

SIS30315: Certificate III in Fitness

SISXCAI006 - Facilitate groups

Notebook



SISXCAI006 - Facilitate groups

When working with groups, the instructor needs to be able to:

Plan the establishment of a group

- Identify the **needs** of the individuals/group and the activity goals

→ Needs

- physical and/or emotional
- Negotiate acceptance for the establishment of group goals within the individual's/group's expectations
- Establish clearly defined purpose, roles, and responsibilities within the group
- Establish a **group performance** plan

→ Group performance

- criteria
- monitoring and assessment methods
- factors that may contribute to optimal performance
 - task allocation
 - mentoring



Monitor group formation

- Establish criteria against which group development and performance will be measured
- Establish systems and mechanisms to monitor and review group development and performance
- Identify potential **barriers** to group development and performance

→ Barriers

- includes factors that may be barriers to group formation
 - conflict of interest
 - conflict between individual and group goals
 - personality clashes
 - poor communication skills

- poorly defined

responsibilities and roles

- Develop and implement strategies to reduce/eliminate **barriers**

Develop group commitment and co-operation

- Demonstrate use of shared information, open communication and constructive feedback to develop and maintain **group dynamics**, commitment and co-operation

→ Group dynamics

- communication
- decision making
- conflict resolution
- trust
- safety
- respect
- Demonstrate use of open communication to establish trust, confidence and ownership in group decision-making, feedback and problem solving processes

Facilitate group processes

- Develop group effectiveness through active participation and **facilitation**, and demonstrate sensitivity to the effect the leader's behaviour has on colleagues

→ Facilitation skills

- strategies for group work include
 - goal setting
 - group management
 - monitoring and review processes
 - negotiation
 - defining roles and responsibilities
- Demonstrate use of collaborative approaches to develop effective working relationships which help to accomplish strategic and operational goals
- Facilitate and achieve individual and collective empowerment whilst maintaining group cohesion
- Identify and facilitate group resolution of **problems which impede individual and group performance**, using external assistance (as required)



→ Problems

- factors that may impede group performance
 - conflict of interest
 - conflict between individual and group goals
 - personality clashes
 - inadequate/inappropriate skills to perform task
 - poor communication skills
 - lack of group cohesion and commitment to group goals



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- inadequately defined
- poorly defined responsibilities and roles

goals

- Demonstrate routine use of cross-cultural (including gender appropriate) communication strategies

Manage and facilitate group performance

- Assess competencies of group members regularly, and refresh as required, to meet group plans
- Provide mentoring and support to individuals and **groups** to enhance knowledge and skills

→ Groups

- types of groups may include
 - full time employees
 - part time employees
 - clients
 - volunteers
- differences within groups may include
 - gender
 - culture
 - socio-economic



- Allocate tasks to group members so that the diverse skills of each group member make a maximum contribution to the outcome
- Devolve responsibility and accountability to group members, where appropriate to the activity context, program aims, and group members' abilities
- Monitor and follow up delegations and tasks to assess the performance of group members in relation to their responsibilities
- Recognise achievement(s) with appropriate recognition and/or reward

NOTES

Class Structure:

To ensure that your members experience the excitement and physical benefits of your class, the class needs to be pre-set with all the moves constructed in a near perfect format. The class is constructed of 10 tracks with a warm up, 7 work out tracks, an abdominal workout and cool down track.

Making the class adaptable for all age groups

The instructor needs to be trained in understanding music rhythms. By following strict guidelines, they will be able to modify or adjust the intensity, making it adaptable to the elderly or children, who may be able to complete the usual class structure.

Example of a class structure;



Bar class example

- Track 1 warm up
- Track 2 chest
- Track 3 shoulders/ biceps
- Track 4 back
- Track 5 triceps
- Track 6 squats
- Track 7 lunges/ calf raises
- Track 8 ABS
- Track 9 cool down

Example of tracks used, dependent on class type

Warm up

Designed to supply adequate blood supply to all parts of the body, and to ensure that muscles are prepared for an increase in the intensity of the workout. The speed of the music needs to be slow.

Work-out tracks 2-8

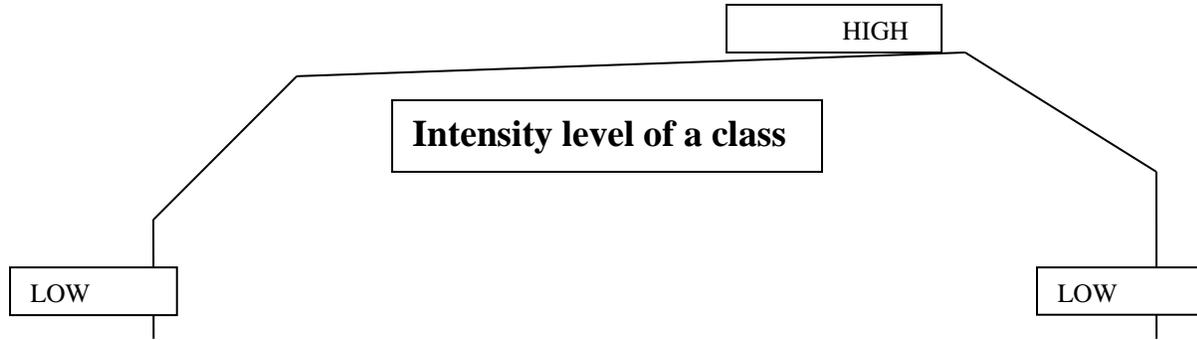
The intensity increases with the speed and components (depending on program)

Abdominal track 9

Abdominal conditioning, not required in a pilates or yoga class

Cool down track 10

The objective is to reduce heart rate through the use of breathing control and the incorporation of stretching moves. Ensure all muscle groups have been stretched.



Energy Systems and your class

Group exercise classes should provide the participant with an all over body workout. This should include the use of our anaerobic (ATP and Lactic acid system) and our aerobic energy systems (using oxygen). We make use of both our anaerobic and aerobic energy systems in class, by manipulating the intensity from track to track (interval training).

ATP-PC Energy System

We use this system during short bursts of intense physical activity (jumping knees etc). The ATP system provides energy almost immediately where power muscular effort is required. This energy system provides enough energy for activity lasting up to 10 seconds.

Lactic Acid (glycolytic) System

For intense activity of more than 10 seconds, this (fuel reserve) system must take over. In martial arts classes, we use this system to provide energy (jabs, followed by a roundhouse kick etc).

Aerobic Energy System

Used in low level intensity exercise, this system allows the body to exercise for prolonged periods of time, as it is primarily using oxygen (jogging etc). In class, this might be a recovery track after a more high intensity track.

Energy Zone	Intensity Range	Energy systems
Recovery	50-65% MHR	Aerobic
Endurance	65-75% MHR	Aerobic/Anaerobic
Strength	75-85% MHR	Anaerobic
Interval	65-90% MHR	ATP/PC/ Anaerobic



Music Structure:

With all classes, the moves must be in perfect balance. It is important that the music is structured correctly so that there is a full body workout ensuring all muscle groups on both sides of the body have been trained.

8 counts = 8 beats

|||||||

Block = 8 x 8 = 64 counts

||||||| / ||||||| / ||||||| / ||||||| / ||||||| / ||||||| / ||||||| / |||||||

Martial Arts class

- punches can use rhythms 1,2 & 4
- kicks can use rhythms 2 & 4 only

Bar class

- use rhythms 1,2 & 4
- back track can use rhythms 2 & 4

Step, aerobics, circuit class

- use rhythms 1,2 & 4

Pilates & Yoga class

- use rhythms 2 & 4

Cycle class

- can use rhythms 1,2 & 4 (also 0.5/double time)



Speed example

Circuit class	125-160 bpm (changing 1-2 mins)
Aerobic class	125-155 bpm
Bar class	125-135 bpm
Step class	125-145 bpm
Kickboxing/aerobics	125-150 bpm (balanced both sides)

→ In class, we can adjust the intensity of the class by changing the rhythms of the music. Changing the rhythms enables us to be able to adapt and change the intensity level to suit participants.

