFA, and DMS., Category sheets, Jazz Aerobics, Jazzergetics and Jazzercise, (no date nor origin given).
based on dance culture. At the end of the 1980s, the excesses of leg warmers, hair ties, waistbands, layers and leotards disappeared. The two piece, G-string co-ordinate reigned supreme, as aerobic dance became treated as a sport, the search for clothing which best revealed an athletic shape was sought in the exercise apparel market. Lycra leggings became ever shorter, as tights moved up women’s legs to the mid thigh, and by the time Jazz Aerobics had been renamed Meltdown, the shorts were little more than hot pants.95

The general exercise fashion of the late 80s and early 90s was a combination of fluorescent colours and intriguing designs both in the cut of the outfit and the texture and design of the material. Perhaps the biggest influence on clothing was commercial sponsorship. Capitalism had infiltrated the everyday aerobics class as the clothing manufacturers stood to make a profit from having their exercise wear seen by hundreds of people. Brett Fairweather, for instance, was sponsored by ‘Kosmik’ (an exercise apparel company). Kim Harvey by ‘Skin Flex’ (leotard label), and Juliet and Michelle by ‘Pazzaz’ (another leotard label) and most of the Les Mills ‘presenting’ instructors had their shoes provided as well.96 The sponsorship revolution has reached incredible proportions in Auckland today. ‘Nike’ (a leading international fitness apparel company) sponsors Les Mills’ top instructors and all of the personal trainers, to the effect that they have most of their work clothes supplied.97

95 ChChLMWOF, Jazz Aerobics, and Meltdown Videos, 1985-1992, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland. These videos show the different styles of leotards and exercise apparel in great detail.
96 ChChLMWOF, Jazz Aerobics and Cardio Funk Videos, Introductions, end notes, thanks and acknowledgments, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
97 Sweet, W., Interview, with National Director of One On One, Personal Training, and Senior Instructor for the period, (1980-1992).
Jazz Aerobics was predominantly led by Helen Hughes and Neil Gudzell in its years of prosperity. These two leaders throw an intriguing light on the body culture at Les Mills World of Fitness. Helen had an atypical body in comparison to other leading Les Mills instructors. Helen had the shape of an endomorph, that is a round soft, pear shaped body with more fat distributed at the hips and thighs and shorter limbs relative to the trunk. The endomorph generally has a slower metabolism, which reveals a higher body fat percentage, and less muscular definition. See Glossary of Body Types Helen did not have the historically typical body of Les Mills instructors, rather it was more important that she had an extensive dance background. It appeared that Les Mills did not base its instructor value merely on issues of body shape.

Helen was accompanied by another dancer, Neil Gudzell. Neil was renowned for his feminine aerobics attire, sarcastic wit and humour. With presentation of the new routines on video at a national level being one of the pinnacles of success in the business, Neil expressed his gift of sarcasm in the July issue of the Jazzfitness Teachers Bulletin. He wrote a column on how to become a video presenter for Les Mills.

Now for some pointers on how to be a presenter (again tick and compare).

* tell the Mills how stunning they are (it worked for me)
* send Maureen flowers
* send Helen flowers
* send Cyndy flowers
* send Lynley flowers
* send Jackie flowers

In reality it took much more than luck and networking to become a presenter. Helen and Neil’s replacement, for instance was the World Aerobics Champion, and golden boy, Brett Fairweather. See Figure VI Brett was a typical mesomorph. Broader at the shoulders and the hips, and narrower at the waist, the mesomorph has well developed and defined muscles on limbs and trunk. Due to the high muscle to fat ratio, this medium to large boned, symmetrical body can look toned without exercise. See Glossary of Body Types According to the IDEA Personal Training Manual, because lean mesomorphs look very fit even if they are out of shape they tend to be less self conscious about their bodies, and naturally enjoy exercise. This was no doubt part of Brett’s winning formula both on the international stage and at Les Mills World of Fitness. Many of the females who helped Brett in the presentation and choreography of the Jazz Aerobics programme were miniature in comparison with Helen. Kaye Eagle, Kim Harvey and Kate Arnott, were all petite ectomorphs. Helen appeared to be the exception rather than the rule.

Just like its predecessor, Jazz Aerobics followed the international trends. During its years of maturation, Les Mills management defined the aerobics programme as a combination of high and low impact aerobic activity. With three products on the market at this time, the company ensured that there was a strong product differentiation.

Movements in the Jazz Aerobics programme were differentiated by a loose, more relaxed attitude to exercise. While it still offered a thorough work-out, the classes gave a high and low impact options, and the beginnings and ends of the class were relaxing, rather than tense, hard and demanding. This is also evident in the video presentation, where the atmosphere is more of a party or celebration, the instructor is told to feel the music and to save the jumping and ballistic movements until the third or fourth track, or routine, of the class. 101

The structure of the Jazz Aerobics class, like the Jazzercise class, became more scientific as Jazz Aerobics increased in popularity. Like Jazzercise this coincided with the development of exercise science both in New Zealand and internationally. Just as physiology and injury prevention became important so too did a physiologically sound class structure. Foot strike patterns † became the primary concern in class structure since it was best that each routine did not work the same muscle group over and over again. Some of the major muscles were naturally exercised every time, but the choreographers coordinated the routines so that different groups of muscles would be targeted each routine. In accordance with the discipline, Les Mills World of Fitness issued class structures. 102 The cover pages of the choreography also introduced the listing of beats per minute (bpm) of each of the sound tracks, so that the dramatic and physical exertion climax in each class could be planned to maximise exercise benefits.

