Jump Start Fitness

Try a Boot Camp

The **Basics**

Boot camps are generally held as four to eight week sessions and meet either in the early morning or early evening. Groups are usually limited in size (six to 10 people), and class participants can attend as few or as many sessions per week as they choose. The common denominator of boot camps is that they push participants harder than they would ordinarily push themselves. Most boot camp instructors are encouraging, and don't necessarily adopt a military coaching style.

The Workout

Boot camps offer a total body workout. The workout may include any variety of cardiovascular, resistance training, core strengthening, calisthenics and interval training. Team competitions, partner exercises and obstacles courses are popular boot camp fare. The typical class lasts one hour to 75 minutes and includes a warm-up, a 35 to 45 minute workout, and a cool down. Most boot camps include fitness, health and nutrition education as well.

A Boot Camp for You

Just like people — boot camps come in all shapes and sizes. There are indoor and outdoor camps, and camps designed for various intensity and fitness levels. Many boot camps are highly specialized and cater to specific clientele. There are boot camps for skiers, women-only, seniors and even brides-to-be!

The Benefits

For many boot camp participants, the biggest benefit is the bonding and camaraderie. Other "boot campers" like the challenge and competition. For others, boot camp offers something completely different than their other work out routine. Still, others appreciate the fact that it is cheaper than a personal trainer.

Helpful Hints

Try out a boot camp first to see if the exercises, instructor and general feel are right for you. Also, be sure there is an initial fitness assessment and repeated assessments performed along the way. Start exploring boot camps at bootcampfinder.com, or your local recreation departments or fitness centers. Always check with your doctor before doing any form of exercise.

The words "Boot Camp" may be intimidating to even the most seasoned athlete, but today's camps are popular, accessible forms of fitness for a variety of people seeking to get fit fast.

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