

Take a fresh look at fitness classes

September 20 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



Tired of taking the same old cardio class? It's time to explore some of the combination classes being offered at both large gyms and small, more personalized fitness centers.

One of the most popular options is the multi-discipline class—two or more activities woven into the same [workout](#) session, designed to keep fitness fun as well as challenge participants and avoid workout ruts. And there are many variations.

A very rigorous [combination](#) takes the high-calorie burning technique of high-intensity interval training and applies it to strength training moves using only your body weight. By focusing on exercises like lunges and squats and not worrying about grabbing equipment, you can work through the moves quickly. Some creative combo classes mix various forms of dance, so you get a [cardio](#) workout as you learn [different styles](#)—that's a great twist if you love Zumba, for instance, but want to shake it up even further. Adding an ab workout to a cardio class is another common offering. As different as they are, most of these mash-ups are designed to burn maximum calories, build lean muscle and increase stamina while keeping you engaged.

Clever fitness teachers in your area might offer their own combinations, but some global pioneers have drawn from dynamic activities to make innovative combinations, like mixing Pilates with boxing and dance, and weight-training with aerobics.

Because these are often very high-powered classes that can push up your target heart rate, it's important that you scale into them. You might need to go at a slower pace than other participants at first if the intensity level is new to you. And if you have any [health issues](#) or concerns, check with your doctor's office to make sure the class you'd like to try is safe for you.

More information: The American Heart Association has tips on [how to find your target heart rate](#) for exercise safety.

Citation: Take a fresh look at fitness classes (2019, September 20) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-09-fresh-classes.html>

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