101 ChChLMWOFA, Jazz Aerobics Videos, Tape 4 - Tape 63, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
102 ChChLMWOFA, Jazz Aerobics Choreography, Tape 49 and 50, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
Moreover partly as a result of the low impact craze which swept the gym world, and partly a result of the scientification of aerobics as a popular sport, Helen took great care to show the nations' teachers about the safe and sound physiological movements in aerobics.

Jazzercize, Jazz Aerobics and aerobic dance, exercise to music, call it what you will - has progressed so much over the last few years that part of progress is criticism from fitness experts and safety consciousness. Because of the vast types of people in your class, the skills of the teacher are more demanding, and the confines which you work within are much stricter. So the choreography has teaching and safety notes as well to help you.103

The fun atmosphere associated with Jazz Aerobics meant that the body language and the language of communication was warm and relaxed. The form of the Jazz Aerobics instructor was looser than the well disciplined and bold Jazzercise pioneers, however, they still retained the tidiness and clarity of movement which had been handed down from the dance discipline. Communication between the instructor and the class changed substantially over time. The style of communication became conversational, the introductions to classes were friendly and welcoming. Rather than the few words, of '...we've got a great class for you this time, let's get into it...', instructors introduced themselves and continued to talk to the class throughout the first few tracks. Much of the change in style occurred because of the introduction of the microphone in the 1990s, whereby economy of effort was no longer an issue. The instructor no longer used half of their energy projecting his or her voice across a class of one hundred people, and a loud blaring stereo. Moreover, more time and

103 ChChLMWOFA., Jazz Aerobics Choreography, Tape 49 and Jazz Aerobics Video Tape, 46. Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
energy could be put into motivating and ‘selling’ the class a great workout.\textsuperscript{104}

Helen Hughes wanted to ensure that all instructors were ‘involved’ in what they were doing; for the class, with the class and to make sure the class felt a part of what was being taught. For Helen it was not enough for the Les Mills instructor just to be seen.\textsuperscript{105} Indeed a major part of working for Les Mills meant that much more of the instructor’s time was invested in teaching rather than purely instructing a class. A form of psychological commitment to the industry and the commitment to constantly better oneself and one’s teaching was expected of the Les Mills instructor.

Pirkko Markula talks of whole body fitness. This is an holistic view where exercise is no longer a concern for purely physical well being, rather it embraces the mental aspects of fitness as well. “We are urged to train our bodies and our minds”.\textsuperscript{106} In accordance with Chris Shilling’s view, the instructor sees their body and mind as a project, something to be constantly worked on outside of teaching classes. Thus the Les Mills instructor trains, in their own time, to be a symbol of a healthy lifestyle, to believe they are the best so that they can present the Les Mills product in its best possible form. Aerobics at Les Mills World of Fitness then became more than just a term, it had a myriad of changing meanings but came to symbolise a lifestyle.

Aerobics isn’t just dance exercise any more, it’s a lifestyle

\textsuperscript{104} Davis, M., \textit{Les Mills World of Fitness Aerobic Teachers’ Manual}, Auckland, 1992, p12. In the manual it states that the instructor has to sell the concept of the programme they are teaching, with particular reference to Meltdown.

\textsuperscript{105} ChChLMWOFA., \textit{Jazzercise Video, Tape 47}, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.

The instructors at Les Mills maintain peak physical and mental confidence through an holistic approach to aerobics, this is also how the company’s management maintain what they believe to be the top instructors in the New Zealand industry.

In the midst of the aerobics and fitness revolution was a ‘fringe’ aerobic dance form which took off in Auckland but did not last in the rest of the country. Cardio Funk or Cardio Jazz was based on the hip hop dance style which came out of America. Les Mills faithfully imported this new exercise dance trend and quickly developed a choreographed programme. They introduced it via Jazz Aerobics classes, and advised the instructors nationwide to always include some funk tracks in their class. Cardio Funk involved combinations of dance steps, with complex arm movements and a complex body culture.

Cardio Funk, introduced the mesomorphic body type to a dance based programme which was atypical of Les Mills ‘body type’ programme patterns. These mesomorphs were often males whereas the female funk instructors tended to remain ectomorphic in shape. See figure VII

The funk clothing represented the root dance culture, with many layers, rips, shreds, loose and baggy accessories to dress up the traditional aerobics garb. In this ‘fringe’ programme the males and females both dress in the spirit of the culture, Pete Leo, Carla, and Kaye Eagle all had loose singlets

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or cropped tops and a kaleidoscope of psychedelic colours. Cardio Funk still exists today at Auckland Les Mills. Pete Leo, who takes the class, is an extremely talented hip hop dancer, with a mesomorphic figure, and the ability to pull over 100 people to each of his classes. The Cardio Funk fad of the early 90s may not have lasted a long time, but it did establish the aerobics programme as the best dance exercise programme within the company. If one wanted to exercise to the latest sounds, if one could move and ‘groove’, and wanted to have fun, then this was the appropriate class. Vestiges of the funk era have survived today. One can still see ‘the wave’, variations on the ‘stomp move’ and plenty of trunk wiggling in the Meltdown classes at Les Mills nationwide.

