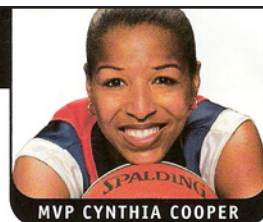




BETH M. HOWARD

MEET THE WNBA'S BRAVEST HEART >>



MVP CYNTHIA COOPER

# Sports FOR WOMEN Illustrated

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## CONTRIBUTORS

> **BETH M. HOWARD**, an avid surfer



and trail runner, picked up valuable training tips when she interviewed hoops star Jennifer Azzi for *IN THE GYM*

(page 106). Howard, a native Iowan, has written for *Elle*, *Fitness*, *Shape*, *Sport* and *TEEN PEOPLE*. She is now the director of an extreme sports adventure Web site, [www.quokka.com](http://www.quokka.com).

> **MEGAN McMORRIS**, who wrote



*How Competitive Are You?* (page 46), enjoys running in marathons and adventure races and loves to win.

But she also tries to keep sports fun by, she says, "not taking myself too seriously." The Brooklyn-based McMorris has written for *Fit*, *Glamour* and *MetroSports*.

> **AUSTIN MURPHY**, who covered



the ELF Authentic adventure race in the Philippines for us in this issue (page 100), has competed in two such races,

finishing, he says, "without distinction." Murphy, a senior writer at *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED*, spends most of his free time these days racing around after his two toddlers.

> **BEVERLY ODEN**, a member of the



1996 U.S. Olympic volleyball team, each week sifts through close to a hundred candidates to choose *FACES IN THE CROWD*

for *SPORTS ILLUSTRATED* and our *FACES* column (page 12). She reports that the work is fun. "Talking to people who are excited to be part of the magazine is refreshing," Oden says of her subjects.

"With professional athletes you don't always get that cooperation."

FROM TOP: JASON GROW/SABA; JASON BURFIELD; AL TIELEMANS; ANDRÉ SOUROUJON



# AZZI Does It

Injury rehab taught Jennifer Azzi the value of a tough workout. Now she's ready to teach you. So why are you just sitting there? **BY BETH M. HOWARD**