In class,

- *safety is your first priority*
- use correct equipment
- depending on specific class, correct application and use of equipment
- range of movement
- correct posture and body alignment
- accurate combination of moves

Choreography

Movements need to be pre-choreographed, this will provide standardization of the program no matter where it is to be presented. Pre-choreographing moves will also ensure that the classes are delivered in a safe manner, instructors can change the speed of the rhythm to alter the intensity, to suit a variety of age groups and fitness levels.

Choreography Example

Martial Arts

Intro- set up

Block 1- 3 x upper cuts

Block 2 – 3 x upper cuts plus 1 knee

Block 3- 3 x upper cuts plus 2 knees

Block 4 – Recovery jogging

Block 5 – repeat block 3

LOW

Intensity levels

MEDIUM

HIGH

Very LOW

HIGH

Repeat other side



CLEAR CORRECT INSTRUCTIONAL CUES AND WORD SELECTION ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF YOUR DELIVERY

Verbal and Visual cues

VERBAL CUES

- what to say
- when to say it
- do they understand you
- are you saying too much

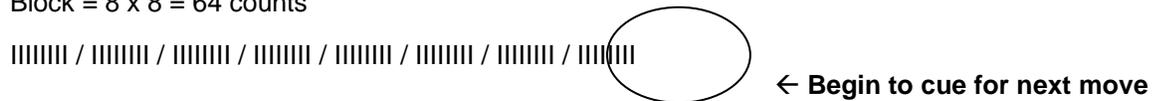
Often in a class, we give too much information, it is important we reach our objectives with what we say and when we say it. We need a straight forward approach...

Example

“GO”, instead of “can you all please move now”

→ Pre-cueing is important so that we don't leave anyone behind. Using the last couple of counts in a track to explain the next move for the next track is a good way to pre-cue your participants.

Block = 8 x 8 = 64 counts

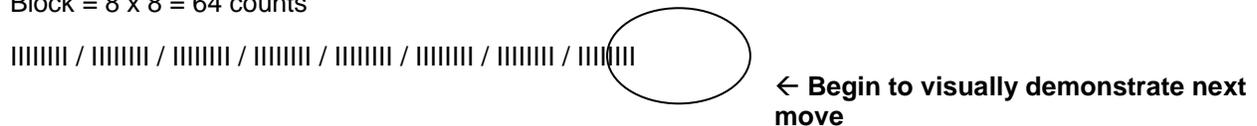


VISUAL CUES

- understand your signals
- show clear direction
- class control

These are cues that your participants see, often in a class when the tempo is fast it is hard to get a verbal cue across fast enough, so a visual cue may be more efficient.

Block = 8 x 8 = 64 counts





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EXAMPLE of VISUAL and VERBAL CUES

YOUR OBJECTIVE	COMPLEX CUE	SIMPLE VERBAL CUE	SIMPLE VISUAL CUE
Getting the class to move in a direction	'could you all move please?'	"go"	Directional movement pointing in the direction you want the class to move
Getting the class to stop	"id like everyone to finish moving please"	"stop"	Stop sign using your hand
Safety: showing a safety drill for a kick during set up phase	"id like everyone to turn your foot and show me their heel please"	"show me your heel"	Point to your foot

Communication

As we have discussed, in a class setting, we communicate both verbally and non-verbally with visual cues. We are continually communicating through our tone of voice, the words we use, and our body language. Communication is a key element that can guarantee a large class of participants.

To ensure a fun, effective class that ensures re-attendance by participants, we need to be continuously communicating;

- Focus on the entire class! – connect with all participants
- Focus on the individual! – eye contact, names, body language

- using names of participants if possible
- using the room and all the space possible

Other ways of communicating with class members:

Sharing your cycling experiences
Greeting participants as they arrive to class
Staying back after class
Offering your services

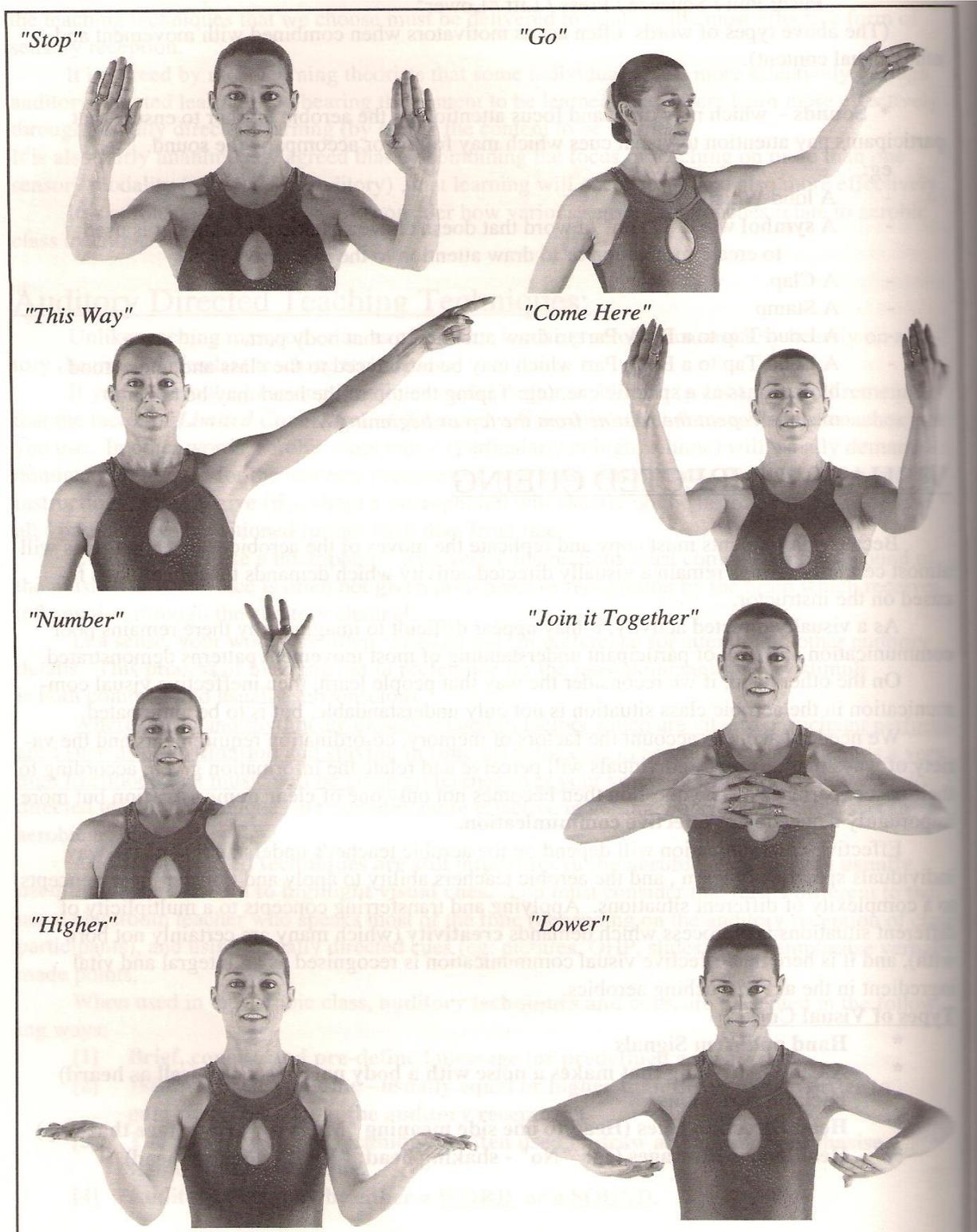
These techniques will ensure participant feedback that is positive!

- ✚ Focus on and connect with the whole class
 - smile
 - say hello, how are you going?, or I'm glad you could make it today
 - make eye contact with everyone in the class at least once, even in the back row
 - share your own stories / your experiences to connect with the class
- ✚ Focus on the individual by using eye contact, names, body language
 - try chatting with new participants pre class or post class to acknowledge them
 - a personalized comment makes participants feel appreciated and ensure the class is personal
 - offer your services/advise after the class to people wanting to ask any questions etc

***A good communicator is a good instructor,
a good instructor delivers a safe class,
a safe class is a great class!!***



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Teaching/ Correction Techniques

Teaching exercise to music classes involve much more than simply signaling direction and cueing. Teaching techniques for classes encompasses the total communication process throughout the whole session.

