

# FITNESS OUTDOORS

## NEW YORK STYLE

### Bettina Marks

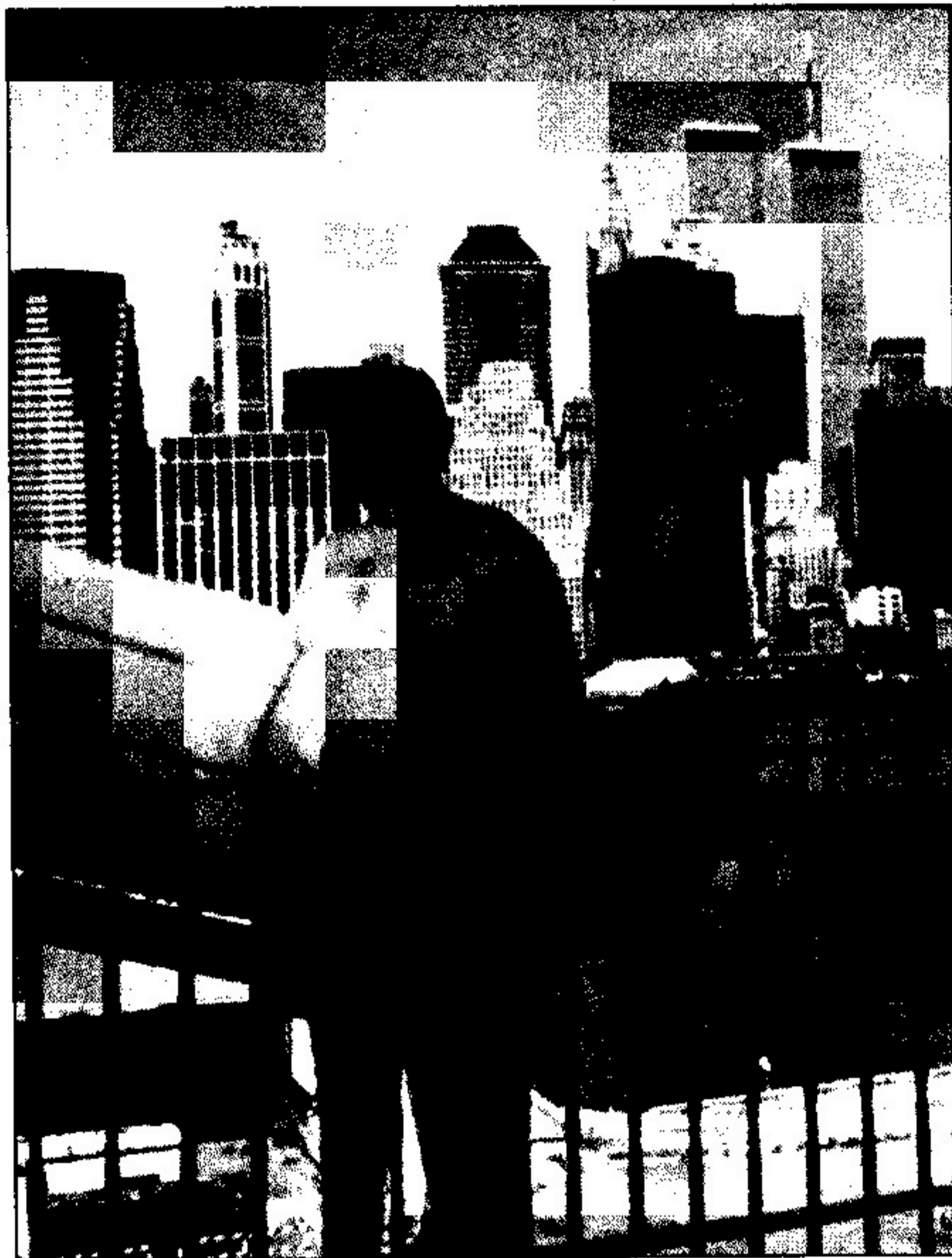
Summertime and the living is easy...but if you don't set some fitness challenges, and live too easily, you may miss out on some of New York's most exciting outdoor activities! Even you lounge lizards will want to get in on all the firming, toning, and fun that is taking place in our city's great outdoors.

