

Workouts in the company

Companies see a benefit. Those offering wellness perks have fewer absences and disability claims.

Many companies say company-sponsored sports and fitness programs improve the workplace atmosphere. "It absolutely helps with stress. And the respect we have developed fencing each other carries right into our work", says Adam Marks (29). He works as quality-assurance engineer at Open Ratings, Cambridge, Mass., that offers an unusual perk: subsidized membership at the Boston Fencing Club.

Sweating together is a valuable equalizer. Says Tony Myers, personal trainer for McKee Foods in Collegedale: "It allows workers to see each other without jackets, ties and uniforms." But companies see a benefit: fewer absences, higher productivity and lower health insurance costs. The number bandied about is a 3-to-1 return on investment. A modest health-promotion program costs about \$500 per employee/year.

Extra work hours could explain some of that return, says Barry Miller, a workplace psychologist and professor at Pace University in New York.

Excerpt from U.S. News & World Report

workout (Konditions-)Training; sonst auch: Erprobung, Versuch – **benefit** [ˈbenɪfɪt] Nutzen, Gewinn – **perk** Vergünstigung, persönliches Vorrecht – **disability claims** Meldungen wegen Arbeitsunfähigkeit – **sponsored** gefördert, unterstützt – **to improve** verbessern – **to develop** [diˈveləp] entwickeln – **fencing** Fechten – **quality-assurance** Qualitätssicherung – **subsidized** [ˈsʌbsɪdaɪzd] subventioniert

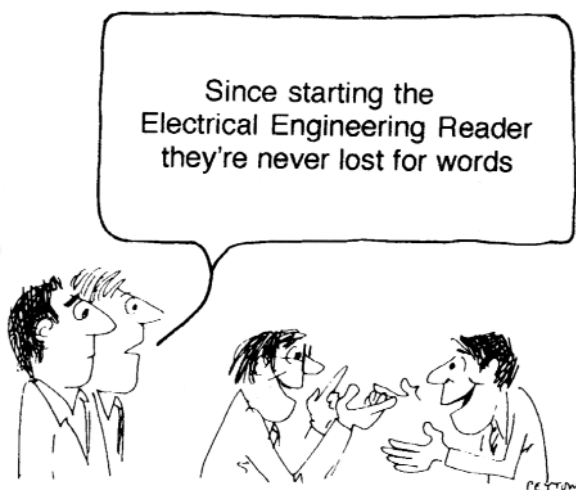
to sweat [swet] schwitzen – **valuable** [ˈvæljuəbl] wertvoll – **equalizer** [ˈiːkwəlaɪzə] Gleichmacher – **health insurance costs** Kranken-Versicherungskosten – **bandied about** wie man sich so erzählt – **modest** [ˈmɒdɪst] bescheiden – **psychologist** [saɪˈkɒlədɪst] Psychologe

The mathematician

If you are at a party and tell people you are a mathematician, it is the worst turnoff you can imagine.

British professor John Berry, telling that math teachers are viewed as friendly nerds.

mathematician [ˌmæθəməˈtɪʃən] Mathematiker – **turnoff** etwa: Ablehnung, Abweisung; sonst auch: Ausstand, Streik – **to imagine** sich vorstellen – **viewed as** betrachtet als – **nerd** (Slang) etwa: Langweiler



Drawing by courtesy of New Scientist, London

Hand-held computers – novel features

Not all that long ago, hand-held computers were an exotic product used by the digerati rather than by the rest of us. Their relatively high prices and limited utility made these personal digital assistants tech status symbols. But, suddenly, the tiny devices are popping out of purses in the grossery line and peeking from doctors' coat pockets, executive briefcases, and student backpacks. Even self-described lutties are finding that they may want these things.

That's the idea, manufacturers say. "I'm going to get you eventually", warns Ed Colligan, cofounder and senior vice president at Handspring, which makes the Visor. "You don't need one today; a calendar and address book don't justify it for you. But every day there are new applications."

Analysts think he's right. Sales of hand-held computers in the United States are projected to rise 300 percent to 28 million in the next four years, according to the Gartner Group.

What's fueling the spread of these devices is the cornucopia of software and accessories available that allow them to be tailored to various job functions and lifestyles. Professionals, often weary of adopting new technology, are leading the charge.

About 15 percent of physicians in the United States, roughly 90,000, use PDAs to store phone numbers, look up drug information, and perform other reference tasks.

By Janet Rae-Dupree; Excerpt from U.S. News & World Report