

Scenario Example: The Gymnasium Generation

** Words underlined indicate possible hyperlinks to essays and the internet*

Kirk was a [reformed character](#)*. Only 6 months ago he was smoking a pack of cigarettes a day, eating junk food and spending most of his nights either out drinking with friends in town or sat in front of the television. Since he had started [working from home](#), the brisk walk to the office had become unnecessary, particularly since he and his colleagues had all been issued with the latest [3-D holophones](#). Following a check-up at the doctors in January, Kirk was told that his fitness level had decreased below the minimum level required by the IRS to qualify for the new tax rebates. He now tried to exercise at least three times a week, just to be on the safe side.

This new scheme of rebates had obviously had major repercussions on the number of people trying to keep fit. Spurred by the incentive of reduced tax payments, many people had taken to jogging or going to the gym at least twice a week. After the initial rush, many people had done themselves more harm than good by failing to warm up sufficiently before exercise, or by wearing the wrong sort of footwear. An article in the New York Post had joked that the recent wave of injuries had cost the health insurers more than illness due to poor fitness and obesity. People had since become more interested in ["intelligent exercise"](#); keeping fit without the injuries. As Kirk got ready to go to the gym, he laid his clothing out onto the bed.

Kirk first put on his leggings. They were tight fitting with a network of thin, spiralled metal threads sandwiched into the middle of the fabric which acted as mini shock absorbers. Clinical tests had shown that the leggings reduced the force absorbed by the feet by 60%. The network of wires somehow absorbed the impact and spread it across the legs where it was distributed harmlessly. He didn't pretend to understand but was impressed all the same.

Kirk pulled his new T-shirt over his head. Made from yarns containing [energised ceramic particles](#), the stimulation produced by the fabric had been proven to increase physical strength and endurance. Despite the fact that he had worn the very same shirt yesterday, the [anti-bacterial finish](#) masked any incriminating evidence. He grinned to himself; the extra cost had been worth it.

Kirk put on his [training watch](#). A number of companies had now launched training watches which combined a [GPS tracker](#) with a [heart rate monitor](#). By mapping out routes for the wearer, these watches were able to produce tailor-made training programmes for runners of any calibre.

He fumbled under the bed and pulled out a pair of training shoes. Kirk's shoes were fitted with the latest "adjusta-cushion" insoles, used to prevent sprained ankles. These consisted of small cups at the ball and heel areas which were held in a gel-like substance within the main area of the insole. As a result of the gel, the cups were able to adjust to the movement of the foot, without letting it move too far to either side. The sideways motion was further reduced by a cradle of [Kevlar](#) webbing around the heel area of the shoe.

In certain downtown regions, the seemingly ever-increasing swarm of cars and trucks that ploughed through the streets meant that the number of people running outdoors was rapidly decreasing. More and more people seemed to prefer the comfort of an air-conditioned gymnasium to the dirty, intoxicating sidewalks (some malls were now installing sheltered running tracks in their carparks for use in off-peak hours). Some of the die-hard outdoor runners had taken to wearing filterhoods. Used to filter the carbon monoxide from the air, these were tight fitting [disposable](#) balaclava-type hoods, which had a thin porous [membrane](#) covering the mouth and nose. Despite the proven efficiency of the hoods, many people had been put off running outside completely by the visible layer of brown gunk that was filtered out from the air.

As a result of the [increase in air-borne pollution](#), more and more people were starting to use treadmills, either in their homes or at the gym. Others had taken to driving out of town before starting their running. At the new gym Kirk had recently joined, people using the treadmills were able to use wireless visors which made the thought of plodding along more bearable. You could choose from a number of different settings for your run: international marathons, athletics meetings, exotic beaches, or cross-country mudbaths.

Kirk walked the short distance from his house to the nearest gymnasium. By plugging in the lead from the waistband of his leggings, a small electric current passed through the spiralled network of wires, warming up the muscles in his legs. Swinging and stretching his arms, Kirk walked over to one of the treadmills. Pulling the visor over his head, he entered details about his height, weight and age. Having been asked the location, Kirk paused and looked outside to see clouds beginning to descend over the skyline. "I think I need a little inspiration today, how about the men's 1500 metres at the 1984 Olympics?"