The following factors will affect even the best intentions of the instructor:

- ⊕ The length of teaching experience of the instructor, and how the experience has been applied
- ⊕ The quality of training completed by the instructor
- ⊕ The instructors aptitude for the task

Think back

Remember your own education

Remember your own teachers

Remember the times you felt good and did well

Remember the times you disliked a particular teacher or felt uncomfortable or awkward in a class

Some of you may be experiencing these feelings all over again in learning how to teach group exercise classes

Most people relate their best achievements to those teachers who were most positive, who made learning as easy as possible, and even enjoyable.

Although the group exercise studio is a lot different to a classroom, we can say that there exist many common elements, simply because in both settings:

- learning and motivation must occur in order to success to occur
- the human brain learns by taking information in through the senses and uses many of the same processing methods for lots of different kinds of information.

That is, in some ways, the method the brain uses to process and remember a series of numerals or script patterns, is much the same process used to process and remember movement patterns.

Positively geared teaching techniques

- ♪ are those in which make people feel good about themselves
- ♪ techniques which can be applied without resulting in negative feedback to individuals
- ♪ often designed to occur before or on introduction to the movement pattern of task so that the teacher takes the responsibility for introducing the exercise in such a way that the anticipated error pattern simply does not occur.

Negatively geared teaching techniques

- ♪ are those that can make people feel bad about themselves while they are participating in your class
- ♪ can cause people to feel that it is their own fault for a movement error pattern or position
- ♪ those techniques which depend on highlighting the learners performance as an error pattern and giving feedback in order to justify the correction, after the incorrect pattern has been performed



An accountable teacher will say:

“It is not that they cannot do it or cannot learn it but...

It is that I (class instructor) have not devised an effective way to teach it to them... YET!”

Strategy for implementing positively geared teaching techniques

1. Anticipate – likely error patterns
2. Identify – error pattern related difficulties and their cause
3. Pre-place with compound sensory focus – to lead participants into correct accurate patterns, before the whole movement pattern is underway by using cues which involve as many senses or sensory channels of communication as possible (visual, auditory, tactile)
4. Cue attention
 - + focus on closest joint area
 - + offending destination pointTo ensure correct movement pattern is achieved in quickest most efficient method learning
5. Create a unit based teaching progression

Motivation

When we want to motivate people, our aim is to move them from one place to another physically, emotionally and experientially. To be a successful motivator, you need to move people further than where they thought they could go themselves.

For people to feel motivated, they need to feel like they belong or are apart of a group. A great way to make people feel a part of a group is to include yourself in the group. You can do this by saying things such as “lets all sprint”. This is an extremely powerful and influential way to endorse team building, which in turn creates a sense of community and can create a strong team like feel.

There are 3 ways to motivate participants in your class:

- Physically: prompt and cue, performing the moves at a high intensity
- Emotionally: create the chance for your participants to release tension and fear, benefiting from the class. For example, visually and verbally empower the participants with the use of music
- Experientially ‘the journey’: expand the participants experience by linking their concentration with the sequence of moves

A great motivational tool is the lyrics of a song. Often lyrics can explain an action or an emotion. An increase or build up of the intensity of the sound in a song, can help motivate participants to increase the intensity of their workout. Ensure your tone of voice matches the songs build up.

Remember, YOU are the motivator!!





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Music Interpretation

Vocals

A great motivational tool is the lyrics of the song. Listen to the songs, try and dissect the words and think, "how can I utilize this in my class?". Often lyrics may explain an action or an emotion

Sounds

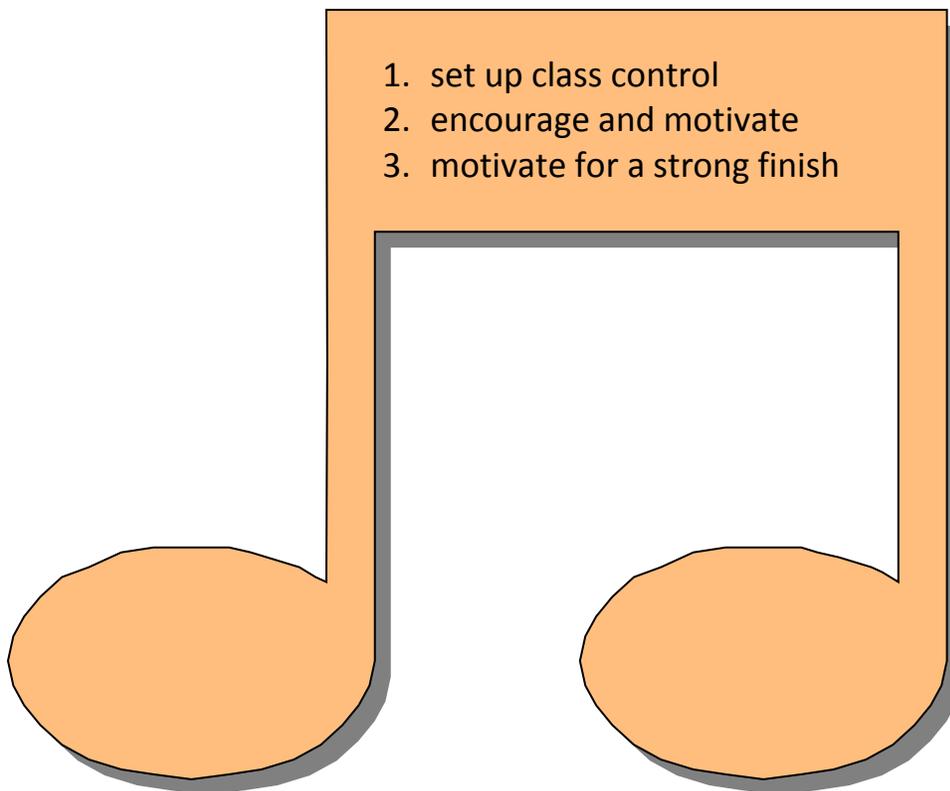
The sounds we hear in music are also another great way to motivate participants. For example, an increase in the build up of the intensity of sound in a song, can help participants to increase the intensity of their workout. When using sounds of music to help motivate, ensure to tune your voice to the sound of the music to increase motivation.

Type of track

WE have a variety of tracks that we use throughout our classes. For example, a SPRINT and HILL track in a cycle session. There is a variation between the two, and this variation will depend on where we use the track in the class (start or mid motivation track)

Strength tracks are slow and when the workout is more focused.

IN contrast, aerobic tracks are often relaxed and the tempo of the music is faster.





CLASS FORMAT

No single class format is appropriate for all group exercise classes. Generally classes will be segmented into:-

- *Pre-class preparation / warm up*: most classes will begin with pre-class preparation followed by a warm up. The warm up includes specific movements to prepare for the cardio activity. These movements are performed at a low to medium speed and range of motion, also increase blood flow to the muscles.

PRE CLASS PREPARATION-

- Know participants health history and survey new participants
- Be available before class to orient new participants
- Discuss appropriate attire/ dress appropriately as a role model
- Have music cued and ready before class
- Acknowledge class and introduce self
- Preview class format and individual responsibilities
- Bring and encourage participants to bring water to class

WARM UP SEGMENT-

- Designed to 'break a sweat'
- Focus on and rehearse moves as a large part of movement selection
- Include stretches if appropriate
- Verbal directions are clear
- Music volume and tempo are appropriate
- Instructor must use correct form, and observe participants and suggest adaptations if incorrect
 - ♪ Controlled and rhythmic in nature
 - ♪ Activities which require low to medium resistance
 - ♪ Warm up specificity is important: muscle groups and structures stressed during main activity should be warmed up prior to commencement
- *cardio-respiratory*: aimed at improving cardio-respiratory endurance and body composition and keeps the HR elevated for 10-30 minutes.

Benefits

- elevates muscle temperature
- increases blood flow to working muscles
- decreases lactic acid production at any given workload
- increases lactate dispersal and metabolism
- increases muscle elasticity
- increases aerobic enzyme activity within the working muscles
- increases metabolic rate

CARDIO SEGMENT-

- promote independence and self responsibility
 - gradually increase intensity
 - give impact or intensity options for differing levels
 - build the sequence logically and progressively
 - utilize a variety of muscle groups
 - use music to create a motivational atmosphere
 - monitor intensity through HR and/or RPE checks
 - incorporate post cardio/cool down stretches
- *muscular strength and endurance*: this can be added either before or after the cardio segment, depending on the activity.

