

## HOW TO BUY A TREADMILL

**IT'S SATURDAY MORNING.** Whole day ahead of you. Grab the kids, get to the store and see what's what. Okay, we've got auto-incline, digital pulse sensors and very bored kids. They're not big on treadmills.



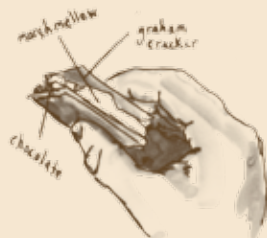
**THIS ONE LOOKS GOOD.** Will it fit in the car? Grab a measuring tape. Come on, kids, out to the car. Maybe it will fit on the roof? No. Not without crushing that center dome-y part. Plan B.



**CORRAL THE KIDS.** Back inside. The kids are running. Not toward the treadmills. They're in the

tents. One in the orange one and the other in the green one. They're zipping open flaps. Waving. Pretending to offer each other s'mores.

**FORGET THE TREADMILL.** Who needs double-insulated transformers and shock absorption systems when you've got *actual walking trails* threading around your neighborhood? With actual trees, even.



**LET'S GO HOME.** Let's leave the treadmill here. Let's leave our car ceiling intact. Let's get going and get on with our Saturday. But first, let's get that tent.

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## AGING THE PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE

**IT'S TUESDAY EVENING.** Lot at stake here. Teachers make you nervous — at least, they did 20 years ago — and you want to make a good



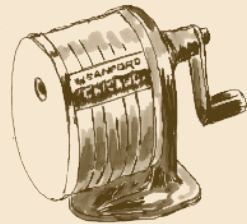
impression. Who knows what your daughter's in store for with this Ms. Evans?



**BE ON TIME.** No, you can't get a tardy slip, but you also can't bring a note from your parents. Besides, the school is in the neighborhood, right? Right.



Shoot for five minutes early.



**IS THIS EVEN THE RIGHT ROOM?** You're at an undersized desk and there's a pencil sharpener by

the door, but what if ... oh good, she's here. Stand and offer a handshake.

"Hi, I'm Isabelle's mom."

**YOU NAILED THE INTRODUCTION.**



Gold Star.

Wait a minute, though. This lady looks familiar. Isn't she the one from the café? Yes. Caffè Latte Lady. Always smiley. Always in there when you are — she must live nearby. (That would make sense, with the school in the neighborhood.)

**WHEW.** She's normal. Not scary at all. A neighbor, even. Isabelle's in good hands. You know, maybe you and Ms. Evans could sit down sometime and just chat. Over at the café, maybe. Over coffee, maybe. In normal-sized seats, *definitely*.

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## HOW TO MAKE A GREAT CUP OF COFFEE

**IT'S SATURDAY MORNING.** You're the first one up. Why not be really nice and go bring back some coffee? The real kind—none of that freeze-dried instant stuff. Grab a copy of the paper while you're at it.



**WHAT'S THIS IN SECTION C?**

A big gardening feature. What to plant now, soil-testing tips, the whole bit. And there's a garden tour in Charleston. Hmm. The spouse likes gardens.



**AN IDEA IS SPROUTING.**

How about a little day trip? Charleston's only a 30-minute drive away. You two can head down there, poke around, get inspired.



**FARMERS MARKET, ANYONE?** It is Saturday and all. Plenty of flowers there. And produce.

And pony rides. A fine way



to spend the morning. Maybe get one of those nice baskets the ladies weave—the sweetgrass kind. We'll see.

**LET'S GET GOING.**

It's time to head home, brew a nice cup of Java and present this ingenious idea. It's as simple as it is perfect: Hit Road.



See Something Interesting.

Investigate. What else? Nothing else. The best plans always leave room for surprises.

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