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– Shannon Stone ”

ZUMBA

IN CY-FAIR!

Aerobic Exercise with a Latin Twist

Written by Michelle LeBlanc Photos by Marisa Hugonnett

It almost sounds too good to be true. A workout that burns hundreds of calories and feels more like a party than an exercise session, but Cy-Fair exercise instructors say Zumba is all of this and more. Zumba is like aerobics, but incorporates Latin-based dances including salsa, merengue, reggaeton, cumbia, and mambo. “It’s like going to a nightclub in a safe, clean environment and you all have the same goal to be physically fit. And it’s a great way to make friends,” says instructor Laura Orlando, who teaches Zumba at several locations in the Cy-Fair area. “People are able to connect on all levels through this class. It’s more than just a fitness class - it’s a lifestyle, a state of mind.”

FITNESS FOR EVERYONE

According to Cypress Dance Zumba instructor Sarah Stokes, the benefits of Zumba are numerous. “It’s an exercise program anyone can do - high or low impact, for toning or sculpting. It’s a lot of fun - you’re basically dancing the whole hour.” One hour of Zumba can burn between 300 and 400 calories, depending on how much you put into it, says instructor Shannon Stone, who teaches at the Carolyn Robert School of Dance. “You feel like you’re out dancing somewhere, but you’re actually exercising,” she says.

Besides the physical fitness benefits, taking a Zumba class benefits older and younger people in different ways. “For the older generation, it’s great for mental well being - you’re thinking about what steps to take next and actually working on brain function,” says Stone. “For the younger generation, the benefits are emotional. It changes your whole perspective on how you see yourself and others.”

Each Zumba class is different, depending upon the instructor who incorporates their own music and personality into the program. “You’ll never have two Zumba instructors who teach Zumba the

The Creation of Zumba

Celebrity fitness trainer, Beto Perez, stumbled upon the concept of Latin-inspired fitness in his native country of Colombia in the mid-1990’s. One day, he walked into his class and realized that he had forgotten his aerobics music, and his only option was to grab whatever tapes he had in his car. His tapes were comprised of the songs that he loved, the traditional Latin salsa and merengue music with which he had been raised.

But it was a challenge to improvise a whole class on the spot using non-traditional aerobics music. Perez rose to the challenge and from this last minute improvisation, he created the Zumba fitness program. The class soon became the most popular at his fitness facility.

In 1999, after his success in Colombia, Perez brought the class to the U.S., where he was approached by entrepreneurs Alberto Perlman and Alberto Aghion to create a global company based on the Zumba fitness philosophy. The three young entrepreneurs then set a goal to offer Zumba classes all over the world.

Adapted from zumba.com



The Zumba Class at World Gym begins with a warm-up and quickly moves into dance routines



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FIND A ZUMBA CLASS IN CY-FAIR

24 Hour Fitness Willowbrook

7300 W. Greens Rd.
 281-894-6151
 24hourfitness.com

Carolyn Robert School of Dance

10902 Tower Oaks Blvd.
 281-469-4874
 carolynrobertdance.com

Cypress Creek Family YMCA

19915 Hwy. 249
 281-469-1481
 ymcahouston.org/cypress-creek

Cypress Dance Studio

25250 N.W. Fwy., Ste. 280
 832-475-9142
 cypressdance.com

Gold’s Gym Bear Creek

16211 Clay Rd.
 832-593-9333
 goldsgym.com

Koenig School of Dance

8707 Spring Cypress
 281-374-8300
 koenigschoolofdance.com

LA Fitness Jersey Village

9244 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. N.
 281-640-9946
 lafitness.com

Langham Creek YMCA

16725 Longenbaugh Dr.
 281-859-6142
 ymcahouston.org/langham-creek

LifeTime Fitness

7717 Willowchase Blvd.
 281-812-4100
 lifetimefitness.com

Pine Forest Country Club

18003 Clay Rd.
 281-463-0900
 Pfcc.com

Pure Fitness for Women

6370 Louetta Rd.
 281-376-8800
 Purefitnessforwomen.com

Texas Sports Medicine Center

28120 Tomball Pkwy.
 281-351-6300
 tmc.org

same way, because we all add our own personal style, it’s very unique,” says Stokes.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

Anyone just observing a Zumba class may think that the participants have prior dance experience, but that usually isn’t the case. “The moves are easy and most people, whether they have taken dance or not, will pick them up - they are simple steps,” Stone says.

Orlando agrees, remembering when she first began taking Zumba classes. “I was a horrible dancer. My husband used to say I looked like Elaine on Seinfeld, but within six to eight weeks of taking Zumba I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror and noticed that my hips were doing what the instructor’s hips were doing,” she says. “It will make you a better dancer. Now, he’s not a good enough dancer to dance with me!”

People may be intimidated the first time they go to a Zumba class because they’re not used to the routines and the steps, but Stokes reassures newcomers they will catch on. “They come back one or two more times and get used to the music and moves and they end up coming back and getting hooked.” Stone advises those who are interested in trying a Zumba class to find an instructor and convenient location in the Cy-Fair area by visiting the zumba.com website, where you can search for classes by zip code, distance, day, and time. Stone notes that many programs will offer a free trial class. “Eighty-five percent will join the class, because they will enjoy it that much,” she says. If you know of a unique fitness program in the Cy-Fair area, email editor@cyfairmagazine.com. CFM

MICHELLE LEBLANC is a freelance writer who has lived in the Cy-fair area for eight years.



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