→ General recommendations when designing an aerobic class

- ✚ integrate the use of all major muscle groups by integrating un-elevated movement patterns, elevated movement patterns, and arm/shoulder work
- ✚ apply intensity variables at a suitable level for the fitness capacity of your participants
- ✚ apply design variables at a suitable level for the coordination level of your participants

MUSCULAR STRENGTH / ENDURANCE SEGMENT-

- encourage muscle balance and functional fitness
 - give verbal cues on posture/spinal alignment
 - utilize equipment safely and effectively
 - create a motivational and instructional atmosphere
- *flexibility / cool down*: a gradual cool down reduces the HR towards resting levels, and prevents excessive pooling of blood in the lower extremities. Stretching and flexibility component included, designed to further reduce HR, help prevent muscle soreness and enhance overall flexibility.

Base moves for resistance phase:

✚ push up

→ Any action that pushes the body away from the ground with resistance caused as a result of pushing against the force of gravity. Eccentric muscle work occurs as the body is lowered toward the ground again

✚ trunk curl/limb curl

→ Can be achieved by contracting various muscle groups associated with the spine to create a curl effect. Remember as the muscles of the abdominal region are required to contract, the opposing muscles associated with the back region are elongated and vice versa. Eccentric muscle work occurs as the body is lowered toward the ground

✚ limb – lift/lower

→ A limb lift is a movement pattern which requires the limb to be moved away from the body in an action which opposes the force of gravity.

A limb lower is a movement pattern which requires the limb to be moved toward the body in an action which may be assisted by gravity or which may require that the muscles work eccentrically to resist the speed of gravity.

Muscles may work concentrically in a limb lower if opposing muscle groups to those focused in the limb lift, are employed to pull the leg toward the body in a concentric action.



limb – push/pull

→ A limb curl is a movement pattern which requires the limb to curl at the knee or elbow joint toward the body.

A limb extension is a movement pattern which requires the limb to straighten.

Resistance Variables- may be used to adjust the workload or resistance of the exercises which you have selected for the resistance phase of the class.

- Range of movement
- Length of lever
- Speed
- Resistance applied
- Number of repetitions
- Duration
- Base of weight bearing support
- momentum

FLEXIBILITY SEGMENT-

- stretches for major muscle groups used
- relaxation concludes the flexibility segment

- ♪ isolate the muscle
- ♪ relax the muscle
- ♪ stretch the muscle at the end range...
- ♪ move the origin as far away from the insertion as possible in a line through the midline of the muscle belly
- ♪ carry out a movement which is the opposite of the prime moving action or actions of that muscle

Benefits

- elongate muscle tissue
- muscle tissue that has been warmed and stretched is capable of greater work out put
- allows muscle tissue to work through full range of motion ROM with a decreased incidence of tissue damage



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Safe, effective and purposeful class design requires a specific knowledge of fitness so that the appropriate overload is provided to help achieve the desired gains. Modify the different segments to meet the needs of the ever changing fitness industry.

It is important to know that group exercise carries with it a lot of power if participants feel welcome, are learning, get to know others, and feel that their time spent was worthwhile. One of the biggest challenges about being a group exercise instructor is being able to balance all of these challenges. It is important that instructors move beyond emphasizing merely quantity fitness gains and future outcomes, and understand that the real power of exercise lies in the experience itself.





Do you make any of these mistakes while teaching fitness?

No matter how long or often you have been teaching fitness, you are bound to wonder if you are attracting as many participants as you could. Simple idiosyncrasies about any instructor's personality are magnified when they put on that head mic. An instructor is truly on stage, only instead of just performing, an instructor must also lead and participate. And don't think that one wrong move won't turn countless participants away from your class.

The articles you will find in this section deal with the intangible, people kinds of issues you will encounter leading fitness experiences. This is not a place to get choreography or physiology. It's about something more basic, but often overlooked. It's about the group fitness class participant's experience, and how you can maximize it.

Dealing with Talkers in Class

What to do when they don't SHUT UP!

We've all had talkers in class. But have you ever watched your other participants' faces as they struggle to deal with an obvious annoyance like 2 people who won't shut up? This type of distraction is not just a pet peeve - it's bad for your class.

A talker is a problem for a variety of reasons, but the bottom line is that they are a problem. Since you are the instructor, the room is your domain. And the class is looking to you to be in control. If you don't stand up to someone who is annoying everyone your attendance will suffer.

Listed below are a few tried and true methods:

Stand by - Walk right over to the talker and teach from the spot right beside her. Don't say a word to her, and don't acknowledge that you have even changed your location in the room. Just teach from right beside her for a minute. I like to pick the loudest talker and teach right beside her, but you can also position yourself in the middle of the conversation. I don't know why this works, but it does. When they see you coming, they shut up.

Turn it up - Two options - turn up the music or turn up the intensity.

A - Turn the music up loud so they can't hear each other. This especially works well with dawdlers from the class before yours. Probably not appropriate for yoga class...

B - Turn up the intensity. If you are teaching an athletic training class, then lead them through a particularly tough drill. If you are teaching yoga, put them in chair pose and have them hold for 4 or 5 deep breaths.

Make a joke - I was taking a spin class today and two men were holding a conversation. The instructor looked at them chatting away and said 'Alright if you are still talking then you aren't working hard enough.' Then she smiled really big and the whole class laughed and had a great time. And guess what - not a peep out of those two for the rest of class. A lot of times I like to say 'Don't make me separate you two' - but this does not go over well with women. It's a little condescending, even with the big smile at the end. Everyone has their own style, but whatever you say deliver it with a big smile at the end. Then let the class hoop and hollar a little - like a team would do.

Address it head on - For a really chronic problem try talking to them outside of class. Let them know how it makes the other participants feel. Tell them that they are cheating themselves and detracting from the effectiveness of the class.

Chances are your talkers don't realize how damaging their conversation is. But you have to address it. Try these non-confrontational methods first. Don't be afraid to be in control of your classroom - your participants will appreciate it in the end.

Early Leavers

Deterring participants from skipping the cool down to cut out early

I take a spinning class every morning at 5:30AM with the rest of the Type A personalities. It's a pre-formatted, canned type class (meaning that the instructor is bound to a format and a script that has been given to him/her.) The last 2 songs are a free spin/cooldown and then a stretch. A lot of participants tend to view these 2 pieces of the workout as 'optional'.

They get off their bike and do one of 2 things. A - they quietly leave. B - they start a conversation with their neighbor, do a stretch, say goodbye to the instructor, then leave. Both of these options are detrimental to the class.

The cooldown is important. It gives your participants something to visualize and look forward to during that last round of the workout. Cooldown should feel good and allow their minds to disengage from the work and focus on feeling their body.

Flexibility is a component of fitness that should not be overlooked. A flexible muscle is a muscle that will withstand a fall or training accident much better than a tight muscle. Flexibility helps improve performance and endurance by allowing better circulation through all of the muscle fibers, whereas a tight muscle may have proper circulation only at the points nearest large arteries and vessels.

So - how do you impress the importance of staying through cooldown to your class? Communicate, Educate, and Stay in Control of the Room.

Communicate - Make an announcement at the beginning of class. "OK - now if you need to leave early please let me know now, otherwise please stay through the whole class. If you do leave early please do so quietly so as not to disturb anyone else's cooldown." Telling the class up front that you expect them to stay for the whole class helps them set the goal of doing the whole class. It also lets them know that the end of class is just as serious as the beginning, and that you don't expect disruptions by those who are leaving early.

Another way to communicate - talk through stretches. Lead visualizations and breathing exercises that allow participants to feel the muscles they are stretching. If you are not sure how to do this attend a yoga or pilates class. These do a great job of drawing parallels between objects and body parts, allowing participants to understand the physiology of a particular movement better.