Since summer is the time to decompress, and de-stress, there is no better time to set yourself in motion with a regular exercise plan. According to most health experts, moving your body is THE best way to reduce stress and relax from a busy, and hectic lifestyle. If you participate *outdoors* in an activity that you enjoy, like cycling or volleyball, you will burn calories without even thinking about it.

For avid, health conscious individuals, who are in good shape, exercise regularly, and eat well, why not find alternative routes for your activities? Join a new group of like-minded friends; set out on a bike, hike, kayak, camping, running, or rollerblading adventure to uncharted turf, outside the city limits. Land lovers can take to the mountains for a day hike along route 9A, overlooking the Hudson River Valley, or venture to Staten Island by ferry with your bike, and cycle along the waterfront paths.

With climbing temperatures and excessive humidity, water is essential for enjoying summer in the City. Those in the know already attempt to drink eight glasses a day to purify and detoxify the body. The waterfront 'beaches' along the Hudson and East Rivers can also offer some relief from a sweltering day, with breezes not often available in the granite canyons, where the air hangs like a heavy cloud.

*New York City's 1993 Greenway Plan* is well on its way to connecting, developing and beautifying recreational trails throughout the five boroughs. The vision is to create bicycle and foot paths along the waterfront areas to enable public waterfront access; many are already completed. The City is also improving existing facilities and creating new access beginning from Battery Park City up the West side, through Hudson River Park to 59<sup>th</sup> street. This is where the Trump machine takes over with the Riverside South Development plan, (still in progress). It resumes again at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street in Riverside Park, which connects to Inwood Park in the Bronx. There are paths that bring us south, again, along the Hutchinson and continue on to City Island, then back to the east side of Manhattan. The plan also incorporates the bicycle path on Shore Parkway in Brooklyn, from Knapp Street to Pennsylvania Avenue, completing the waterfront access in



*Having a great time, wish you were here! - Jr.*

Brooklyn. Venturing along these paths will most certainly offer comfort and respite from overcrowded inland streets.

*Transportation Alternatives* is a membership supported group dedicated to improving the urban environment for cyclists, runners and walkers, not limited to the waterfront areas. They are working to designate safe areas for cycling, for the city's many enthusiasts. There are several bike rental facilities throughout Manhattan (see guide page 24) and groups to join for guided tours, including a two hour bicycle ride through Central Park.

According to the New York City Department of Park and Recreation, the city boasts some 27,784 acres of park land (hard to imagine, isn't it?). If you're a typical New Yorker, you

frequent a 5 block radius around both your work and home bases. This, along with overtime and demanding schedules allow for little opportunity to seek out these pastoral green patches amidst the towering glass and granite skyscrapers. You may be surprised to learn, however, that these natural resources are available within short reach.

The *Urban Park Rangers* conduct ongoing "nature walks" along the trails throughout the city's parks. You can explore everything from wildflowers to beautiful birds, while keeping your heart rate up with the brisk pace.(see guide page 24). If you're into team sports, it's never too late to join one of the citywide teams who practice and play on the city's 823 athletic fields. You can choose from baseball, softball, cricket, hockey, volleyball, football, soccer and softball. For tennis, it is necessary to obtain a permit in order to play at the outdoor courts throughout the parks, which are open from April through November, with 96 courts in the Bronx, 147 courts in Brooklyn, 98 in Manhattan, 126 in Queens and 18 in Staten Island.

And, don't forget the park lakes, strewn amidst the patches of green, which offer solitude and respite. You can even rent canoes and rowboats in order to keep those arms in shape! Most famous is *Central Park's Loeb Boathouse* where you can sip refreshments after a spin on the water, and catch a picturesque sunset and romantic moment, even in your workout clothes. You can also rent boats at *Crotona Park* in the Bronx, at *Prospect Park* in Brooklyn and at *Clove Lakes Park* in Staten Island.

*The Conservatory at 72<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, in Central Park*, offers Sailboat Rentals on a 41 inch radio controlled sailboat. If this just doesn't satisfy the Captain Bly in ya', get on over to the *Great Hudson Sailing Center* at Pier 63 at 23<sup>rd</sup> Street on the