

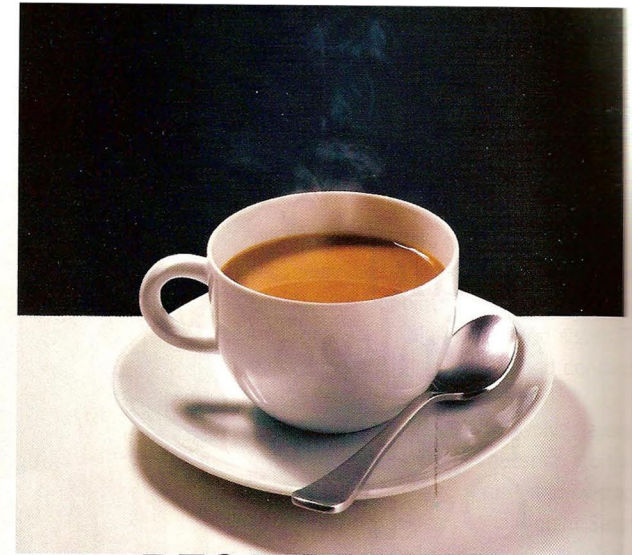


Babelicious— and Disabled

IT'S NOT OFTEN YOU FIND WOMEN wheelchairing down the aisles of a sex shop. But there they are in *Doin' It: Sex, Disability, and Videotape*, a new documentary by and about the Empowered Fe Fes, a Chicago-based group of young, disabled activists.

When they're not making movies, the Fe Fes (a play on "female"), whose disabilities range from cognitive to physical, have biweekly meetings where they discuss the struggle of living in a society that doesn't acknowledge them as productive, artistic, and sexual citizens. Susan Nussbaum, 52, who cofounded the group, was hit by a car and paralyzed at age 24. Would she ever be able to work again? she wondered. Have children? Make love? Her family didn't know. "And there wasn't a disability rights movement back then," she says. "My terror made me feel that other young women with disabilities should not have to go through the same confusion and fear."

The Fe Fes hope their new film, which premieres this spring (available at beyondmedia.org), will debunk conventional ideas about desire and attractiveness. "We're sexual beings," says Chaka Stovall, a 20-year-old wheelchair-bound college student, "and we're proud of it." —DOROTHEA HUNTER

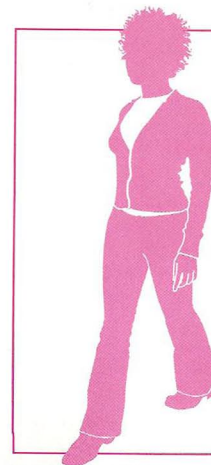


DECAF DEBATE

» Years of scientific controversy percolating over whether coffee is linked to heart disease may have convinced you to start asking for decaf. But according to the first nonindustry-funded coffee study, after eight weeks of downing three to six cups a day, decaf drinkers had slightly higher LDL levels ("bad" cholesterol) than both caf drinkers and noncoffee drinkers. Should you switch your order?

Maybe, according to lead author H. Robert Superko, MD, chair of molecular, genetic, and preventive

cardiology at Atlanta's Fuqua Heart Center. His study—which was presented at a recent American Heart Association convention and has yet to be published—also found that the decaf group had higher levels of ApoB protein, another predictor of cardiovascular disease. But American Heart Association president Robert Eckel, MD, thinks that until the findings are replicated, it's too early to draw conclusions. For now it looks like one or two cups of coffee—regular or decaf—is probably fine. It's the cream that'll getcha. —CARLA MURPHY



Invisible Fitness Move: Hip Flexors

AFTER YOU'VE SPENT years sitting (at your desk, behind the wheel, on the couch), your hip flexors—the worker-bee muscles that help you walk, run, and kick—shorten, says Anthony Carey, founder of San Diego's Function First corrective exercise studio and author of *The Pain-Free Program*. The result, all too often, is

lower back pain and joint problems up and down the body. To keep these crucial hip flexors long and supple, he suggests a daily stretch: In flat shoes or bare feet, take a step and hold your position, keeping both heels on the ground. Distribute your weight evenly without bending your knees—front foot pointed forward, back

foot slightly pigeon-toed. Tighten your abs. Keeping your upper body straight, simultaneously push your hips forward while bending your front knee until you feel a pull in the front of your back thigh, into your groin. Do not bend your knee past your toes. Feel the burn for at least 30 seconds, then switch sides. —C.M.