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OPINIONS

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## The Jill Clayburgh Workout

by Alexandra Jacobs and Jon Trichter



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Jill Clayburgh was a big feminist actress in the late 1970's and early 80's, but then she got married and moved to the suburbs to raise kids. She missed out on that whole era of women-in-shoulderpad movies like *Working Girl* and *Baby Boom*, and by the time she was ready to re-enter Hollywood, Hollywood wasn't sure it had use for her. Perhaps you remember her in the Matthew Perry vehicle *Fools Rush In*, or as Ally McBeal's mom?

But lately, greatest Clayburgh hits like *An Unmarried Woman* (1978), *It's My Turn* (1980) and *I'm Dancing as Fast as I Can* (1982) have been resurfacing in the gauzy confines of lady networks like Oxygen and Women's Entertainment (WE), conjuring up with startling immediacy a lost world of nouvelle cuisine and white wine and culottes, self-realization through therapy sessions and affairs with bearded men. Lifetime has taped an "Intimate Portrait" of Ms. Clayburgh and her family.

She received *The Observer* in a chilly 12th-floor bedroom at the Regency hotel, at the end of a junket for her bawdy new movie, *Never Again*, which is about a man and a woman in their 50's who find love.

"I just lost my mojo," she said of her hiatus.

She was wearing a sleek, sleeveless black outfit and assuming what looked like the lotus position on her bed.

"I no longer say nice things about yoga because it's so *hip* and *chic*," said Ms. Clayburgh, uncoiling and sitting in a chair. "I was doing yoga so long before everybody else."

In one of the more memorable scenes of *Never Again*, her character berates a woman in her 20's for not respecting the older generation of feminists who were

on the "front lines."

"I don't want to categorize 25-year-olds," said Ms. Clayburgh, who is now 58. "There are certainly very political 25-year-olds ... but the 70's, it was such a different time. *Almost Famous* is so fake—oh, my God!" she said, referring to the Cameron Crowe movie set in the 70's that stars Kate Hudson as a glamorous groupie. "First of all, nobody whitened their teeth—let's just start with that! It kills me that my children think that the groupies were just this lovely sort of airy-fairy thing. And then, you know, we don't realize how much the Gap, Banana Republic, that way of dressing has influenced, infiltrated—and I don't even have anything against it, but it just wasn't there, so there was just this amazing individuality. And then when you see *Gimme Shelter*, it's just a whole different world of optimism and fearlessness, women just taking off their bras and dancing around naked, and a political hopefulness and involvement."

She looked great, with a red pedicure from a Korean place, \$25 cubic zirconia earrings and a faded denim jacket. She was planning to pack a wet suit for her trip to Gloucester, Mass., where she's in rehearsals for a couple of plays with her 19-year-old daughter Lily, who also plays her daughter in *Never Again*.

"I love to swim for miles; I could just go back and forth," she said. "Last night I came from dinner, I went downtown with my friends, I came back and the elevator was down at the end, so I ran down the hall toward my room at 10 at night, having had two glasses of wine. I thought, 'Oh, here's an opportunity for exercise!' I like to run, I like to go down the stairs, I'm one of those kind of people. And I *do* do yoga, I guess I have to admit it. And I do get on my StairMaster, and I do hike. But compared to the women who run with the wolves where I live, I'm a wimp .... You know what I noticed? Now, whatever character in whatever movie you're watching, they have these toned arms and muscles. I mean, I remember seeing that movie with Nicolas Cage and whoever, where they're both alcoholics and she's a prostitute, and they're ... built! And you know, there's something about soft, unstructured arms that's very beautiful."

—Alexandra Jacobs

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