

Serious Results for the Serious Man: The Evolution of Group Fitness

By Mari Garner

Outdoor fitness expert, Mari Garner who extended group fitness beyond the gym and into the parks, now explores a new avenue – Group Fitness for Men. As founder of [The American Boot Camp Company](#), Mari is constantly innovating her outdoor workout regimen and indoor group ex programming to meet the needs of an ever growing population of men that want the accountability and motivation of a group, but not the frou-frou dance classes or step aerobic classes offered at the local gym. “Most guys can’t and don’t want to dance at the gym. They want simple movements that are real, not choreographed and most gyms don’t provide that type of programming,” offers Garner. “We appeal to men with loud, fast beat driven music in classes where it is ok to sweat, perform power jump squats or do slow pushups to build muscle mass.”

Painting a new image of group fitness in the minds of the male client is a number one priority. Class titles like “Buns and Glutes” have to be replaced with “Boot Camp” and “Interval Training”. Class programming needs to become less choreographed, movement patterns need to become more athletic and workouts need to become shorter and geared toward a total-body experience. Most importantly, long cardio routines that build upon memorized dance steps have to be replaced with more dynamic and explosive movements to keep the interest of the males and to constantly keep them challenged physically.

The American Boot Camp Company is proving that group fitness is not just for girls. By creating workouts using athletic drills, agility training and functional movements a tough full-body workout can be achieved in every kickboxing, interval and core conditioning class. And yes, this training is done in a group. But Jane Fonda beware. There are no leg warmers, just a serious group of fitness enthusiasts – everyday athletes as they are often referred to, led by certified, athletic instructors that are tough enough to challenge any man to a pushup contest.

But don’t equate group fitness to gym class either. There are no teams to be picked, just a group of people with the same goal of getting in shape. At [The American Boot Camp Company Fitness Studio in Atlanta, GA](#), every member is there for one reason only – to get their butts kicked. They don’t put on make-up to come to the gym or wear jog bras or tight shorts. And the guys that come don’t look like Richard Simmons.

Check out this line up for the best group fitness classes for men:

Kickboxing: Interval training and heavy bag work combined to maximize calorie burn. Each class incorporates the functional movements of kickboxing with strength elements such as squatting and lunging and core elements such as pushups and ab work. See results in no time.

Female to male ratio: 15:5

Bottom line: In a society based in efficiency, this is the best full body workout. Get out all your aggression on the heavy bags and keep your nice guy reputation. Burn up to 750 calories in 45 minutes and look like a boxer. Who wouldn't want that physique?

Try this class for a major kick in the pants: Tara's 6PM class on Monday or Ricardo's 10:30AM class on Saturday

Interval: Constant action of cardio based intervals, plyometric & agility exercises and strength training using free weights, medicine balls and heavy resistance bands

Female to male ratio: 12:8

Bottom line: This is perfect if you are not a fan of weight lifting or if you want to burn some fat to show a little bit more definition. You will not be out of place in this group class.

Try this class for a major kick in the pants: Mari's 6PM class on Tuesday

Core Conditioning: Think you abs are strong? Think again. This is more than just an abs class and is guaranteed to give you that six-pack you have always wanted and make you a better athlete.

Female to male ratio: 10:4

Bottom line: Try it if even once a week to stay injury free and to improve your golf swing. Great for cross training, too.

Try this class for a major kick in the pants: Chris's 8AM class on Saturday or Mari's 6PM class on Thursday

Outdoor Fitness Boot Camp: 4-Week results based exercise and nutrition program designed to jump-start any fitness routine. All fitness levels are welcome, but participants are usually broken up into smaller groups based on their cardiovascular and strength levels. Workouts combine athletic based drills, interval training and core conditioning with running and strength training to provide ultimate results.

Female to male ratio: 20:12

Bottom line: This is the best workout in town. With multiple locations across Atlanta, [The American Boot Camp Company does fitness boot camp](#) better than any others.