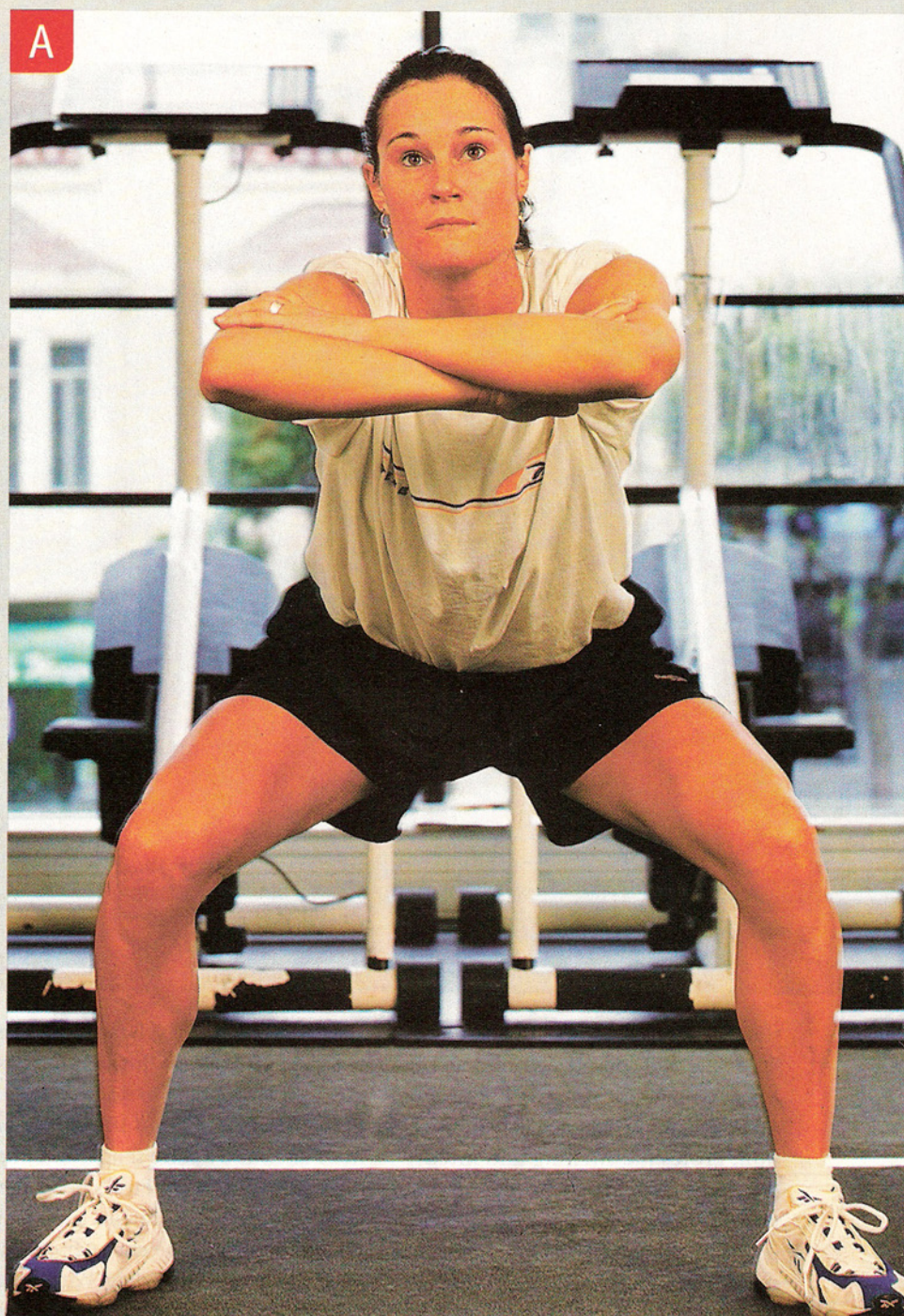
**t**WO AND A HALF YEARS AGO ABL star Jennifer Azzi collided on the court with another player and suffered a dislocated right shoulder that stalled her career—but not for long. She underwent arthroscopic surgery at Stanford Medical Center and reluctantly discovered the benefits of rehab. “I had a bad attitude at first,” she says, remembering her introduction to Lisa Giannone, a physical therapist and the owner of Active Care, a sports rehab center in San Francisco. “I thought, What does she know that no one else knows?”

Now fully recovered and ready to play, Azzi is a believer—and she continues to work out two to three times a week with Giannone.

“Rehab is the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” says Azzi, who will play for the WNBA’s Detroit Shock this summer. “Basketball players don’t train as much as some athletes. Before, I could lift heavy weights, but it didn’t help me play ball. Lisa taught me a smarter way to train. She taught me workouts without weights. We do abs, static squats and running for aerobic.”

IT IS A RAINY SPRING DAY IN San Francisco. Active Care is bustling with people wearing athletic clothes and knee braces. Enter Azzi and Giannone. Both are wearing shorts; both have ponytails. But the similarities end there. Azzi is long and lean, wearing a baggy T-shirt and baggy shorts. Giannone is petite, dressed in short shorts and a tank top. Although she’s only 5’ 3”, Giannone has been known to make NFL players beg for mercy.

She gets right to work with Azzi. First on today’s lineup, intervals on the





B



## azzi's squat series

THIS SEQUENCE WAS DESIGNED BY GIANNONE TO STRENGTHEN LEG MUSCLES WITHOUT STRESSING KNEES.