At the class and members level, the Meltdown programme replaced Jazz Aerobics and was simply a change of name, but officially it could be seen as part of a strategic marketing plan aimed at the avoidance of the traditional short product life cycle. Marketed towards consumer demands and ideals the teaching manuals of the period stressed the consumer benefits of each programme, which the instructor should ‘sell’.

Meltdown is a combination hi/lo class designed to fat burn and to increase stamina, strength and co-ordination with an emphasis on fun.¹⁰⁹

The class was unique in that it had a single peak structure, that is 40 minutes of continuous aerobic work, that sustained the heart at its working heart rate.¹ The manual stressed that it offers plenty of alternatives to a wide range of clients.

¹⁰⁸ ChChLMWOFA, Cardio Jazz Videos, Tapes 61, 62, and 59. Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
¹‡ See Glossary of Terms.
The Meltdown team were an illustration of the direction of body culture at Les Mills World of Fitness. The video presentation consisted of a wider range of instructors than in the Jazzercise presentations; only the top instructors and head choreographers appeared on the latter. As many as five instructors, a mixture of race, gender, and body type could be seen instructing with the choreographer and head teacher. Gender still differentiated the body culture in terms of clothing, but the terrain of movement, language, and body composition was no longer an issue. The males could dance with the female instructors and the females could sweat and push-up like the boys. Markula argues that in order to attract the male aerobics participant, the male has changed the feminine mode of aerobic dance.110 This analysis rings true in most of the Les Mills programmes, in all but the Jazz Aerobics/Cardio Funk/Meltdown class. Here the males who teach these programmes often have a dance background, and love to retain the dance aspect of aerobics, albeit with a masculine interpretation.

JAZZERGETICS

Jazzergetics was the second Les Mills initiative which promptly followed the Jazzercise venture. The Mills saw the potential to encourage more people into their gyms if they offered an alternative to creative, dance-based exercise. Jazzergetics still fell into the broad category of aerobic dance but its exercise component was more sports oriented. Fondly known by the clientele as ‘Getics, the class combined aerobic as well as anaerobic exercises and stamina building as part of its structure. Jazzergetics is one of the longest serving programmes in the history of aerobics at Les Mills, and by 1992 its features were well entrenched. ‘Getics, has been named, renamed, structured and restructured over fifteen years and it still ‘holds its own’ in the extremely volatile aerobic class market.

Essentially, Jazzzergetics was an advanced class to challenge the super fit. Consisting of a high intensity conditioning, strength and cardiovascular work-out, this high impact class lasted for 60 minutes of sweat and pain. Energy and motivation were the basis of this programme and this produced a vastly different body culture from the traditional and modern dance based aerobics classes. Perhaps the greatest difference was the use of the male instructor.

Phillip Mills and Phillip Gould were amongst the key instructors in the genesis of the long serving ‘Getics class. Both Mills and Gould were ecto-mesomorphs in shape. The ecto-mesomorph possesses long levers but with well defined muscles, they are also

generally thin and wiry. These two instructors were the ideal athletic sporting shape that management wanted to promote in the Jazzergetics programme. Jackie, one of the first female ‘Getics instructors, also had an athletic figure, she carried little body fat, and had good muscle definition. Jackie’s body lies testimony to the changed shape of body culture at Les Mills World of Fitness. In the early 80s her lean ectomorphic shape was the fitness industry’s ideal; by the end of the decade she had altered parts of her anatomy, and taken on the fashion trend of the 90s, the feminine hard-body. Towards the end of the 80s Jackie carried more body fat, gained a much greater muscle mass, acquired the typically masculine ‘V’ shape of the Latissimus Dorsi, developed an extensive musculature of the upper torso and a larger bust.¹¹³ Rather than eliciting that she had lost her femininity, this change not only reflected a greater strength of body, but strength of character as well. She could compete and keep up with the masculine demands of exercise.

Exercise wear also underwent a metamorphosis. Jazzergetics was developed simultaneously with Jazzercise, and both went through the same fashions for much of the 80s. Dance exercise wear was Jackie’s predominant choice of clothing during the early years. In fact, after a second degree in medicine and the birth of two children she returned to video presentation, in much the same style of leotards and tights as her earlier presentations. She did not invest in the excesses of Jazzercise and Jazz Aerobics, but neither did she acquire the athletic clothes the males wore.¹¹⁴ See figure VIII There appeared to be a contradiction in philosophy and body culture. Women could not get away with any excess fat or

