

5 CLASSES GU ATTRACT NI

We look at what's hot on the group exercise scene right now, how gym owners can use these trends to attract new audiences and, most importantly, keep everyone coming back for more!

Words: Emily Williams

This year has been an exciting year for the group exercise scene, with an array of new fitness brands coming to the forefront, the ever-growing success of dance fitness classes and the launch of FitgroupUK (the first body to bring together the group exercise industry to educate, excite and energise more of the inactive population). With all this going on, now really is the time for you to stand at the front and review your current group exercise offer. How can you differentiate yourself from other providers? How can you attract new members whilst keeping current ones inspired? How can you be a part of the bigger picture and help to get more people active? Well, here are some ideas to get you going - and spice up your timetable with these must-have classes!

Must-have class #1: Clubbercise

For some of you this may be an obvious one, but if you aren't running Clubbercise classes, then where have you been for the past year?

What is it? Fast becoming the queen of dance fitness concepts, Clubbercise offers energetic routines to club anthems with the added fun of glow sticks and disco lights. The lights are switched off and inhibitions are left outside.

Who will this attract? Women (and some men) of all ages who love to party, they'll most likely bring a friend or five along, too. The high and low impact options also mean you can attract a mix of abilities.

For more information visit www.clubbercise.co.uk

Must-have class #2: POUND

Perfect if you are looking to give your centre that edge!

What is it? POUND is a 45-minute workout for rock stars that combines light resistance with constant simulated drumming, using specially made drumsticks called Ripstix. The workout fuses cardio, Pilates, plyometrics, isometric movements and poses. POUND claim that participants can burn up to 600 calories and work muscles they almost forgot they had.

Who will this attract? Music lovers, beginners and people who aren't into tuck jumps and burpees - participants work hard, but they never leave the floor!

For more information visit www.poundfit.com



GUARANTEED TO NEW MEMBERS



Must-have class #3: Block Fit

When your timetable only has space for one more!

What is it? New kid on the fitness block, Block Fit has been created by my favourite thing to come out of XFactor - Chico Slimani. Block Fit is a one-stop shop fitness brand; a fusion of dance, combat, HIIT, yoga inspired moves, and meditation. It is a mind, body, and soul approach performed in simple to follow blocks of choreography.

Who will this attract? A wide range of fitness tastes (unsurprisingly), Block Fit gives the participant everything; HIIT to burn some fat, combat to sculpt, dance to have fun and yoga to stretch and relax. The HIIT section is pretty hard-core so be mindful that this probably isn't the one for absolute beginners.

For more information visit
www.blockfit.co.uk



Must-have class #4: The Jungle Body

Why not take a step on the wild side?

What is it? Australian-born The Jungle Body is a global fitness company who offer the world's most fierce workouts. There are currently five Jungle Body programmes:

KONGA has everything from dance to boxing, cardio to core work.

VYPA is pitched at a more intense level, fuses boxing, cardio, plyo and resistance exercises.

JAGUA is inspired by Musical Therapy, a strength and stretching class to some dancefloor classics.

TYGA is a dance fitness class which mashes up Hip-Hop, pop, Dancehall and Afro styles.

BURN! is a strength and conditioning class using dumbbells, participants curl, squat and fly to their favourite Hip-Hop tracks.

Who will this attract?

Anyone who wants to push their own limits whilst shaking their booty to Beyoncé. Although, BURN! and VYPA would cater to more experienced participants who enjoy it hard, fast and hot.

Must-have class #5: Burlexercise

Because your group exercise classes can be sassy, too!

What is it? Burlexercise classes are split into two - one half cheeky Burlesque-inspired dance fitness routines, and the other half strength and resistance with, guess what... a weighted feather boa!

Who will this attract? Burlexercise is very female-friendly, but you do see the odd showboy too (good on them)! Burlexercise introduces the benefits of weight training to a whole new audience, because, as many of us know and understand, a lot of women (and men) feel too intimidated to lift weights in the gym. The varying intensity and options throughout make it a great class for anyone to let loose, de-stress and have fun.