**A»** Stand with your feet a little wider than your shoulders, toes rotated out slightly, arms crossed palm-to-elbow in front of you. Keeping your back upright, lower your body until your thighs are almost parallel to the floor (keep your knees in line with your heels). When you feel your quads burn, hold the position 20 seconds. Next, bend forward at the hips and reach your arms straight out. Go 20 seconds beyond quad muscle burn.

**B»** Reach between your legs and touch hands lightly to the floor; hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat two or three times; as your strength improves, increase time in each stance. At no point should you feel knee pain; if necessary, consult a trainer on positioning.

Spinner bike. Azzi stands on the pedals for the warmup. Giannone, on the bike next to her, calls out instructions. "Don't sway. Don't slouch. Straighten your arms and push your butt back more. Keep your back flat. Get a little speed there. Here we go, 20-second sprint."

While Azzi grimaces, Giannone sings along with the music (*I Say a Little Prayer*) and says, "I don't call this a Spinning workout. We have a Spinner bike but we create our own workout around it." Five minutes into the spin Azzi is grabbing for her towel to wipe the sweat that's dripping into her eyes. The music is now blaring disco, and Giannone says, "We're going for a hill climb now. Eight turns total on the tension."

"How much longer?" asks Azzi.

"Five more minutes," says Giannone.

"You said just one more song!"

Giannone, whose clients include All-Stars Jerry Rice and Steve Young, trained several new NFL recruits the day before. "They were ready to throw in the towel," she says, "and I told them I had a woman

coming in who can do this and more. I invited them back to join Jennifer's workout but they didn't show up."

At last Giannone relents, and the cooldown begins. Azzi says that although she never quits during a workout, she does get mad at Giannone. "It's always about how much time," Azzi says. "I'll ask how long we're going, and she'll say 30, then it's 35, and we end up going 45 minutes. With Lisa, you push yourself harder than you ever thought you could."

"It's easy to go for a run on my own, but not this other stuff," she says. The other stuff includes the abdominal series, which is next up. Giannone lays out two towels side by side on the floor. She deposits two medicine balls, one 15 pounds, the other 12. Azzi gets into position: butt balancing her weight, feet lifted off the floor, hands holding the ball, abs crunching. Their arms move the ball from side to side for one set. The ball gets lifted overhead for the alternate set, with the series lasting five to 10 minutes. Today they've done six

sets, with 20 to the side and 20 overhead equaling one set. The two collapse in unison the second Giannone grants permission. Azzi wipes away more sweat.

Last, but most definitely not least, is the squat series (*box, left*), created by Giannone to treat knee injuries because, she says, "well-trained muscles will diminish forces inside the knee joint that cause pain." This squat series has become a staple in Azzi's workout. "Everything has a point," says Azzi. "It's not a workout just to work out."

Arms folded, butt back, toes up, Azzi lowers herself into the squat position, keeping her eyes straight ahead. She holds it for 10 counts. Next she drops back farther, extending her arms straight out in front. Another 10 counts. As if Azzi's quads aren't burning enough yet, Giannone moves to the next stage, reaching the arms back through the legs. "Ten more," Giannone barks. The final position is a deeper squat, with the back flat and the arms straight out in front. Giannone explains, "It's isometrics combined with motion."

Though her face was flushed during the squats, Azzi recovers instantly, looking fresh and relaxed. "I always leave here feeling great," says Azzi. "I have a sense of accomplishment."

She just worked out for two very intense hours—yet this is the off-season. So "off" is the season that Azzi isn't even going near a basketball court. "I just don't want to be in the gym right now," she says. Guess that depends on how you define the gym. ●

## azzi's tips

1. **Be consistent.** Exercise 30 to 40 minutes a day, even if it's just going for a walk. Make the time for yourself!
2. **Train with a partner or a group.** When three or four people meet for a run or at a gym, you become a team. "I believe in energy between people," Azzi says. "It's not fun to work out alone."
3. **Drink lots of water and make healthy, common-sense food choices.** "If you have a choice between the fried prawns and the grilled," she says, "order the grilled."