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Physical Culture

GEAR TEST WITH Eric Franz, ex-bodybuilder, and family

Exercising With a Full Deck

YOGA PRETZELS \$14.99, www.barefoot-books.com. The poses on these jumbo cards were very easy to follow, thanks to clear descriptions and up to five drawings to demonstrate each move, the testers said. Aviva Rose, who had never tried yoga before, said this "colorful" deck was her favorite because the directions had pictures to make them crystal clear.

IN December, hectic schedules, travel plans and holiday party hangovers are notorious for edging workouts right off the agenda. But for some, new motivation can be found within portable decks of fitness cards, which can lead an exerciser through a series of yoga poses, strength moves or cardiovascular activities. Other cards are geared to travelers, children, golfers, pregnant women or anyone seeking a kick in the workout pants.

"They are definitely growing in popularity, and I'd say they're growing in availability, too," said Fabio Comana, an exercise physiologist for the American Council on Exercise. "There is demand for them because they give people structured ideas."

To see if the decks are as convenient as they sound, Eric Franz, 38, a Manhattan lawyer and former bodybuilder, tested five sets with his wife, Aviva, and his daughter, Aviva Rose, 8.

LAUREL NAVERSEN GERAGHTY

— The New York Times, December 21, 2006

Yoga Pretzels • \$14.99 • 50 full color cards, color-coded in 9 categories • Includes illustrated leaflet
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