For more information visit
www.burlexercise.co.uk



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Thinking outside of the box

So, you've nailed your timetable and found the perfect blend of classics and fresh trends, which (of course) you regularly review and refine; hurrah! Now it's time to take this even further to maximise your membership sales and retention.

Getting techy with it!

Let's face it, we're living in a very virtual world, but this does hold exciting opportunities for the fitness industry! In recent months we've seen companies like LES MILLS and Nintendo embrace the digital era and think innovatively about changing, arguably, a cause of inactivity to a potential answer. LES MILLS have launched their new virtual reality spin class THE TRIP, and Nintendo have unveiled their super cool and ever growing PokémonGo app which has taken the world by storm. So, how can you use technology to give your members a whole new experience? Is it a simple dance mat in the corner of the gym? A silent disco spin studio? To be continued on that one.

Make it more personal

Put yourself in the shoes of your potential customer; whoever they are, they are likely to be busy and have other commitments which sit above going to three classes a week. You can make your timetable as varied and cool as you like, but if you can make it easy, convenient and specific for them too then you are onto a winner.

Whether you're an occasional gym user or haven't taken part in exercise for some years, coming to your first group exercise class can be extremely daunting. So, make it clear what level the class is set at and what to expect; people feel a lot more comfortable if they are prepared for something. Think back to basics too; what's it like when they arrive? Are they greeted nicely by the instructor? Are the rest of your gym team friendly and approachable? Creating a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere will keep them coming back and encourage them to tell their friends.

And speaking of friends, why not introduce a 'Bring a Friend' system? This is a great way to encourage new people to try classes and for you to showcase your talents. Remember, first impressions can be deal breakers so ensure you make every class count.

Not every class has to be an hour - have a go at trialling some 20-30 minute classes (at a variety of levels). Some people may find it hard to commit to a whole hour or may be doubtful about coping with the duration so this could help reduce those barriers.

Your timetable - more than just classes

The first thing to consider are events. What events can you put on and what events can you go along to? Flash mobs, world record attempts, themed open days, fundraisers, community events, and family days - the possibilities are endless.

Your timetable also doesn't have to fall within the hours of 9am and 8pm; Morning Glory, for example, wakes up the busy folk of London by offering early morning fitness raves. Could you do something similar? Have you ever thought about local businesses too? Could you offer some kind of workforce project or incentive? Why not check out the Workplace Challenge (www.workplacechallenge.org.uk) now to see how you could get involved?

Invest in your workforce

A strong, skilled and empowered team is key when increasing your membership. They are the face of your product so it's imperative they have an up-to-date and extensive knowledge of your clients, your business, and the wider industry.

A good way of upskilling staff is through CPD opportunities; the Exercise Move Dance Academy, for example, provides a wealth of courses for staff to gain extra knowledge and skills as well as training bursaries to help expand their class repertoire. Check out what's available at www.emdacademy.org.

Ensure your instructors are supported every step of their career, too. Teaching can be a lonely job, going from place to place on your own, so make them feel a part of your team by involving them in updates, creative meetings, decision making and socials. Give them the tools they need to do their job well, from supplying equipment that works to helping them find the best deal on insurance. The Exercise Movement & Dance Partnership membership packages are a one-stop shop for instructors, offering very competitively priced insurance, discounts on PPL and REPs and expert advice on the end of the phone.

Find out more at www.exercisemovedance.org



Emily works as communications manager for the Exercise Movement & Dance Partnership, the national governing body for dance fitness and group exercise in the UK. Emily is also a qualified dance instructor, fitness and nutrition blogger, mygroupfit ambassador, keen runner and women's sport advocate. She is truly passionate about fitness, especially dance fitness, and aims to inspire more people to be active. Emily is currently training to be a personal trainer and looks forward a long and rewarding career in the fitness industry.

Find out more about Emily's work at www.exercisemovedance.org

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