¹¹³ ChChLMWOFA, Jazzergetics Videos, Tapes 1-46, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
¹¹⁴ ChChLMWOFA, Jazzergetics Videos, Tapes 1-46, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
bumps and bulges, (as stated in the teaching manuals) because of the nature of the leotard. Its tight, 'all over' fit revealed the entire bodily form for public scrutiny, whereas the male shorts and loose singlet could hide any excesses, especially as males tend to carry weight around the sacrum, lower lumbar area, and the loose singlet could hide it all. During the 1990s, however, there appeared to be less pressure for females to wear the G-string leotard or the G-string two piece coordinate. The clothing became more asexual. Men wore bike pants and so did the women as they abandoned the unnecessary external G-string. On their torso they wore sports bra tops much like the male singlet. 115 Although the female instructors appeared to reveal more and more of their bodies they were now prepared to narrow the gap between the athletic clothing of the men, and work towards an asexual body culture. See figure IX

Jazzergetics and Jazz Aerobics not only revealed a contrast in male and female bodily adornments, the first Jazzergetics videos reveal an extreme difference in teaching style. The men were particularly bland and militarised in their delivery, like a sporting discipline. Conversely, Jackie offered more than plain directional instruction and cues. Her style was filled with enthusiasm, motivation and inspiration. Her vocalisation included motivation to action and information to encourage, where the men only gave the necessary next move, and the odd 'Hut' 'Hup' or 'Push' that was counted out like callisthenics. With the arrival of Brett Fairweather to the Jazzergetics programme this changed. Brett and his successors were constantly motivating and offering directional, safety, and teaching cues. They also offered a more melodic vocal instruction. The

115 Mike and Diana who feature on the Jazzergetics videos in the 90s are an excellent example of the developing asexuality of aerobic wear. Diana and Mike are both dressed identically in a cropped athletic singlet and running shorts. ChChLMWOFA, Jazzercise Video, Tape, 42, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
screeching and squawking of the early and mid 80s was replaced by a well modulated, lower pitched voice. Female instructors especially showed a dramatic change in pitch by the 1990s. Because of their naturally high pitched voices they had to lower their tone and pitch, in order to be understood by a room which was no longer filled with only females. Like a radio announcer, this style of vocalisation was pleasant to listen to from the introductory moments of the class through to the climax of the class. This was how the hype of the Les Mills aerobic class was built. Language like “feel the energy”, “crank it out”, and “this routine is dynamite” vocalised in pleasant tones was an essential element in creating that hype.116

The music for ‘Getics was carefully selected for the nature of the programme and the clientele it was serving. The music had a more harsh, ‘gruntary’, ‘hard rock’ sound than any of the other programmes which reflected a masculinisation of aerobics as a physical activity. The warm up had to be fast paced and hyped, the cardios† inspiring and entertaining, and the warm down a mellow or popular ballad to suit the new male clientele. The theme songs from movies and music on the popular charts were used each quarter for new musical material. Movies like Rocky, St Elmos Fire and Top Gun featured amongst the rock sounds of Jimmy Barnes and the sexually suggestive titles like ‘Sex Crime’, “I Want Your Sex’ and ‘Born to Be Wild’ were selected.117

‘Getics steadily became more challenging from 1981-1992. Over this period the bpms of the music were gradually increased, so that by 1995, a

116 ChChLMWOFA, Jazzgergetics Videos, Tapes 1-46, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
† See Glossary of Terms.
warm up could have 140 bpm's, a pace that would have seemed impossible in 1983, (around 100-110).\textsuperscript{118}

Movement was one of the more curious aspects of Jazzergetics. Neither dance based, nor based on isolation of body parts, it nevertheless became an essential part of the Les Mills service. Rather than a choreographed routine, the Jazzergetics class appeared to be a series of fitness exercises, fitted into the dramatic flow of a track of music. The classes were filled with repetitions of stride jumps, duck walks, lunges, hops, hip pushes, shoulder stands, bicycles and trunk twists. See figure X The sports based class was more serious in terms of exercise, exertion and effort, the military style of presentation was to convey this seriousness. Quite different from the stretching, extension, flexion and invigorating swings of the body which began the Jazzercise class, the 'Getics class was filled with high impact jumping and lacked the fluidity of movement present in the early aerobics class. Perhaps this form of exercise was more closely related to physical culture than Jazzercise ever was. 'Getics developed in to what was also known as 'Superfitness', a strong, simple class based on repetition, strength and hard work. One instructor commented: “Intensity is the name of the game, Jazzergetics is super fit, so if your not there, - get there!”\textsuperscript{119}

The rituals of the aerobics instructor included those of tanning, shaving, and moisturising, an important element of the image based body culture at Les Mills. Part of the duty of the instructor at Les Mills was to promote a healthy lifestyle, one whereby their body was supposed to be a reflection of

\textsuperscript{118} ChChLMWOFA, Jazzergetics Choreography 1982-1992, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
\textsuperscript{119} ChChLMWOFA, Jazzergetics Video, Tape 45, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
Figure X
good health. Most of the Les Mills World of Fitness centres could boast a sun bed or solarium, an in-house fixture that was part of the presentation of a supposedly healthy lifestyle. The instructors at Les Mills would often look tanned in the middle of winter, thanks to this ritual. In an article on Dunedin Les Mills World of Fitness, the managers reported:

Now we’ve got a solarium, squash court, a sauna and showers what more could you want...you can become fit, slim, healthy and brown all under one roof.\textsuperscript{120}