Educate - Let them know why the cooldown is important. Tell them about how flexibility helps them achieve their fitness goals. As you perform a stretch talk about anatomy - give them the names of the muscle groups and tell them which is the antagonist and protagonist, as well as the major functions of these muscle groups. People really do enjoy gaining knowledge - it makes them feel closer to their fitness goals.

Stay in Control of the Room - As people leave the room they tend to start conversations with neighbors and friends. They may even try to talk to you. This is not appropriate during cooldown, and especially during stretch time. The room should be quiet and relaxed. Dim the lights and lower the music. If someone tries to speak to you, use body language to let them know that you are busy. If they stay in the room and try to have a conversation with each other you may want to pull the mic off and walk over.

One last thought, when a particular participant leaves early as a rule you may not be getting the opportunity to bond or communicate with that person. See if you can't learn why. We should always make an effort to get to know each participant by name, current fitness level, and reason for participation. If you have a participant that you can't seem to get any one on one time with you may consider pulling them aside DURING class and asking if they can stay after class to speak with you. Spend a minute getting to know them and their current circumstance as it pertains to their participation in the class. It will solidify your relationship with them and help to make him/her a loyal participant.

Have Some Fun with Your Class

Here are some simple ways

I get such inspiration from the 5:30 AM spinning class that I sometimes participate in. What a group! They are fun, hard working, and dedicated.

I don't think we would all be there week after week at that early hour if it wasn't fun. We hoop and holler, make fun of each other, and push each other to work harder.

It gets me thinking about ways to have fun with your classes. Here goes:

1. **Build a team** - The class that works together, stays together. OK, corny but true in a lot of ways. When you get them feeling bonded and cohesive they will work harder for and with each other while becoming more loyal to you. Try running fire drills: have everyone stepping on their steps to the beat or jogging in place, then go to one person and make them run a lap around the room. When that one person returns to their spot pick someone else to do it. The participants who are in their spots cheer the runner on. Continue until everyone has done a lap.
2. **Try some props** - Bring a squirt gun to class and bust it out 3/4 of the way through. Play a silly old song during cool down (I like 'The Fat Boys are Back' 80's rap song for ab work.) Wear some sunglasses during the 'Sunglasses at Night' drill. Write on the mirrors with a window marker. And remember, your most effective prop is your smile. Wear it all the time, make 'em wonder if you shouldn't be drug tested.
3. **Break out of comfort zones** - Change is good.
 - o **Theirs** - Use one song as your 'move' song. Make everyone take a different place in the room for 4 minutes. Or (gasp) make them take a partner. They won't be happy about it at first, but deliver the news with your most important prop - your smile. They will enjoy the change once you get them to try it.
 - o **Yours** - Tell a knock knock joke. Wear something a little outrageous. Force yourself to walk all the way to the back of the room and teach from there for a few minutes. Teach facing the participants (this is best practice anyway.) Complacency is not good for instructors - it is the start of burn out.

4. **Plan** - Implementing your 'fun' will not come naturally. You are going to have to plan and practice.
 - **Program** - Write out the entire class segment by segment. Note the places that you will use these tools. Teach the same program to the same music for a few weeks. Your classes will not notice, but you will get more comfortable with it each time.
 - **Entertainment Ops** - Look for place during your program to crack a joke, or squirt them with your squirt gun. I use the song 'Jump' by the Pointer Sisters, and there is one part where we are all holding at the bottom of a squat when they sing 'Jump'. So I just do a little leap without leaving my squat. It just makes the class look twice - it entertains them a little. Gets them through the rough parts because they are busy wondering what you are going to do next.

The more fun your class is having, the harder they are going to work for you. Further, the more fun they have the better the experience, the more loyalty they develop, the more they tell their friends about your class. And larger classes are more rewarding to teach and provide more value to your facility.

Microphone Mistakes

I've done it too...

I know you have taken a class from someone whose mic is turned up too loud, it cuts in and out, or their voice just plain hurts your ears. Guess what - that instructor is you. Yes it is. The mic is an issue in most classes, but most instructors swear they are using it correctly - well you do the math.

Here's how to be sure you are being heard (and not like the teacher on Charlie Brown - 'wa wa wa waaa'):

Volume - You should not be able to hear your own voice from the speakers while you are teaching. Remember, the way you hear yourself is different than the way the participants hear you. Your ears have to fight against the vibration of your voicebox to hear the sound of your voice on the speakers. So if you turn the mic up loud enough to hear yourself coming off those speakers the mic is probably too loud for the class. Your voice will be grating and painful to your participants at this volume.

Look for a good balance between microphone volume and music. Check this BEFORE class. Turn the music on at the volume you will be playing it at, put the mic on, and walk to the middle of the room. Then gently blow in to the mic or speak. If you can hear that you are on the speakers, but can't hear yourself coming through very well, then you are at the right volume.

Mic Meltdown - the most common culprit of a fuzzy or flaky signal is low batteries. For God's sake - get to class 5 minutes early and change the battery. Don't ask the instructor before you if they changed it, and don't assume that it will still be working in 35 minutes. If you get to class late, make them wait the extra 2 minutes while you change the battery. Just change it. ESPECIALLY in gyms with rechargeable batteries - there is just no excuse for a run down battery in the middle of class.

Avoiding re-verb, feedback, and ear pain - a lot of instructors - especially women - like to turn the treble on the music up because when they do this they hear their own voice over the speakers more clearly. The problem is this - bass is what pumps the music and music is what motivates the participants. Bass is the part of the music that you feel in your body. Bass is the soothing, steady, drum beat sound. Treble is the rest and treble alone is physically painful to listen to without the bass to even it out. Plus treble actually interferes with your voice - especially if you are a woman. If anything, you want as much bass as possible - leave the treble right in the middle! This will allow you to be heard, and allow the music to do its job as well.



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One more thing - shouting 'weeehew' in to the mic is not motivating, it's annoying. Words of encouragement and praise are motivating. The 'weeehew' and 'hhheehah'ing should come from the class as a response to something you've said, done, or prompted. Please use words, not sounds or yells, when wearing a mic.

Always watch your participants - if they seem like they aren't hearing you make some adjustments. Always use hand signals along with your verbal queues. And be kind to your participants' ears. An appreciative class will grow and grow.

Speaking Effectively to Your Class How to Say What You Mean

The way you speak to your class will in no uncertain terms effect their experience and success in class. Not only will it effect how they feel about you, it will effect how hard they work for you and their depth of understanding for the concepts and movements you are teaching. Also, the types of words and word patterns you use effect they way they feel about you as a person AND as an instructor. And that will effect attendance.

This is exactly what I have learned from 13 years of wearing a head mic for 10 hours or more a week.

1 - Never Say "Never" When giving directions, corrections, or queues, start with a positive. Always say "do this" instead of "don't do this." I like to compare this concept to a conversation with my kindergartner. If we were standing in a room containing 100 sharp tools hung on the walls and he walked over to an large axe with his hand extended, my first reaction would be to say 'Don't touch that ax.' The problem is, that statement leaves 99 sharp tools still in play. If I say 'Stand in the center of the room and be still' he has no other options. Nothing is left in play.

The same can be true when dealing with participants. Let's say you are trying to correct improper squat form. Saying 'Don't push your knees forward' is a correct movement queue, but now instead of pushing their knees forward they aren't bending them at all and are instead bending at the hip. Instead say 'Push your tush back and down.' That movement queue is concise and positive. It leaves your participant no other options than to perform the exercise exactly the way you described it.

2 - Use Visual and Feeling Queues. Let's revisit the squat scenario from the last paragraph. You give your participant the movement queues using positive ques, and lo and behold, they perform the movement correctly. Hooray! You have crested a hill, but you have not yet conquered the mountain.

In order to ensure that you participants maintain correct form over their entire exercising career you must make them understand the how and why of the movement.

However, participants are not in class for an anatomy and physiology lesson, and we are not about to give one. Instead, we are going to tell them what the movement should look like from the inside of their brain, and where they should feel the work being done.

So, in the squat scenario you already have a proper movement queue, 'Push your tush back and down.' An added visualization helps cement the concept. 'Push your tush back and down like you are going to sit in a chair that is positioned 12 inches behind your heels.' Or 'Imagine a waitress with a tray full of food trying to open a door with her tush - start the movement like that.' You are using an imaginary chair or tray full of food to cement the concept of the movement.

