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An unexpected use for a “body shaper”

Sunday, April 13, 2014

And the careless behavior that caused me to need it.

Some years ago in a moment of vanity I bought a “body shaper.” My mother (and Betty White) would have called it a girdle. It was advertised as taking inches off your waist and hips and had several testimonials to go along with it.

No matter how I adjusted that tape measure, the difference for me was less than 1 inch total, a result not noticeable at all, and to me not worth the discomfort. Coming of age in the 60s, the less confining the underwear, the better. So the shaper lay unused in the bottom of a drawer.

On Friday I spent several hours on the computer, not relaxed in my comfortable, back supported position, but in an angry, agitated posture.

I had read a letter in the newspaper of my parents' hometown which in a condescending, vitriolic diatribe put down runners in general and marathoners in particular. He hit every fat shaming, speed shaming stereotype you could imagine and even included a few racist remarks.

The end result was my own letter to the editor so that such an attitude would not go unchallenged.

However, when I finally got up, my back and diaphragm were in a spasm. Ouch! This continued all day and resisted all my efforts to relieve it. I have a history of weird injuries that have nothing to do with running or athletic activity. (Like the time I tripped over a step while checking out the dessert table at a buffet)

I was very disappointed by this turn of events since I was scheduled to run a 5K the next morning. One month past my half marathon, I was curious to see how well this nearly 67 year old body had recovered.

Then I remembered the body shaper. It provided support all the way up to my bra and made me feel much better. So I wore it in the race and my muscles felt just fine. I maintained a comfortable steady pace of 10:15 min/mile and my 31:45 time earned a 1st place age group trophy. That meant I was faster than 1 other 65-69 year old and any others sitting home on their couch.

I've always said that there are valid reasons to lose weight that have nothing to do with vanity.

Now I've discovered an alternate reason for a body shaper and I'll keep it handy, just in case.

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RUDITUDI2000

Cool! I'll have to remember that! Only it would probably make me sweat some much I'd toss it out...

2611 days ago



CD13758606

A compression sleeve for the trunk! Great idea! You are a problem solver.



2617 days ago



MERRYMARY42

makes sense that support would help control spasms and muscle strain, way to go

2617 days ago



STRIVERONE

I'd love to see the outrageous letter and your response if you can direct me to it or if it's something you can copy and paste into a SparkMail.

2618 days ago



STRIVERONE

I'd love to see the outrageous letter and your response if you can direct me to it or if it's something you can copy and paste into a SparkMail.

2618 days ago



MARYJEANSL

I got a big kick out of this blog! My mother used to wear a girdle, and I thought it looked like an instrument of torture. I have never owned one, but now I guess they do have their uses. ;-)

2618 days ago



STEVIEBEE569

2618 days ago



SYLPHINPROGRESS

Good for staying in the race. Good for responding to the knuckleheaded article.

Shapewear can also double as a tourniquet, don't you think?

2618 days ago



MISCHAKEO

Good job on writing a rebuttal to that letter! That was too funny about using the body shaper for your race. I am glad it helped you!

I am amazed at the number and types of body shapers there are available in stores.

Hooray for finishing your race and being number one in your age group.

2618 days ago



_LINDA

Good on you responding to that nasty letter in the paper!! I too, can't imagine what problem someone would have with runners! Would love to read the original and your response (hope they publish it)

So glad you found a use for your body shaper although I thought corsets went out with Victorian times :PP I know weight lifters wear heavy leather waist supports and moving people or someone with a back injury, but the rest of us shouldn't need them!

Hope you feel better soon!

2618 days ago



SWEETNEEY

You also beat me and I'd be in the 50 - 60 category. So YOU ARE AWESOME. Talk about re-gift - re-engineering - A back support brace.

2618 days ago



SUZYSMOBILE

Now, of course, I want to read your rebuttal!

2618 days ago



**TRAVELGRRL**

Ha! Don't you find it AMAZING that there was only one other brave soul in your age category, and about 9,999 still sitting on the couch!?! V

Yay for the bodyshaper!
2618 days ago

**LINDAKAY228**

I love that story! Glad you found something useful to do with that thing and won the race! And all those sitting on the couch (including me) should get out and run if they can. However, I was doing some running until I had a stroke 5 1/2 months ago and hope to run again in the future. Right now I'm working on walking without falling over LOL. Doing not too bad with that as long as I don't try to do anything else but walking longer distances. But I do see lots of runners since I am now in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex with son and am so jealous of them. Anyway, hope to be back with you all soon! Hope you don't need the body shaper again lol! V
2618 days ago

**JAHINTZY**

lol good thinking! I've been known to wear one of my corsets from the renaissance fair when I've hurt my back and caused a spasm - handy indeed :) V

and I loved that bit with Betty White about the spanx/girdle thing
2618 days ago

**CD9543726**

I never could get into the body-shaper thing either. I bought one once, and it was just so uncomfortable (they wouldn't let you try it on in-store) that I never wore it... V

Your 5K pace is awesome! Why would anyone try to shame runners?? It makes no sense.
2618 days ago

**WATERMELLEN**

This is quite hilarious!! I remember routinely wearing "control top" pantyhose and buying some "Spanx" too (which also live in my lingerie drawer). Even the nomenclature is punitive! V

Glad you wrote the rebuttal (another great word). And glad you ran and triumphed too!!
2618 days ago

**DR1939**

Off and on I have back pain due to arthritis. Usually walking helps ease the pain, but when it increases it, I have a light girdle/body shaper that I wear to give me a little support. V
2618 days ago

**ALICIA363**

1088! WAY TO GO V
2618 days ago

**ONEKIDSMOM**

So, a spine brace, like we might wear a knee brace? Good job at creatively adapting to the situation! V
2618 days ago

**PICKIE98**

My grandma always told me to never wear a girdle because without it, I would automatically hold my stomach muscles in, whereas with it on, I would not, would relax my muscles and they would be loose and out of shape!! She was very wise.... V
2618 days ago

**WILSONWR**

That was great! Now it's a muscle supporter! V
2618 days ago

**CD12377244**

I think we've all tried body shapers. No need for it anymore as I have shaped my body with diet and exercise. Neat you found an alternate use! V
2618 days ago

**4A-HEALTHY-BMI**

I love your new application for those things! V

Hopefully you won't frequently need to write such letters and it'll be safe in the bottom drawer for several more years. LOL



2618 days ago



DOVESEYES

V




2618 days ago



TERI-RIFIC

V

LOL. I've had body shapers, too. I agree that they at best don't work and at worst make you look worse. But you found a great use for one!! You could slap an ice pack in there, too. Congrats on a great race!! That's a very good time for any age in my book. Where would you have been in

the next lowest category. 

2618 days ago



CD12813197

V

This is a funny blog! I have bought a few of those body shaper things to "smooth" things out, but I think they make me look worse! They push all the fat into a smooth, round shape and make me feel like an egg! I might have parts of me I would like to shrink in different proportions, but at least I have curves when I just let my body flow how it wants. I never thought about wearing them running. I had to invest in a knee brace, which compresses the muscles above and below and keeps my knee stable. It might be nice to keep all this fat from jiggling around my core when jogging. I might try it some time! Take care!

2618 days ago



MUSIC123JJ

V

Thank you for sharing. I will have to remember that the next time my back acts up.

2618 days ago

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