The earliest male instructors did not remove any bodily hair, Phillip Mills was quite happy to run around in shorts with hairy legs chest and armpits, whereas the females were quite obviously clean shaven. By the late 80s and early 90s however, the men were obviously exfoliating. This gave the image of better muscle definition and followed the trend towards a more sporting and professional image in the aerobics industry. Male instructors always retained a little masculinity amidst the beauty rituals of the female instructors, for example they did not shave under their arms. As consumer culture told millions of women to rehydrate their skin, and save it from damage, the male instructor appeared to invest in this as well. Many of these rituals can be attributed to the fact that the cosmetic industry and the fitness/body image industry are closely related. It was, however, common knowledge that if an instructor moisturised their entire body thoroughly before a class they would sweat quickly and more profusely to give a bodily shine during class, a visual image that the instructor was working extremely hard.\textsuperscript{121} See figure XI

\textsuperscript{120} DMS, Otago Daily Times, newspaper clipping ‘What is it like to Tan in Dunedin’, (no date given).
\textsuperscript{121} Goad, D., and Taylor, S., Interviews with Senior Instructors, Dunedin, for the period 1980-1992. The image of sweat also became more obvious on the Jazzercise Teaching videos of the period. Sweat was left on the body; the lighting revealed its shine.
Figure XI
In sum, Jazzergetics aided the evolution of a particular female form. Jazzergetics was the first non dance based aerobics programme: the first to move away from feminine movement and introduce strength, discipline, competition and hard work into a class. These masculine values inevitably appealed to males and hence male participation in aerobics increased. More importantly, rather than males accepting the female style of exercise, aerobics changed to meet the dominant male values. Female body culture changed in order to compete for a place in the ‘lime light’. The female instructors of the late 80s and early 90s at Les Mills stand as testimony to this. Along with the men the women were doing full push ups and triceps dips, working up to 8 or 9 cardio tracks in a class and ‘cracking a sweat during’ the second warm up track. Maria, one of the more solid ‘Getics instructors, was known to say “come on ladies, you can do this”, in comparison with Jackie Mills in the early 80s instructing the ladies to drop to their knees in order to complete the press track. The body composition of the female Jazzergetics instructor moved away from the traditional ectomorph towards the larger endo-mesomorph. Whilst Les Mills still attracted instructors to ‘Getics who fitted the traditional mould, it appeared to be more acceptable for larger body types to work in this programme. Maria, Ruth Pirihi and Kim Longrahana were amongst these women, they were solid, by no means flabby and carried with them a bold stage presence. See figure 22 The gap in morphology between males and females had narrowed.

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123 ChChLMWOFA, Jazzergetics, Video, Tape 7, and Tape 45, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
124 ChChLMWOFA, Jazzergetics Videos, Tapes, 44, 45, 47. Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
Step New Body, the aerobics phenomenon of the early 90s was another example of an aerobics programme which helped to create a new morphology, a new ideal body. For many years the aerobic industry had been experimenting with ideas to vary the basic aerobics class and enhance exercise benefits through special resistance apparatus. Historically, resistance training was a male activity whereby males trained with weights to build bulk, and increase their strength. In the wake of Jane Fonda and Victoria Principal, women have been able to see the appeal of tone and shape. These women set a new physical precedent; the fit and trim, muscular female body. Over the course of the 1980s muscles were portrayed as sexy and strength exercises replaced stretching exercises. Les Mills New Zealand found, however, that weight training lacked the stimulation of an aerobic class, so they introduced light hand weights, steps and rubber bands into a class work-out situation. The step aerobic phase promoted fat burning and the resistance training promoted muscle tone. This form of exercise gave an all over body work-out without the impact that is inherent in Jazzergetics and jogging. By specifically isolating the muscles this work-out has the potential to change a participant’s body shape; to sculpt and tone. The Step New Body class enabled more intensity to be added by using larger hand weights or introducing propulsion work into the step tracks. By this formula, the beginner could exercise next to the super fit.

The programme has turned out to be more than a fad because of the results people have gained; and the best motivator to exercise is results.

People like New Body because it works, and you can feel it working without being really uncomfortable. Our aerobic public are far more discerning than ever before demanding quality, variation and innovation. This means that the programme must stay dynamic and be constantly looking to the future. 127

Deidre-Lee and Gary Hart were the pioneer instructors in the Step New Body programme. Deidre-Lee was an extremely petite ecto-mesomorph, her little frame she had extremely well defined muscles of the upper and lower limbs, whilst Gary Hart, an endo-mesomorph, had well defined muscles but a higher level of fat. The body culture of Step New Body was in line with the current trends in the other programmes. Music, clothing and body typing mirrored the Jazz Aerobics and Jazzergetics styles but the movement and language of presentation had a realm of its own. The nature of the step and the other apparatus meant that movements were more technical and precise, and proved a more difficult programme to teach because of the detailed cueing involved. The language of instruction was increasingly scientific and precise, “this is New Body we’re working the muscles - think muscles”.128 They gave all of the working muscles a ‘layman’s’ title, and movements for the hand weight sections were names borrowed from traditional weight training, terminology like ‘lateral raise’, ‘front raise’, ‘triceps extension’ and ‘shoulder press’.129 This is evidence that aerobics had become a sporting discipline; an activity which was controlled by the scientification and

127 Davis, M., ‘Profile: Deidre-Lee, New Body’, New Zealand Fitness, 7. Autumn, 1992, p.18. Deidre-Lee established and developed the Les Mills World of Fitness Step New Body concept. She was Head choreographer, and senior teacher during the early 90s at the Wellington centre.
129 DCAV, New Body and Step New Body Videos, Tape 1 - 0, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland.
professionalisation of its very essence. The instructor and gym goer now had to work each muscle of the body in isolation, to constantly seek results and improve body shape. Deidre-Lee is an illustration of this. In developing the Les Mills Step New Body programme, she has, according to the Les Mills mouthpiece, *New Zealand Fitness*; significantly changed her own shape and discovered the control and power she can have with such a work-out'.

