



Plus Fitness footwear you'll love: Our best picks for fall '96

SHAPE

JOE WEIDER'S

November 1996



inshape

The eco-challenge school: This ain't no summer camp

You're tired, you're hungry, you haven't brushed your teeth, your butt hurts and you have a blister on your heel — but somewhere, deep down inside, you find a small reserve of energy that you never knew was there. That pretty much sums up the Eco-Challenge Adventure School, a four-day camp that simulates the Eco-Challenge adventure race (this year held in British Columbia). Here in California's Santa Monica Mountains, world-class athletes teach you climbing, ocean kayaking, orienteering, mountain biking and team skills — everything you need to know to compete in the main event.

The school's brochure promises physical challenges just like the real race, but it also emphasizes the importance of a positive mental attitude. You'll need it, starting with the 2 a.m. wake-up call (a boombox blaring the "Mission Impossible" theme song). Your mission: to endure a six-hour night hike, five hours of kayaking and another six-hour trek through rugged terrain and poison oak in the scorching sun. Instructors eventually may allow you to nap, but after a few short hours you're back on the trail along with the other members of your team. Four days after you started, you stumble out of the woods and back into your life, a changed person.

Why do it? "Because sometimes you need to test the hot burner, put your hand on it and touch it, just to remind yourself that you're still alive," says instructor Tommy Baynard. Sessions run throughout the year; if you're ready for the challenge, call the Eco-Challenge school at (310) 553-8855.

—Beth M. Howard



[sports & exercise]