Finally, the participant knows they are performing the movement correctly when they get payoff. Tell them where they should feel the work (upper and not lower quads as well as tush, hamstrings, and inner thighs.) If they feel it there, they know their form is correct.



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3 - Watch your Attitude. As you walk in to your classroom you set the pace and tone for everything that goes on there for the next hour. Imagine a preacher walking up the aisle on Sunday shuffling notes in a panic. He gets to the podium and says 'I'm sorry I'm a minute late, traffic was terrible. Oh, and by the way, I'm not going to be singing with you today because my 3 year old was up all night sick and I am tired.'

If he had not excused himself for being a minute late, chances are 90% of the congregation would not have noticed that the sermon started at 11:23 instead of 11:20. Further, how many people would be offended if he did or didn't sing.

There is no need to start a performance (yes, teaching a fitness class IS a performance) on a negative note. If you are late, just get class started as soon as possible. If you know people noticed that you were late, then do this: at the of class while you are thanking them for coming and telling them when you are teaching next, give them a sincere apology for your tardiness. But never do it on the mic at the beginning of class. It just starts things off on the wrong foot by calling attention to something negative.

If you aren't feeling well and want to use no risers in step class, then just do it. Don't apologize for it. If you have taught 4 times that day and want to coach through class, that's fine. But you only draw attention to it by excusing yourself. An announcement that you are sick just gives your participants a reason to slack off. An announcement that you have taught 4 classes gives them an unhealthy idea about how much exercise they should be doing. Just coach through class and don't say why. Let them think that you planned to coach in order to give them some one on one attention.

4 - SMILE. I like to say 'Make them think you are on drugs.' Smile at the dead faces in the middle. Smile at the front row divas. Especially smile at the beginners in the back of the room. Ask your participants to smile a few times during class too. Did you ever hear the saying 'Fake it until you make it'? Act like you are having a great time - this may just help everyone believe that your class is fun. :)

Remember, participant retention is all about their experience in your class. You have to make them believe they were successful in class, and that they had a great time doing it. This will keep them coming back long enough to reap long term benefits that they can see!

Wardrobe Malfunctions

What not to wear when they're all going to be looking at you

I love those cable shows where people who seem to have never met a mirror suddenly are confronted by stylists and asked to evaluate their look. The makeover recipient is usually a nice enough person, who has gotten sidetracked and stopped thinking about their image. The result is usually that this person's look is telling an unflattering story to the world.

It gets me thinking - what are we as instructors projecting with our clothing choices? And what should we be projecting? How can we promote fitness while projecting confidence and professionalism; all while mixing in our own sense of style?

1. **Look like the instructor** - This does not mean that you have to have the latest, most expensive workout wardrobe available. It means that you should look like you are in class to work and that your job is to train your participants. Wear a fitness shirt and shorts or pants. The Corona t-shirt you got at the beach last weekend is not a fitness shirt. Neither is a bra. Find a balance somewhere in between. A few more things to consider in this area:
 - o solids or stripes are less abrasive than patterns
 - o dark colors will come off as more professional
 - o consider the format you are teaching when choosing your gear
2. **Don't buy Bottoms at KMart** - Let's just say this, on your hands and knees while stretching in front of a full class is the wrong time to find out that your bottoms are threadbare. Discount store pants are not sold for their quality, they are sold for their price. You may be able to get away with wearing cheap pants (or tight shorts) one or two times, but pretty soon the washing machine is going to get the best of them. The material (especially the seams and material on the inner thigh) will wear thin before you realize it, but not before your participants do. I have seen it happen more times than I care to remember. Consider the quality of the material and seams when buying tight pants or shorts for teaching.
3. **No perfume please!** - It is lovely to smell nice, but there are a lot of things to consider in a general population setting. Some of your participants have asthma or allergies. You are in a crowd of people and you don't know what each person's individual circumstances are. It's best to err on the side of caution.
4. **Make sure everything is covered** - Be modest when you are teaching. Save the skin for the fitness competition. If there is a chance you might show something you don't want to during class, cover it up and make sure that there is a generous 'margin' on all sides. You should not have to worry about your outfit slipping while you are teaching - you will have enough to deal with.
5. **Update often, but not too often** - I am not saying that Nike should feel obligated to give you a call whenever they release new clothes, but if you are still wearing a thong bikini over your tights, well, we need to talk. And to address the other extreme, trends are a lot of fun, but keep them in moderation. Too much of any one style can really look out of place in the gym. Minor modifications can make your look ageless rather than dated.
6. **Watch your step** - Pay attention to your choice of footwear. You are setting an example, so make sure that your shoes are appropriate to the format you are teaching. For example - many people wear running shoes for step class. Running shoes have a lot of padding in the heel and therefore are not appropriate for step because they push the knee out of alignment while stepping up. Even though you know your participants are going to wear running shoes (even though they shouldn't), you should not wear running shoes for step class when you are teaching.

Make sure that your look tells the story that you want to tell. Even if you only buy one nice outfit every couple years and wear it every time you teach, it's a good investment if you know you look professional and in charge.

Which is better for your fitness centre: pre-choreographed group exercise programs, or freestyle classes? Here are the pros and cons of both.

By Kelly Coulter

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Right now, many group exercise programs are at a turning point, since fitness centers are increasingly buying into pre-choreographed group exercise programs. Les Mills offers its Body Pump, Body Combat, Body Step and RPM classes. Body Training Systems (BTS) has Group Power, Group Kick, Group Step and Group Ride. Specialty programs like Jazzercise and TurboKick (TurboJam) are making a strong showing, and Silver Sneakers is showing up everywhere.

These types of classes are pre-formatted and pre-choreographed. The companies train your instructors how to teach the classes, and the classes are outlined and set to music, with each beat planned and written. Trained instructors are sent "releases" at regular intervals. Releases contain the exact materials they will use in class until the next release. They are expected to teach the class exactly the way it is written, every time.

Some of these companies require the fitness center to sign on as a carrier of the program; some even charge a monthly franchise fee to offer their classes. And some will train any instructor who wants the training and leave it up to them to decide how and where to offer the class.

So, should you offer these types programs at your facility? Here is a look at the strengths and weaknesses of pre-style vs. freestyle group exercise options.

Quality assurance

People want a sure thing. They are not going to invest an hour in a class unless they know what kind of return they will get. If they cannot be assured they will get specific things out of a class, they will perform their own workout on the equipment ? or, they won't come to your fitness center at all. Only about 13 to 25 percent of members who walk into the average fitness center use the group exercise resources available.

There are two ways participants will know what they are getting into before walking into class. They either know the instructor or they know the format. If participants are coming to a class because they know the instructor, they are there because that instructor is fun and/or motivating. They trust that instructor either because they have taken their class before, or because they have a stellar reputation. And, if a substitute shows up, participants are usually disappointed.

If participants know the class format, they have learned to trust that, at this facility, any class called by a specific name will contain certain elements and objectives, regardless of who teaches it. Body Pump (Les Mills) is always a weight lifting class that follows an outline: warm up, squats, chest presses, etc. Participants can depend on the workout, even if the instructor varies.

"Pre-choreography allows me to deliver a safe, effective and exciting workout every time," says David Spence, national trainer for Les Mills, and 33-year fitness professional (20 spent as a group fitness instructor). "I was resistant when I first heard about the idea of using choreography that was written by someone else and music chosen by someone else. But, these workouts are researched and developed by qualified fitness professionals and physiologists long before they ever get to me. It allows me to concentrate on my participants ? inspect their technique, coach them to better performance, connect with them individually and as a group, and create some 'fitness magic' by blending the music and movement with my teaching style."

Pre-style classes prescribe to standard outlines that are the same from class to class, instructor to instructor. This means that whether you are a participant or program director, you can be reasonably sure of what is being taught.

The quality assurance point goes to pre-style.

Training

Most group instructors receive a primary certification, which can be quite good. However, some of these certifications were developed outside of the group fitness arena, and were retrofitted to include group fitness classes. These certifications train instructors in anatomy and physiology. They list indicated and contraindicated movements, and ask instructors to learn anatomical terms and theories. The primary concern is ensuring a safe workout.