The high impact† and cross training‡‡ exercise classes of Les Mills, followed closely international trends and these trends served as a stimulus to alter the dynamic body culture of instructors. The change in styles of instruction, the change in musculature, and the challenge to the male terrain of muscular strength was less of a conscious decision, than an unconscious response to the post-modern, consumer culture that they work within.

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† See Glossary of Terms.
‡‡ See Glossary of Terms.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Les Mills and his family have made a ‘Success Out of Sweat’. They have developed their lucrative gym business into a multi-million dollar enterprise. A large part of this success has been their ability to present exercise to music programmes to the paying public in most commercial form. The nature of aerobics, instruction, and body culture at Les Mills has changed significantly over the 12 years from 1980-1992, as dance exercise turned into a professional sport. Aerobics was no longer a dance based exercise to music programme, it became a lifestyle. The aerobics instructors at Les Mills were symbols of this lifestyle. They evoked visual images of the ideal body, commercial fashion, and personal success and became salespeople of the Les Mills product.

Jazzercise, Jazz Aerobics, Jazzergetics, and Step New Body were the earliest programmes at Les Mills. Each class targeted a specific part of the exercising population, and each supported a commercial trend. Jazzercise was based on the American model of the aerobic dance craze which swept the United States in the 1970s, and was one of the first choreographed aerobic dance programmes in New Zealand. Jazzercise and Jazz Aerobics differed from the modern day aerobics phenomenon because they emphasised the fun, relaxed, and social atmosphere of the class situation. Many of the participants and instructors were women, and they were all interested not only in improving their fitness, but in meeting people and having fun. By the mid 1980s aerobics had developed such that there were scientific reasons behind every swing and leap. Every routine that was
performed in class was in a specific physiological order and the shoes which everyone wore were specifically designed to serve the purpose of impact aerobics. The class concentrated on spot exercises that worked isolated areas of the body, like the abdominals, the hips, thighs and buttock regions. While these isolation exercises still remained a part of the classes up until 1992, the emphasis changed in the mid 80s to a more cardio-vascular work-out, where the cardio-vascular system was exercised to enhance fat burning, and the isolated muscles or muscle groups were exercised for toning effects. The body was like a machine. Aerobics became a physical discipline, a site of social control, whereby ‘big business’ could mould and shape popular leisure activities in order to satisfy their own profit motive.

Moreover, classes began to embrace technology, to include steps, hand weights and rubber bands, as part of the aerobic exercise experience. Step New Body, was the first of the cross training classes to be imported from the United States. Cross training became fashionable in response to the injuries which occurred in high impact aerobics classes because of the constant jarring of the lower limbs. The programme satisfied all of the scientific controls that the discipline had established, and like Jazz Aerobics it was part of a commercial product diversification to avoid the perils of a short product life cycle and wavering profit margins.

Jazzergetics was the Les Mills sport-based, fitness class, with anaerobic and aerobic exercises that challenged the ‘super-fit’. ‘Getics had developed into a sport, whereby the instructor was no longer there to relax the aerobiciser, rather they were a coach to push them harder, to come closer to obtaining the commercial image of a healthy and beautiful body. Much of the class became based on motivation and hype in order to present an excellent
work-out. In effect the instructor became a salesperson for their programme. Aerobics no longer emphasised fun it was serious: hard work, discipline, results and professionalism became the predominant goal amongst the instructors. Pirkko Markula commented on the American phenomenon and it has proved no different in New Zealand:

along the way ...original values of fun and support compromised with professionalisation and attachment to sport.\textsuperscript{131}

These professional themes were also played out in the body culture of the aerobics instructors at Les Mills. The instructors were like windows to change at Les Mills. They reflected the fluctuating commercial, industrial and fashion trends that management wanted to portray in their aerobics product. One of the most important trends was the body as an exciting and alluring project to be worked upon. The Les Mills instructor was in effect, a representation of the ideal. Instructors were under constant pressure, through the company’s systems of quality controls, workshops and demands for high class numbers, to be the closest they could to the ideal, to provide evidence that they had worked work on their body as a project. In effect the instructor was a representation of the ideal.

