

WORKOUT

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Major department stores including Rich's-Macy's, Belks and Dillard's offer less-pricey sportswear.

Everything at these stores tends to be generic in styles as well as moderate in price.

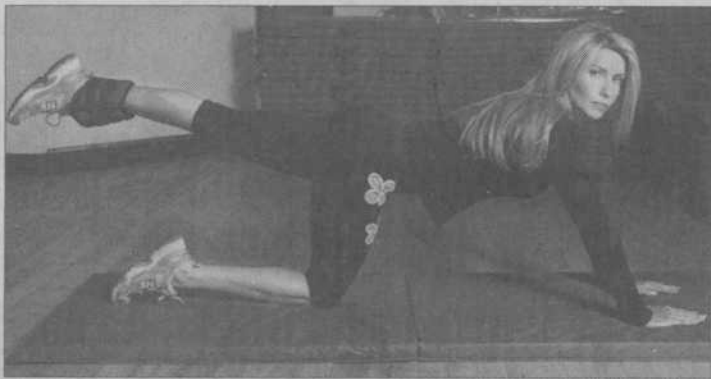
Columbia stores such as Todd & Moore and Half-Moon Outfitters, which have general merchandise as well as some specific apparel, offer a less-generic take on sportswear.

The North Face brand seen around campus, as well as Patagonia, Mountain Hardwear, Prana and Royal Robbins, can be found at Half-Moon Outfitters on Devine Street.

Manager Sara Bryan said many North Face and Patagonia pieces have fabric that absorbs moisture.

While consumers wear the apparel for activities such as rock climbing, yoga, whitewater rafting and other outdoor activities, the clothes are often worn around town, Bryan said.

The North Face brand has



JARED LAZARUS/KRT CAMPUS

Nancy Cole demonstrates weighted leg raises in Coral Gables, Fla. Gym-goers are integrating the latest fashion trends into their wardrobe.

become a university trend because of its comfort.

Depending on what shoppers want, Bryan said prices can vary with T-shirts at about \$15 to jackets up to \$400.

Another store is Todd & Moore, locally owned in Columbia since 1944.

The apparel makes up about 40 percent of sales, manager Rod Wolff said.

The main concern is function and practicality — as performance is the number-one priority, Wolff said.

"We stick with the fundamentals. The trendiest stuff is tennis wear, like what the tennis stars wear," Wolff said.

They carry popular national brands like New Balance, Nike and Adidas, as these are also the top three sellers, Wolff said.

Fashion and functionality do not always top everyone's priority list because customers wear the style without anticipating the activity.

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EMBRACE

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Led by brothers Danny and Richard McNamara singing lead vocals and playing lead guitar, respectively, the quintet is rounded out with Steve Firth on bass, Mick Dale on keyboards and Mike Heaton on drums.

With their debut release "The Good Will Out" in 1998, Embrace rode on the Britpop bandwagon to fame, but with subsequent releases in the UK and "Out of Nothing," Embrace proves itself worthy of praise.

Coldplay fans will want to snap this album up, as it features a ballad, "Gravity," written by longtime friend Chris Martin. The song definitely has the feel of Coldplay, but still contains Embrace's style. In a news release, Danny McNamara said, "Two years ago he played me 'Gravity' down the phone, and I told him it was an amazing song. He agreed, but he thought it sounded too much like Embrace for Coldplay

to use the song."

While somewhat unusual for indie bands to swap songs, this pairing makes for a quietly moving anthem that makes it hard to imagine anyone, even Coldplay, performing it as well.

Embrace's resurgence can be attributed, in part, to the help of producer Youth. In The Eye magazine, Danny McNamara said, "He is an unpredictable genius. The Beatles had George Martin, Phil Spector did the Motown stuff. Youth smashed us to pieces and built us again from scratch. We are a miles-better band now."

This kind of cockiness is apparent in the music, but it comes across more as quiet confidence that makes you pay attention to the music rather than arrogance.

The opening track, "Ashes," is appropriate, given the comeback nature of the album. It talks about drawing strength from rejection in life, which is exactly what Embrace has done, using their past mistakes to propel themselves back onto the music scene. With a very anthem-

like sound, Embrace shows its diversity by following "Ashes" with the mellow "Gravity."

"Someday" returns to the anthem sound. As you listen to it, you can imagine being at a live show with everyone singing along together as the melody builds and builds upon itself, culminating with a chorus heralding, "The light is gonna shine on you and I."

When Embrace steers away from the powerful tunes and tries to have a more low-key sound, it tends to sound just like any other soulful indie-rock band. Embrace has progressed a long way since its beginning, and made strides toward developing its own sound apart from the Britpop surge almost a decade ago, but the band needs to stick to working on that and stay away from the sound that Coldplay made its own. Collaborations are OK, but there can only be one Coldplay, and hopefully that will soon be said about Embrace.

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"Sideways"



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