Pre-style trainings are about teaching an instructor how to teach a class, not just how to avoid injuring anyone. No matter which pre-style company you choose, these programs are a business. If the program fails to train instructors on how to deliver a superior class, the program fails. So, the training covers more than anatomy and physiology.

In a pre-style program, there is no concern that the instructor may use contraindicated or ineffective movements, since the exercises are chosen for them. Other key components to teaching an excellent class can be stressed during training ? things like personality, coaching and entertaining. This type of training can shorten the learning curve new instructors face, and can help to strengthen weak instructors.



Since pre-style programs require instructors to go through training before teaching their classes, and all instructors receive the same training, your instructors will be more united, prepared and well-versed when you are running a pre-style program.

One more point for pre-style.

Ease of scheduling

One of the biggest headaches for any group fitness director is the schedule. Instructors have lives outside of the facility, and participants have needs and wants that don't always jibe with instructors' lives. Programs sometimes lack balance between cardio, weight and specialty classes because of instructor availability or participant requests. However, the group fitness schedule should be a product of your members' needs, not random suggestions or instructors' schedules.

The uniform training that instructors receive from pre-style programs, combined with the quality assurance that is built in to the program, tends to effectively level the playing field between your weakest and best instructors. Therefore, scheduling instructors should be easier, since any instructor can teach any class (and substitutions are easier, also).

Scheduling is never easy; however, the ease-of-scheduling point goes to pre-style.

The "I" factor

The better the instructor, the more time and effort they put into preparing for class. This is true regardless of whether they are teaching pre-style or freestyle.

The big pre-style companies emphasize the idea that one instructor teaching their program is as good as any other instructor teaching their program. This is one of their main selling points. However, in practice, this does not prove to be the case. Twenty-year instructor Vicki Beatty says, "It takes a real teacher to take the time to plan each class and change the choreography from class to class, ... which I enjoy. I spend many hours a week planning choreography for my classes."

Your most dedicated instructors are more involved than your average/poor instructors. They take more time to plan their classes, they spend extra time rehearsing their classes and learning about their participants, and they are more present for their participants during and after class. Their extra effort and dedication will always show in the number of loyal participants who come to their classes.

The "I" factor point goes to freestyle, because instructors get the credit when their classes are succeeding.

Cost

Most pre-style programs cost something. Les Mills and BTS are contract-driven. This means that they require a contract and a monthly fee from the facility. When instructors are trained to teach the program, they are sponsored by a contracting fitness center. They sign an agreement stating that they will stay current by purchasing new releases every three months, and agree not to teach the program at any facility that is not contracted. If they break that agreement, they risk their ability to purchase future releases, which effectively renders them unable to continue teaching the program. Therefore, in contract-driven pre-style programs, both the fitness center and the instructor carry the cost.



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TurboJam (TurboKick) and some others only require individual instructors to go through the training, and then purchase the releases. In this case, the instructor carries the cost of the program. The instructor is free to teach the program at any fitness center.

In either case, the cost of releases (equal to the cost of purchasing about six cardio CDs a year) can be burdensome to instructors. Factor in the cost of clothes, shoes, batteries and gas, and, if instructors teach more than one format or only teach once a week, they may barely break even.

Pre-style classes are meant to bring more participants into the group exercise room, and more potential participants into the facility. The fitness center piggybacks on the pre-style program's existing marketing and brand recognition. Add to this the fact that group exercise participation has been known to increase to higher than 40 percent of the members who use the facility. If the right program is brought in with the right implementation, the fitness center should profit in the end.

Because there is an investment required for both instructors and the facility, the cost point goes to freestyle.

It's your choice

Whether you choose to contract your entire program with a pre-choreography company, implement a few piecemeal pre-choreographed programs or go it entirely freestyle, your program will benefit from structure. Spend some time really looking at your group exercise program. Do some research and talk to other program directors or facility owners. Make sure your program makes sense, both financially and for your members' needs.

Why Teach to Radio Play?

Excitement - Any popular song has a natural appeal to it, that's why it becomes a hit. Hit songs have peaks, valleys, and plateaus built in to them. Choreography that corresponds with all of those elements will have excitement.

Imagine the perfect CD; 13 of your favorite hit songs on one disc. How exciting would it be to teach a class to your perfect CD? Choreography that matches with the individual song elements adds excitement to each song. As a whole, sharing music that moves you with your class adds the element of excitement to the class.

Fluidity - Your class will feel more natural to participants. Workouts outside of the aerobics room are more often structured with starts and stops than in one continuous 45 minute block. Think about your first workout - usually that was sports practice. These are formatted in to short drills.

The exception would be endurance training, but we are not training marathoners here. So it's not important to step or jog for 45 straight minutes - the heart rate will stay elevated during a 10 - 30 second break between songs. The break actually adds to the workout, when the students get a break between songs and activities they approach the work with a new freshness and better attitude.

Simplicity - Excitement and motivation can be built through challenge. Challenge can sometimes mean making basic movements complicated. We up the ante' on the choreography by implementing 'tapless' combinations in step class, or we ask the participants to move two steps to the right when they squat in strength class. But challenge can sometimes mean making basic movements complicated. When we make our basic movements complicated for the sake of challenge we increase the risk of injury, and we alienate our beginners, men, and others who are not inclined to dance or step.

Routines that are choreographed to correspond with popular music are intuitive to the participant. Participants have probably heard the song in their car, at work, etc, so they are already familiar with the song. Choreograph to follow the natural ups and downs in the music using simple movements that change with the song elements. The whole thing becomes user friendly to the participant. We, as instructors, can think less about choreography and are freed, then, to do our job - lead an effective class with no injuries!

Variety with Predictability - Music is constantly changing. That's why Billboard comes out with a new Top 10 list every week. Stay current with music that's up to the minute. If you love a song on the radio today, you can use it in class tonight.

But, participants want to know what to expect from your class. Think of your class as a product. If you contracted to build a single story house, but were built a 2 story house, you wouldn't go to closing on that house. Participants are investing time in to your class. They must be confident that they are going to be participating in the work out they thought they were getting. They won't come to your class if they don't know what to expect.

How do we vary the workout while keeping a standard? You combine your new cd your own music' skill with an outline. Let's look at that house building scenario. If you are the architect, the outline is your blueprint'. The blueprint shows you how to build the perfect house, but you will vary the décor each time you build a house from that blueprint. Make up an outline for each class format that you teach. Each song in your outline achieves one objective. Since most songs are 4 minutes long you will need 12 to 13 songs. With a couple of breaks between your most intense songs, a break to check heart rates, and a break to set up for floor work, the class should be 52 - 56 minutes long.



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So - if it's a step class, write an outline that uses each song to achieve one objective. The first song is the warm up, the second song works over the top, the third song works split lunges, etc. Then look for music that goes with each objective and burn your CD. Use the CD 7 - 10 times before changing it. When you are ready, change some or all of the music while sticking to the outline. Every time you change the music to one song in your outline the choreography will change naturally to match the new song. The ability to change music, while keeping the same basic outline can help to reduce burn out, too. It's the opportunity to vary the routine without having to invest hours in to planning a whole new class.

If you keep your music fun and exciting, your class will always be fresh.

How to Make Your Outline

If you are an architect you will depend on a blueprint to structure the perfect house. You may sell more than one house that uses the same blueprint, but each time you build a house from your blueprint you vary the décor and landscape for variety.

Make up a 'blueprint' (outline) for each class format that you teach. Each song in your outline works toward one objective. Since most songs are 4 minutes long you will need 12 songs. With a couple of breaks between your most intense songs, a break to check heart rates, and a break to set up for floor work, the class should be 52 - 56 minutes long. Your class outline should never be longer than 56 minutes (including the stretch at the end), since you will need extra time for explanation, water breaks, heart rate checks. You should always leave a few minutes between the present class and the next class coming in. Running over is unacceptable.

Each song in your outline has 2 elements - a standard (the choreography you will use) and an objective (purpose for doing what we are doing.) For example, in my Drills classes we always warm up with walking lunges and active stretches. The standard is type of movement (walking lunges and active stretches.) The objective is the purpose for the movement (warm up without using any complicated choreography.)

