

# Get fit and live longer

## New Pilates

I'll be honest, I have never felt the **natural high** which scientists claim follows a bout of intense exercise. The empirical evidence of my own body tells me that the only thing exercise releases in my brain is **loathing**. So I **scoff** when the people at the gym tell me I'll be hooked on a new type of Pilates in two sessions. My first session is an hour's one-on-one with Daniel, my trainer; a good idea for any beginner. Although I, disappointingly, don't actually lose any weight over my six sessions – personally, I find it rather **ups my appetite** – I can **attest to** its toning abilities. The classes themselves – which take a maximum of six people – are entertaining, and as agreeable as enforced muscle fatigue can ever be. It definitely helps if you'd already **got to grips** with some basic Pilates techniques before you start, but, once you've **got the hang of** commands such as 'squeeze that imaginary grape under your armpit'; it provides a great variety of exercise.

## Personal training

A month of sessions with a personal trainer three times a week seems like the perfect **springboard** to a better future. My personal trainer, Tony, asks me what I hope to achieve. I mutter something about losing a few pounds and **toning up** a bit, but the truth is I want to get back into my tailormade suits. It's the gap between my expectations and reality that is hardest to contend with. I know that no matter how healthy I become at the age of 36, I will still be less fit than I was as a lazy 18-year-old who did no exercise at all. But if I'm honest, I secretly believed I wouldn't actually be all that bad at this. The problem is weights. I've never bothered with them before. I take it slowly for the first few sessions but it's hard going and I eventually pull a muscle in my right arm. It's time for a few days off. I **greet a four-day respite** with enthusiasm, but actually find myself in the gym, running faster and longer than before and lifting weights well.

## Sport active

I go along to my nearest fitness centre and decide **to try out** the DVD of Sport Active, which has more than 70 different exercises on it. The programme can measure and display your heart rate, thanks to a monitor that straps to your forearm which sends information to the console. I start with tennis and **get an enormous kick out of** hitting balls into an onscreen net. I quickly move on to mountain biking, or, as I now call it, 'total physical punishment'. However, even though I am **an old hand** at cycling, by halfway round, I have clearly lost all ability **to show off**. On screen, my heart rate has rocketed up to 178. 'You're definitely getting a good cardio workout here; encourages Robert, the fitness centre trainer. Could these games damage people by suggesting the wrong positions? Robert is **dismissive**: "It's unlikely you're going to hurt yourself". I decide to carry on and after a few weeks begin to see the benefits.

## Wild fitness

Wild Fitness is more than a form of exercise, Matt, my trainer, told me that it was a whole philosophy of life: to transform yourself by learning to move and eat in the way of our **hunter-gatherer ancestors** and to become strong, fast and **agile**. It all sounded a bit bizarre but I was more than happy to give it a go. The first session began at Sam on a Monday morning in Regent's Park, London, with some introductory exercises. The hardest session came the next week when Matt told us we would sprint around the 400-metre running track four times, with a short rest in-between – no excuses allowed. I did my best and then discovered that the so-called rest was going to involve **squat thrusts**; 20 of them. Matt didn't stop there. It was thanks to him that I did far more than I would ever have done exercising alone and I looked thinner and was far more toned as a result, especially around my thighs and stomach.

Vocabulary. Explain the meaning of the following words and expressions:

natural high

loathing

to scoff

to up appetite

attest to

to get to grips

to get the hang of sth

springboard

to try out

to get an enormous kick out of...

an old hand at...

to show off

dismissive

hunter-gatherer ancestors

agile

squat thrusts

to tone up  
to greet a respite

Question:

Which of the ways of exercising would appeal to you?

Task 1:

For each sentence, replace the words in italics with one of the verbs in the box and make any other necessary changes. Decide what difference the new verb makes.

yank harangue resolve swear seethe unearth crave flout scrounge
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- a. She *lectured* me for over an hour about the need to keep fit.
- b. Laura *decided* to give up chocolate at New Year.
- c. I *promise* I won't use your bike again without asking first.
- d. 'Can I *borrow* £5 from you, do you think?'
- e. My sister really *wanted to eat* coal when she was pregnant.
- f. Jo *was very angry* when his mobile was stolen.
- g. Don't *pull* the door open like that – you'll only break it.
- h. The boys *found* some interesting old photos.
- i. Trevor *ignored* the rules of the gym and used the new equipment without permission.

Task 2:

Read the sentences below and replace the words in italics with one of the phrases with *live*.

live through live down live it up live by your wits
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learn to live with live up to your expectations
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- a. James really *had a good time* when he was in Ibiza last summer.
- b. The neighbours are the original neighbours from hell, but short of moving, we have to *get used to* them.
- c. The yoga class was brilliant – it *was everything we wanted*.
- d. No one will let me *forget* my tennis skirt falling down.
- e. We *experienced* two revolutions while we were abroad but survived both.
- f. Tom lived on the streets from an early age, but *cleverly managed to survive through his ingenuity*.