

WHAT
WERE THEY
THINKING?

By Toni Krasicki

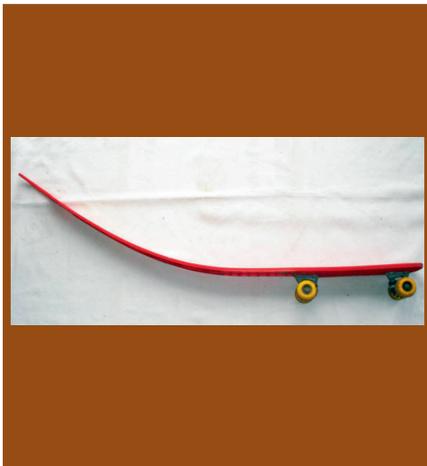
Have you ever wondered what happened to some of the **crazy fitness fads of the past**? Take for instance the longrider skateboard; it's now listed as 'vintage' and is a collector's item.

How about all those crazy gadgets that promised six-packs and bulging biceps? Collecting dust in a dark cupboard no doubt. These are just some of the fitness fads that never quite made it to the big time or had the staying power when their light started to fade.

There are some that are still big-sellers to a certain market, but in terms of popularity with the Australian market and providing what they promise, well that's another story. To help you take that trip down memory lane, we've found a few for you.

Longrider Skateboard

Circa 1980s, these wacky skateboards are now more likely found on vintage and retro collector websites than on the streets. Made in the USA, the 53-inch long and 4-inch wide flexible, unbreakable plastic platform was basically a standard skateboard with an extended piece that had a handgrip at the end. Why the extended piece with no wheels? This was the clincher that made it easier for young kids to learn to ride, allowed easy manoeuvrability, which meant radical jumps, spins and turns could be performed. PS. Our own editor, Analee, was actually in the Australian TV commercial for this one!



Kangoo Jumps

The first and only time I've seen Kangoo Jumps in use was in the 90s when a guy in a yellow and green unitard bounded down Sydney's Oxford Street through peak hour traffic. Although still around today, you're more likely to see someone wearing a yellow and green unitard than a pair of Kangoo Jumps. If you look hard enough you may be able to locate a small band of diehards practicing Kangoo Jump classes to music, but these types of classes never made it into the mainstream health clubs.

Image credit: www.kangoo-jumps.com



The Belt Vibrator

Sold in the 1960s and 1970s, belt exercisers such as the Walton Belt Vibrator, have actually been around since the 1850s. Marketed for its ability to improve muscle tone, remove toxins and subsequently spot reduce fat in targeted areas. The thick belt, placed on the butt, thighs or around the midriff was supposed to mimic massage but instead users felt as though their fat was being vibrated away and their muscles toned by being shaken, in just 15 minutes a day. Need I say more why it's no longer around?

Image credit: www.kshs.org



ThighMaster

Popular during the 'inner thigh' toning obsessed 90s; you'd be surprised not to find one of these suckers in any fitness fanatics lounge room. Popularised by Suzanne Somers, the ThighMaster does what it says it does, tones and strengthens thighs, but as we now know, spot reduction is a myth. However, they're still for sale, someone must be buying it, but it's definitely no one I know.

Image credit: www.thechrista.com



Taebo

Remember in the late 1990s when American Billy Blanks and his sensational martial arts exercise class to music exploded on to the fitness scene. Gyms started offering Taebo classes then all of a sudden there were similar new classes popping up all over the country. BODYCOMBAT™ pretty much knocked Billy Blanks off his Australian pedestal and Taebo went back to the DVD market.

Image credit: www.facebook.com/thebillyblanks



The Beverley Hills Diet

The original Beverley Hills Diet hit the bookshops in 1981 and became an instant best seller and the diet bible to the Hollywood stars. There were three copies in my family home that year alone! Judy Mazel's six-week long initial program started with a 10-day fruit cleanse then proceeded to introduce foods back in to the diet in sometimes unlimited amounts but using the rules of 'conscious combining'. This theory suggested that foods eaten in the right combinations meant that digestion became more efficient therefore the body ran better and no longer stored fat. Needless to say it copped a lot of criticism from the medical profession, but I've got to admit, it did work!