The bodies of early instructors reflected the slim ectomorph ideal of twenty years ago, but as the female ideal changed and exercise science developed, the Les Mills female body changed to a more muscular, hard bodied and strong ideal. Aerobics, for instance, masculinised as the company sought to attract males to their Jazzergetics classes. Phillip Mills began to instruct Jazzergetics, to portray masculine values of strength,

discipline, hard work and competition. These values were considered crucial to attract males to aerobic dance. Men did not accept the feminine mode of aerobic dance, rather programming changed to meet the dominant male values. Moreover, the attraction of more males to the class meant that the female instructors had to raise their physical standards to meet the demands of teaching males and teaching alongside males. As a result female bodies, especially in the Jazzgergetics programme, became bigger, stronger, and more muscular. No longer were all the instructors petite, nor did they have to drop to their knees to do push ups. They could instruct just as the men did. One of the company’s senior instructors, Jackie Mills who has taught every programme from Jazzercise to the latest cross training class, Nike TBC, (Total Body Conditioning, a mixture of Step, Pump, and Slide) is a good illustration of this. See figure XIII Deidre-Lee, the pioneer of Step New Body at Les Mills, has also seen her body change. By working at Les Mills World of Fitness and developing the New Body programme she has significantly changed her own shape. Tracy Minnoch, another senior instructor and choreographer still with Les Mills, has a body which lies testimony to the training which an instructor had to do outside of the gym, and to the fact that instructing is much more than telling people how to exercise to music, it is a lifestyle. See figure XIV In the words of S. Tucker in an article in Shape, on the ‘ideal body’,

As a comely by-product of the fitness phenomenon, women have begun literally to reshape themselves...it is a body that speaks assurance in itself and in the woman who through willpower and muscle power, has created it.\textsuperscript{135}

The instructor’s body was thus a symbol of individual accomplishment, a mark of personal success. This sense of accomplishment and success appears to be what drove the Les Mills instructor to uphold the company’s business aims. The 1995 advertising campaign for Les Mills has the slogan, “Become Some Body”, which captures entirely the instructors’ motivation. By submitting their bodies as a project, by allowing them to operate as a machine, their sense of worth was increased, they could ‘[Be] Some Body’ important, someone who was admired.

An essential part of the presentation of the ideal body were the visual images, the clothing and adornment that the Les Mills instructors wore. The pioneer female instructors at Les Mills moved from the traditional dance apparel to the bright colours, shiny lycra, ribbons and leg warmers which characterised aerobics during the 1980s and emerged in the 1990s with a more revealing but asexual style of attire. The long lycra tights were replaced by the petite lycra hot pants, and the full bottomed leotard, was cut into a G-string or a bra top which flattened the bust. The adornments and accessories of the early 80s too, were abandoned, as clean, tidy, athletic body lines were sought after. This was not so far removed from Mrs Bagot Stack’s uniform for the ‘Fizzy Jerks’ exercise class at the YWCA. The black satin knickers and sleeveless white blouses were quite daring for the interwar period, but Mrs Bagot Stack maintained that the

gleaming fabric had a stimulating effect on the mind. Indeed, it appears that the shiny lycra and the tanned flesh that the aerobics instructor ‘showed off’ each time they graced the stage, stimulated the members minds and reinforced the desire to ‘Become Some Body’.

The Les Mills selection of music was important in stimulating the class to work hard and the instructor to deliver a good work-out. Les Mills choreographers were employed to carefully select the most inspiring, exciting and motivational music for all of their programmes. The music used by Les Mills has consistently been the popular music of the day or music found in the night clubs and discos. If the popular music lacked pace or a strong beat, they re-mixed the music to suit the movements of the programme. The choreographers used the dramatic climax of a chorus, or the thematic aspects of lyrics and sound to motivate the class to work. The theme song from the Rocky Horror Picture Show for instance, included moves like, a jump to the left, a step to the right and a pelvic thrust, (these movements being a part of the lyrics). Indeed, the music added to the excitement and allure of working on the body like a project.

Furthermore, the 1980s aerobics instructor, well known for their vocalisation and noises like: ‘Hup’, ‘Hut’, ‘two more’, ‘...and bend and stretch..’, progressed to a more intimate, conversational communication. This was because the exercises became familiar, styles of presentation matured, and talking to the class about safety became imperative. For much of the warm up and cool down, comments were full of praise, encouragement technique tips and inspiration. By the 1990s the efforts to communicate with a large room packed with sweaty bodies, and a blasting

stereo became easier. The introduction of the microphone brought an even greater intimacy to the class, since every word and comment could easily be heard, and class feedback could easily be elicited. Over time the Les Mills style of instruction became more of a performance, the microphones, the clothing sponsorship, the increased hype and polished performance amounted to nothing less than a spectacle. Just as Jill Matthews argues about The Women's League for Health and Beauty, success for the Les Mills instructor was derived from controlled exhibitionism of both the individual and the class. Les Mills instructors thrived on being seen and 'showing off'. This is especially evident in the Teaching videos. By the 1990s, the basic studio background, one instructor and a video camera had disappeared. It was replaced by a Les Mills studio background, and painted signage of the 'World of Fitness' logo. The lighting, music and camera angles all became more professional and the new workshop class was presented more often than not by a team of instructors in coordinated outfits sponsored by a particular clothing or fitness based company.

