

DAILY NEWS

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NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

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The pros weigh in

Trainers get a read on the book-of-the-mouth club

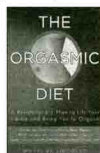
BY GINA SALAMONE

This time of year, new diet books are as bountiful as strawberries at the farmers' market. But how do you weed out quick-fix gimmicks from plans that work? New York trainers Mike Hood and Stacy Berman sifted through some for the skinny on whether they're worth your money.

The Orgasmic Diet: A Revolutionary Plan to Lift Your Libido and Bring You to Orgasm (in stores Tuesday) by Marrena Lindberg (\$23.95, Crown)

THE POINT: If you eat a high-protein diet that's low in carbs and exercise your pubococcygeus muscles (they stretch from the pubic bone to tail bone), you'll have better and more frequent orgasms.

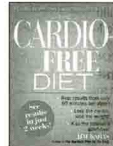
WORTH BUYING? "It's not about losing weight, it's about nutrition and exercise programs designed to regulate a woman's brain chemistry and body functions to bring about 'mind-blowing orgasms,'" Hood says. "I like that it is done through diet and exercise, not some pill." Berman believes that the idea is a little far-fetched, but that there's some truth to it. "I don't know if eating broccoli is going to make you have a better orgasm."



The Cardio-Free Diet by Jim Karas (\$23, Simon Spotlight Entertainment)

THE POINT: Cardio is mindless and won't keep the weight off. Strength-training exercises are the way to go.

WORTH BUYING? "I totally agree that you can get an excellent workout by doing strength training," Berman says. "You're getting your heart rate elevated enough so that you are burning fat and calories, and at the same time building muscle that you need to increase your metabolism even at rest. However, most people who are trying to lose weight are not going to be able to work out at the intensity needed while doing a workout like that. You also need cardiovascular exercise for heart health."

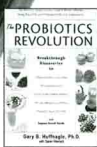


The Probiotics Revolution: The Definitive Guide to Safe, Natural Health Solutions Using Probiotic and Prebiotic Foods and Supplements (in stores May 29) by Gary B. Huffnagle and Sarah Wernick (\$24, Bantam)

THE POINT: Eat lots of fruits, veggies and whole grains to keep your digestive tract full of good bacteria.

WORTH BUYING? "Probiotic bacteria

normally live in our digestive system tract, especially if we eat foods that contain them, such as yogurt with active cultures, aged cheese and naturally fermented pickles," Hood explains. "The contention of these two authors is that by eating foods rich in probiotic and prebiotic bacteria we can fortify our intestinal and immune systems, improve function and fight off disease. Foods like refined sugars encourage growth of harmful microbes." If you can't eat dairy, this isn't the book for you.

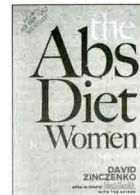


The Revival Slim and Beautiful Diet: For Total Body Wellness

by Aaron and Suzanne Tabor (\$24.99, Thomas Nelson)

THE POINT: Stay in shape with a soy-rich diet, and better emotional and spiritual health.

WORTH BUYING? "This book seemed to promote its products rather than give advice and guidance on a healthy lifestyle," says Hood. "It gave off the impression of a late-night, 20-minute infomercial to sell a product and retain your life — and without telling the truth. To suggest that if you follow this plan of nutrition products will be slim and beautiful is misleading. Don't fall for these kinds of books that promise you fast results for life and lasting beauty."



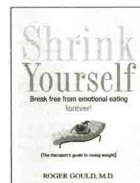
The Abs Diet for Women: The Six-Week Plan to Flatten Your Belly and Firm Up Your Body for Life

(in stores Tuesday), by David Zinzenko and Ted Spiker (\$24.95, Rodale)

THE POINT: Get a flat stomach in six weeks and stay thin forever.

WORTH BUYING? "To have a title suggest if you follow their plan your abdomen will be flatter is outrageous," Hood says. "This is simply not possible. You cannot spot-reduce a body part by dieting

and exercising exclusively for that area and expect it to change for your whole life. You have to train the entire body. Diet and exercise are a lifestyle, not quick weight loss. This is more of a gimmick."



Shrink Yourself: Break Free from Emotional Eating

Forever by Roger Gould (\$24.95, Wiley)

THE POINT: Hunger starts in the brain, not the stomach, if you work at your emotional issues, you can control your food cravings.

WORTH BUYING? "If you can recognize different things that trigger you to pick up the wrong foods or bad foods, that can

definitely help," Berman says. "The book talks about depression and obesity and how sometimes you have to go figure out what the emotional problems are before you can start working on the eating habits. That's a very valid."



The Big Fat Health and Fitness Lie by Craig Peplin-Donati (\$24.95, Waterside)

THE POINT: Don't get sucked into spending a fortune on fancy exercise machines or unnecessary drugs.

WORTH BUYING? "I totally agree that there are so many machines and pills," Berman says. "You can do without any machine if you just focus on the right muscles and be a lot more efficient at it. The machines are kind of a crutch. They sell stuff to you and you think, 'I'm going to get amazing abs.' And in the end if you don't do it the right way, you're still not going to have amazing abs. If you just focus, you don't need all those things."



THOMAS HONANER/DAILY NEWS

Diet titles that seem lightweight

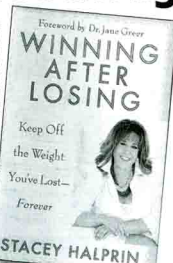
Entering the search term "diet" on Amazon.com's book page returns more than 190,000 results. And with more weight-loss books published every day, many consumers must resort to judging a book by its cover.

Publishers are all too aware of this fact. "We try to avoid yucky colors and bad author photos," says Rodale Books art director Andy Carpenter. He says the most promising books go through dozens of cover variations; the lesser ones, not so much.

"It has to be credible, and the benefits have to hit hard," Carpenter says. "If the book sounds like everything else out there, it's probably going to end up looking like everything else."

Regardless of what's inside, some covers are so dubious, we can't help but judge.

Julian Kessler

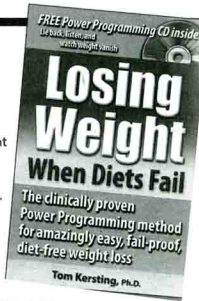


THE BOOK "Winning After Losing" by Stacy Halprin (Warner Wellness, \$24.99)

COVER CONUNDRUM: Stacey's smiling mug isn't exactly inspiring us. Blah pull-quote "You are what you think" on the back. Weak fonts and a lot of pink.

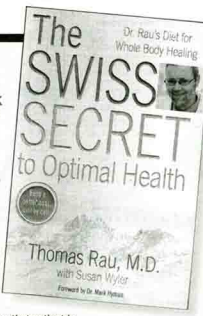
THE BOOK "Losing Weight When Diets Fail" by Tom Kersting, Ph.D. (Harbor Press, \$16.95)

COVER CONUNDRUM: Again with the pink! Fonts look like a fifth-grader chose them. Advertises a CD that's included so readers can "lie back, listen and watch weight vanish" — enough said.



THE BOOK "The Swiss Secret to Optimal Health" by Thomas Rau, M.D., with Susan Wyler (Berkeley, \$23.95)

COVER CONUNDRUM: Promises to "build a better body, cell by cell" — maybe they're that patient in Switzerland, but not here. Panoramic view of the Alps is totally "Sound of Music."



THE BOOK "The Structure House Weight Loss Plan" by Gerard J. Musante, Ph.D. (Simon & Schuster, \$24)

COVER CONUNDRUM: Looks like a dictionary or thesaurus at first glance. Yellow seal promising a "\$10,000 secret to permanent weight loss" channels used-car dealer.

