

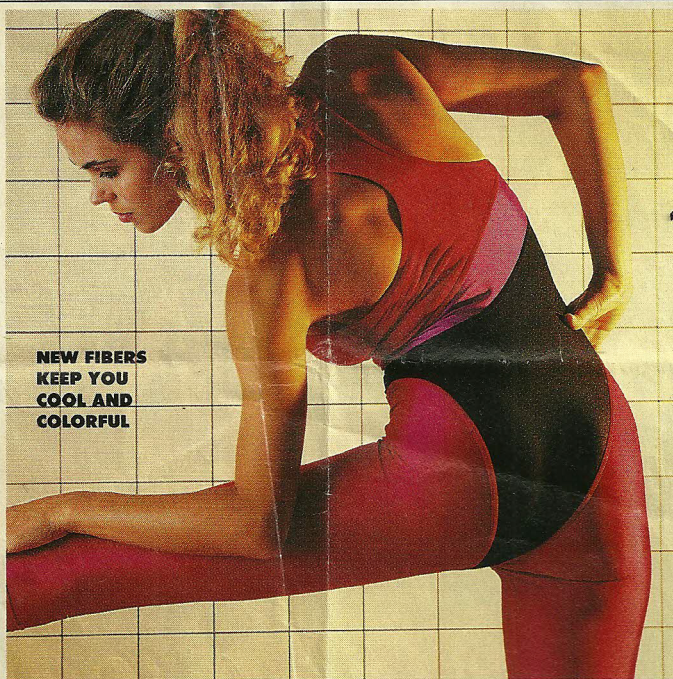
What's In

NO-SWEAT WEAR FOR WORKING OUT

For many weekend jocks, exercise still means jumping into shorts and an old sweatshirt and accepting a drenching as assurance that the body is being worked to the max. But with-it fitness fanatics are discovering "performance fibers" that give them all the benefits of exertion without the discomfort.

The new fibers draw perspiration away from the skin, a process called wicking. The fibers disperse the moisture to the fabric's surface, where it evaporates. Some of the fibers "breathe," allowing more air to pass through.

In 1987, Du Pont launched CoolMax, a wicking polyester fabric. It feels as soft as cotton but is said to absorb 14 times less moisture than cotton, so it won't feel wet and clammy next to the skin. Cool-



NEW FIBERS
KEEP YOU
COOL AND
COLORFUL

Max (whose slogan is "Keeps you cool and dry when the heat is on") was first available in cycling gear, but it is also showing up in men's and women's tennis wear, bodysuits for aerobic workouts, running shorts, socks, and sports bras.

The new fibers are often no

more expensive than conventional materials. Speedo, of Portland, Ore., makes tight-fitting CoolMax tops for women who dance or work out. Offered in hot phosphorescent hues, they cost \$26.95. Hind Performance in San Luis Obispo, Calif., makes a similar lightweight, tight-fitting body

top without CoolMax—but for the same price.

Those who work out in cool or rainy conditions also have plenty of high-tech clothes to choose from. Hind Performance sells a foul-weather jacket for cycling or cross-country skiing under the name Dryline for \$200. The jacket contains, among other fabrics, Hydrofil, a quick-drying absorbent nylon developed in 1987 by Allied Signal.

BE SEEN. Performance gear for runners is a veritable multifiber feast. Lycra spandex, a sleek, durable polyurethane-based fiber, was developed in the late 1950s but not accepted among athletes until a few years ago. Now, it's about the most popular material among runners and other jocks.

Newer materials include Tactel, a nylon-like fiber from London-based ICI that feels like cotton but is wind- and water-resistant, and Scotch-lite, a reflective material made by 3M. Asics sells a light running suit made of Scotchlite and Tactel for \$290. It may be just the inspiration you need to retire that old sweatshirt. *Michele Galen*

Autos

A RAGTOP TIME MACHINE

The folks who created the new Mazda MX-5 Miata know cars are supposed to be fun. Not just "fun to drive"—auto buzzwords implying that to enjoy a car you must step on the gas, hard—but fun to ride in, lounge against, and look at.

Especially to look at. The low-slung, curvy exterior is unabashedly retro, harking back to the classic British sports cars of the 1950s and '60s. Inside, notice the elliptical door handles and locks: This car's designers know the value of a unified styling theme. You find yourself wondering: Can this \$13,800 (base price) two-seater deliver as much as its looks promise?

Yes. If you can stop soak-



ing up the admiring glances the car draws and start paying attention to the way it drives, the Miata's graces will impress you. Responsive to both wheel and pedal, it fairly prances down the road. Its solid-body construction eliminates the rattles so common

to other convertibles. The nifty "short-throw" stick shift means you need only a flick of the wrist to hop from third to fourth gear.

If the Miata has a fault, it's that it's not that fast. It goes from zero to 60 mph in 9.5 seconds—a full second slower

than a big ol' Lincoln Mark VII and three seconds slower than a Mustang GT. But who cares? If you're buying for acceleration, go for the Taurus SHO, Mazda RX-7, or, since four-wheel drive soon will be *de rigueur* for performance cars, Chrysler's new Eagle Talon. But if you're buying a car for your heart, the Miata has few rivals.

HARD TO GET. Mazda plans to sell a scant 20,000 Miatas in the U.S. this year and 40,000 in 1990. With demand already high, Miata merchandising has become the Cabbage Patch craze of cars. The standard "availability premium" is about \$2,000—some dealers demand \$3,000. Even then, the car may take up to four months to arrive.

The solution? Wait. Go back on a cold, slushy day in early February and place an order for this convertible. The great thing about classic styling, after all, is that it doesn't go out of style. *Jim Tress*

Worth Noting

■ **CAPITOL IDEA.** To mark Congress' 200th birthday, the U.S. Mint has issued a \$5 gold piece, a silver dollar, and a copper half-dollar. A percentage of revenues goes

toward refurbishing the Capitol. To order: 800 822-6500.

■ **POLITICAL PROFILES.** *The Almanac of American Politics 1990*, published by the *National Journal* at \$56.95, gives congressional bios and voting records, plus a witty history of each state.