The changes in programming and instructor body culture at Les Mills follow closely the changes within the commercial fitness industry. The company consequently invested resources into research and development and frequently sent representatives overseas to find new ideas for their chain of gyms in New Zealand. In 1992, the Hillary Commission sponsored a study on the impact of sports, fitness and leisure activities in New Zealand. Fitness and leisure was a 4.5 million dollar a day business. New Zealanders spent on average $725 dollars on physical leisure goods

per year.\textsuperscript{138} Fashion and exercise trends were as much a part of the commercial fitness industry at large as it was within Les Mills World of Fitness, because the body and its adornments were a means of visual communication. Both male and female instructors communicated a lifestyle that was in their opinion, the key to self worth and personal success. The bodies of instructors, their clothing and their exercise programmes were a reflection of post-modern hyper-consumption but also a reflection of their own belief in the God of Fitness.

# APPENDICES

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

(All terms in this glossary relate only to this dissertation and are not the current technical descriptions in exercise science)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballistic, ballistic movements</td>
<td>The explosive, vital and energetic movements of the body which require constant exertion of energy to complete, e.g.: high leg kicks, stride jumps, and energised flick kicks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bpms</td>
<td>Beats Per Minute of music. Bpms were found in most of the Les Mills aerobics choreography. Bpms were used by instructors to plan their class so that a dramatic climax in music coincided with the hardest, most exertive part of the class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardio, Cardio-vascular routine,</td>
<td>A routine in an aerobics class whereby the heart muscle and the vascular system are exercised through excess physical exertion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hard cardio, medium cardio.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carotid pulse</td>
<td>Is located with the index and middle fingers, from the Adam’s apple, two inches across and up towards the angle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of the jaw. It is a measure of the heart rate response to exercise, in particular the time taken for the heart rate to return to normal after exercise. With this information one can assess their cardio-vascular fitness.

**Contra Indicated exercises**

exercises which have the potential to be harmful over time.

**Ectomorph, Ecto-mesomorph**

see Glossary of Body Types

**Endomorph, Endo-mesomorph**

see Glossary of Body Types

**Foot strike pattern**

this is the pattern of ways the foot hits the ground on impact. One specific exercise for the leg produces one specific impact. The staff at Les Mills World of Fitness aimed to vary the number of ways the foot hits the ground in one class. Repetitious foot strike patterns were considered dangerous as the muscles could be prone to injury through overuse.

**Gluteal exercises**

Physical activity to work the buttocks.

**IDEA**

International Dance Exercise Association.

**Isolation Exercises**

physical activity which targets only one muscle or group of muscles at a time, eg: Abdominal crunches, gluteal extension, and triceps dips.

**Kinesiology**

The science of human movement and motion.
| **Long levers** | The limbs (arms and legs) of the body act as levers in everyday activity, they flex and extend the arms and legs with the help of muscles. Long levers are thus a genetic endowment on a tall person. |
| **Low impact exercise** | This is physical activity which involves no jumping or ballistic movement. There is thus little or no stress placed on the joints through impact with the ground. |
| **Lumbar exercises** | Physical activity aimed at working the lower back region. |
| **Pre-floor or post-floor routine** | These were exercise activities to music which were completed standing up, where many muscles and groups of muscles are recruited, e.g.: a warm-up, warm-down, standing stretch or cardio-vascular routine are considered to be pre or post-floor routines. |
| **Radial Pulse** | Is located with the palm of the right hand to the ceiling, placing the four fingers of the left hand on the inside of the right arm, next to the palm. To find the pulse, or heart rate response to exercise, slight pressure is added to the finger-tips to feel the throb of blood pressure around the body. This is a measure of cardio-vascular fitness. |
Short levers

the opposite to long levers, short levers are the short length limbs of the body that short people are genetically endowed with.

Working Heart Rate

is the point at which the heart’s pulse is sufficiently high to place additional stress on the heart muscle. When ones heart rate is at its ‘working’ rate one can benefit from the effects of exercise reflected in their cardiovascular fitness.
GLOSSARY OF BODY TYPES

MESOMORPH  ENDOMORPH  ECTOMORPH
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Jazzercise Videos, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland, 1981-1992


Step New Body Videos, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland, from the first undated Tape to 1992. (from The Dalton Collection of Aerobic Videos, DCAV)

Choreography Notes

(from Christchurch Les Mills World of Fitness Archives, 202-205 Cashel Street Christchurch, ChChLMWOFA)


Jazz Aerobics Choreography, Jazzercise Fitness Centres Ltd, Auckland, from the first undated tape to 1992.


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Les Mills Documents

The publication, *Les Mills Fitness*, *Fitness*, and later *New Zealand Fitness*, was a magazine designed for popular readership, however, it is run by Les Mills as a mouthpiece and advertisement for Les Mills World of Fitness and has been used in this study as a primary source.


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Hillary Commission For Recreation and Sport, *Life in New Zealand Survey*

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**The Darling Manuscripts (DMS)**

The Darling Manuscripts contain a vast number of undated documents from the Jazzercise, Jazz Aerobics and Jazzergetics era, (1980-1992). Memos, Lists of Safe and contraindicated exercises, Physiological tables and charts, additional choreographic notes, Pulse Charts, Letters from National Management, Teacher notices, Lists of Trainee expectations, Workshop Agendas, Documents on Instructor Motivation, teaching technique, and Language, etc.

**UNPUBLISHED THESSES**

SECONDARY SOURCES

Books

Journal Articles


