



style health+ beauty

embrace the “f” word

Nikki Parkinson discovers shorter days and colder mornings are no excuse for dropping an exercise routine during winter.

IT'S DARK – very dark at 5.45am. I gingerly pull one arm out from under my doona. Yep, it's cold too, very cold.

But my interview with exercise scientist Martha Lourey-Bird is still ringing in my ears, so I haul myself out of my cocoon and strap on my sneakers.

If Martha can do it, so can I.

The busy mother-of-two lectures in public health and community medicine at the University of New South Wales and is a scientific adviser to Weight Watchers. Martha was one of Sydney's first female personal trainers, helping train fashion designers Trent Nathan, Lisa Ho and Charlie Brown.

She's taught hundreds of personal trainers and aerobic teachers in the UK and thousands here in Australia.

Her newly-released book *Exercise and the F word ... Fun!*, is aimed at keeping mere mortals motivated in the exercise department.

“The hardest thing for people who don't exercise is to take the first step – and then it's a matter of building in a strategy so exercise

is fun and easy to maintain,” Martha says.

“The secret to maintaining that is to have a program that interests you mentally as well as physically,” she says.

“I love exercising outdoors, so it's mainly doing exercises in the park with the kids, running with the pram, walking as much as possible and taking my very fit dog for a decent run.

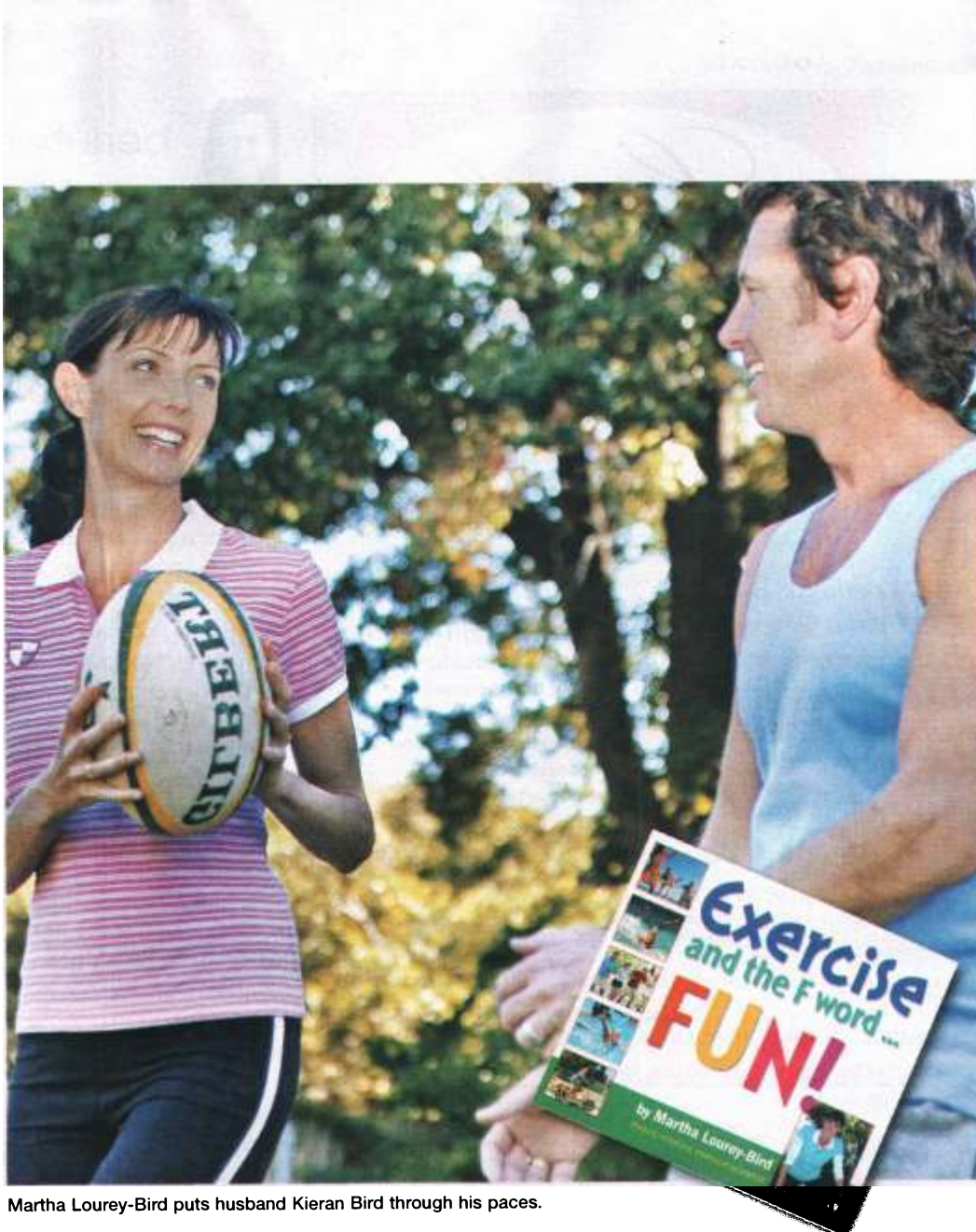
“Winter should not be an excuse to not exercise at all. It's an opportunity to re-think some of the exercises you're doing.”

Martha suggests swapping a beach-based activity for something indoors.

“Maybe try some indoor activities or maybe go to a few classes that you wouldn't have tried in the summer.

“It doesn't have to be at a gym. It could be at a community centre. See if there are any local walking groups you can do with people or play a sport over the winter months like indoor netball or indoor soccer.

“If you change your mindset, I think you can look at those three months of winter and do it.



Martha Lourey-Bird puts husband Kieran Bird through his paces.

Martha says the biggest barrier to someone taking up regular exercise could often be traced back to a negative experience with exercise.

"Quite often it might have been in school where they weren't very talented or were bullied because of that or they went to a gym and had a horrendously embarrassing experience. Or they might have exercised with a personal trainer who was a lot fitter than them and pushed them too hard.

"I thought I'm going to write this book to try and overcome that, to rid people of their

negative feelings about exercise.

"The hardest part is taking that first step. Once you do, you'll become hooked.

"As long as that first step is an enjoyable one, and that could be walking, listening to an Ipod, somehow adding a fun factor into it means you'll more likely do it, stick to it and get results.

"Once you get results you're more likely to keep going."

Exercise and the F word ... Fun!
Insight Publications, RRP \$29.95