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Group Fitness Class Lingo or Just What Kind of Class is That?

Have you wanted to join a Group Fitness class at our club, but still haven't taken the plunge? Do the classes on our schedule sound unfamiliar and confusing even after you've read our Class Description sheet? Cycle or Cycle Circuit, Ball Sculpt or Ball Pilates; what does it all mean and how do you decide which class is right for you? Here's a guide to some of our popular, effective, and always fun Group Fitness classes; along with information on how you might benefit from them.

Cycling

Group indoor Cycling (often called Spinning) is an intense cardio workout on a specially designed stationary bike. A certified instructor leads the class, indicating when to adjust your speed and resistance level (making it easier or harder to pedal). Cycling classes are set to music and typically use visualization techniques to enhance your experience.

What are the benefits? This class allows you to go at your own pace and set your own resistance level. There are no complicated moves to learn. So, regardless of how fit, flexible, or coordinated you are, you can get a great workout. Cycling is also a low-impact exercise which is much easier on your joints than other activities such as Step Aerobics or running.

Ball

A Ball (often called a Stability Ball) class can include aerobic and strength training routines, flexibility exercises, and balance training. The Ball can add intensity to your workout by mixing things up within your routine. Ball training helps establish and reinforce stability and core strength, and can be used for a wide variety of exercises.

What are the benefits? Familiar exercises like leg raises, crunches, and push-ups performed on the Ball -- a surface that is constantly changing -- will force you to maintain your center of gravity, thus making the exercises more difficult. Performing traditional exercises while holding the Ball between your knees, feet or hands will help recruit smaller stabilizing muscles. Holding the Ball during basic low impact aerobic work can increase your heart rate and, thus the cardiovascular benefit of the routine.

Circuit

These classes take participants through a series of exercise stations (which can include both strength and cardiovascular training), with relatively brief rest intervals between each station. Class members can

rotate through shared stations or set up individual stations at their workspace. The purpose of this format is to keep the heart rate elevated near the aerobic training (talk but can't sing) level throughout the workout.

What are the benefits? Circuit Training is a complete workout -- both cardio and strength training -- that saves time. Since the program is fast-paced and offers variety, it can be more interesting and fun than a typical class that focuses on only one aspect (cardio or strength). Exercisers of all fitness levels can enjoy this class, because everyone works at their own pace and resistance level.

Sculpting

Although it's important to have a strong heart and muscles, many of our members are more concerned with being able to complete activities of daily living (ex: transporting groceries to and from the car or lifting a heavy bag off of the top shelf). Our Sculpting classes focus on this functional fitness. That is, they focus on core training (abs, hips, lower back, shoulders), balance exercises, and strength work. They involve a lot of stretching, twisting, and bending motions to mimic everyday activities.

What are the benefits? These classes have very practical applications in daily life. Consider this example: You've been diligently doing the leg press, leg extension, and leg flexion machines at the gym and feel like you're getting stronger. Then one day you squat down to pick up a heavy box and throw your back out. How could this happen? Although your leg muscles might be strong, the other muscles used to pick up the box might not be. The functional fitness training in our Sculpting classes teaches isolated muscles to work together. This style of training can also help us remain independent and injury-free.

Mind-Body

This genre of exercise, which includes yoga and Pilates, has become mainstream in fitness programs. Because of the gentle nature of these classes, participants can vary widely in age, fitness level, and body type. But, everyone can benefit from this unique style of exercise.

What are the benefits? These classes improve flexibility and strength, while also helping to relieve stress and promote relaxation. You'll notice enhanced posture, mobility, balance, and core strength in a very short amount of time.

Don't be afraid to try something new. We have an assortment of classes to cater to your likes and needs. It's easy to reach your fitness goals when you participate in activities that you enjoy.

Reference: SparkPeople.com 2008