The standard and objective for each song doesn't change. My Drills classes always start with walking lunges and active stretches. What does change, though, is the song I use for the warm up, and how I coordinate the music with the movement. The structure and content of the song will dictate how I use the standard movements for the warm up.

So - if it's a step class, write an outline that uses basic choreography for each song. Think about a standard movement and an objective with each song. Maybe the fourth song in your outline uses "L" steps, the fifth song works split lunges, etc.

In a cardio class your objective will usually be to elevate the heart rate so don't be afraid to use a multi-tiered objective. For example, the second song in my step outline always uses stepping up lunges. I call this my 'lower body strength' song. Even though I am technically working cardio, the quads and gluts get fatigued during this song. So it has 2 objectives, raise the heart rate and fatigue the thighs. Although the music to Step song #2 can change, the standard movement will always be some variation of stepping up lunges, and the objective will always be to raise the heart rate and fatigue the thighs.

Once you have written your outline and identified a standard and objective for each song it's time to choose the music. The next link gives great suggestions for finding music, but basically you are going to look for music that facilitates each objective. Pay attention to BPMs, mood and attitude. For example, 'Eye of the Tiger' is a great upper body strength song (pushups.)



Use the CD 7 - 10 times before changing it. When you are ready, change some or all of the music, but stick to the outline. Keep the choreography for the new songs similar to the songs they replace in the outline

Choosing Music & Burning Your CD

1. Outline the class you are going to make a CD for. Each format you teach (step, sculpt, etc.) should have its own outline. Your outline may be comprised completely of radio play formatted songs, or it may include some blocks that will use traditional cardio music.

2. Burn your regular CDs to your hard drive. This will give you a library to start with. Consult some websites for more ideas.

PromoOnly.com - this is a company that distributes current releases to radio stations and DJs. They deal directly with the record companies, so their lists contain all of the music that will be getting air time on the radio during any given month.

Billboard.com - The top songs by category Music station websites - mtv.com, vh1.com, your local radio station website, etc. Always include one or two fun oldies.

<http://www.digitaldreamdoor.com/pages/music0.html> - contains all kinds of Greatest' lists.

3. Download any new music you may need from Napster.com, Walmart.com, MP3Sugar.com, BurnLounge.com or any others that sell music over the internet.

4. Match objectives from your outline to songs. Make sure that the beats per minute are appropriate for each objective. (MixMeister.com has a free BPM analyzer available for download from their site.) Burn the songs to a CD in the order that you will use them in class.

Teaching Radio Play Routines

Songs typically contain 5 components, and these components correspond with the 5 'coach-able' opportunities for each routine.

Intro - Set up the choreography. Demonstrate and talk about the movements that will be performed and the objective behind them

Verse - Allow participants to perform the movement while watching for mistakes that may lead to injury. Introduce low impact options, and higher intensity options.

Chorus - Higher intensity movement in conjunction with the chorus of the song. This can be a new choreography combination, or the choreography from the verse used at a higher intensity.

Instrumental break - Be sure to encourage working recovery; lighter intensity work equal to a light jog. Tell them about what is coming next.

Grand finale - Most songs will conclude with a minute or so of high intensity music Use this to combine the movements you've used in this routine. Smile, work hard and finish strong. Tell them how much longer is left so that they can see the light at the end of the tunnel. The important thing to note in the above 5 components is that they are all about the participant. Coach them by introducing, encouraging, and navigating through the song.



Start using this new approach by adding a few routines to your regular workout. Doing this in itself will add some fun and variety to your class. But, eventually you will have made up (or downloaded) enough routines to comprise a whole class.

The first time you teach a radio play formatted song will be nerve racking. It's a whole new way to teach. But your class will appreciate the music, the excitement, simplicity, and the predictability of this new approach. It's all about excitement - keep your class excited about their experience with you and your participation will grow. A bigger class is more satisfying to teach - everyone wins!

Examples

Step Class

In most clubs each class is allotted one hour. So classes should be planned to fit in to a 52 - 55 minute slot, to allow time for the classes before and after to empty in and out. The step outline below is made up of 12 songs. Each song is 4 - 5 minutes long.

Step Class Choreography

Song #	Objective
1 - Warm Up	Warm up
2 - Steady and Strong	Lower Body Conditioning
3 - Vertical Endurance	Raise heart rate while using step in vertical orientation
4 - Vertical Challenge	Cardio Peak routine #1
5 - Endurance	Keep heart rate elevated at 70% of abs max.
6 - Challenge	Cardio Peak routine#2
7 - Team Builder	Coax participants slightly out of their comfort zone
8 - Finale	Challenge - Cardio Peak routine #3
9 - Standing Torso	Torso Strength and Flexibility
10 - Cool Down	Cool down, relax
11 - Upper Body	Push-ups and Pilates or Yoga style stabilization
12 - Abs/Torso	Traditional abdominal or torso work
13 - Stretch	Promote Flexibility

Warm Up

In the list below you will find warm-up routines that are appropriate for use in a step class. The warm-up for a Step class should be dynamic and fun, last about 4 - 6 minutes, and prepare the participants for more intense work.

The warm up (and first 4 songs of the Step outline) is performed on a vertical bench. This means that participants are stepping on the short side of the bench. The long side runs parallel to the sides of the room. Picture the lower case letter i - the participant is the dot. This orientation limits the amount of traveling, twisting, and turning that can be done. This is a good thing during the warm up, movement should be limited to straight frontal, sagittal and horizontal planes.

Steady and Strong

The "Steady & Strong" song serves to finalize the warm up and give the lower body a pre-emptive fatigue. The routine is performed in a vertical orientation, meaning participants are stepping on the short end of the bench. In other words, if the bench were the line in a lower case letter "i", the participant would be the dot.

The song should use music appropriate for step (between 120 - 130 BPM), but for this routine the slower, the better. The objective is to use low impact, dynamic, strengthening type movements to fatigue the muscles of the lower body just a little.

Appropriate movements include:

- slow (4 count) squats up on to the bench
- slow (4 count) lunges off the bench
- squats on the floor
- single leg lunges on the floor
- dynamic lunges on the floor
- basic step
- alternating knees

The movements listed above are all lower in impact, but can be intensified by adding range of motion. This will allow participants to work hard in the first part of class, while the warm up is still technically going on..

Vertical Endurance

The vertical endurance is 5 minutes of steady intense movement. The objective is to keep the heart rate pumping in the 70% - 80% zone for the entire 5 minutes. This is the first true step song of the class.

This routine is performed on a vertical bench, meaning the participants are stepping on the short side of the bench. Visualize the letter i - the participant is the dot and the bench is the stem on the i. The long sides of the bench are parallel with the sides of the room.

Appropriate movements for the vertical endurance song include:

- basic step on the short side of the bench
- "T" step
- travel over and back
- knees off the sides
- "Z" step
- "A" step
- lunges off the sides
- lunges off the back

Vertical Challenge

The vertical challenge song is the first cardio peak of the step class. This routine should contain 3 intervals, wherein the participant is challenged to raise their heart rate a good bit above 70% of the absolute maximum. The intervals are usually performed during the chorus of a song and last no longer than 1 minute.

This routine is performed on a vertical bench, meaning the participants are stepping on the short side of the bench. Visualize the letter i - the participant is the dot and the bench is the stem on the i. The long sides of the bench are parallel with the sides of the room.



Appropriate movements for the vertical challenge song include:

- "T" step
- travel over and back
- "A" step (especially with a squat at the top of the "A")
- lunges off the sides
- lunges off the back
- football runs

Each of the movements listed above can be varied to increase intensity. Remember, the song should challenge 3 times for less than a minute.

Technology has changed the music industry. Instead of purchasing music by the album at a music store, consumers can download songs at any time, from almost anywhere on the planet. This means new options for the music that we use in class.

Traditionally, classes in the group exercise room have been taught to specially formatted "cardio" music. Instructors teach a couple of movements to an 8 count phrase. Four phrases are combined to make 32 count blocks. The music changes every 32 counts, making the start and stop of a choreography block recognizable and predictable.

But now that we can burn a CD to suite our needs, we are not chained to the music on a pre-purchased CD. We can use music that moves us to create more exciting, challenging classes with simple choreography.



Cycling/SPIN class

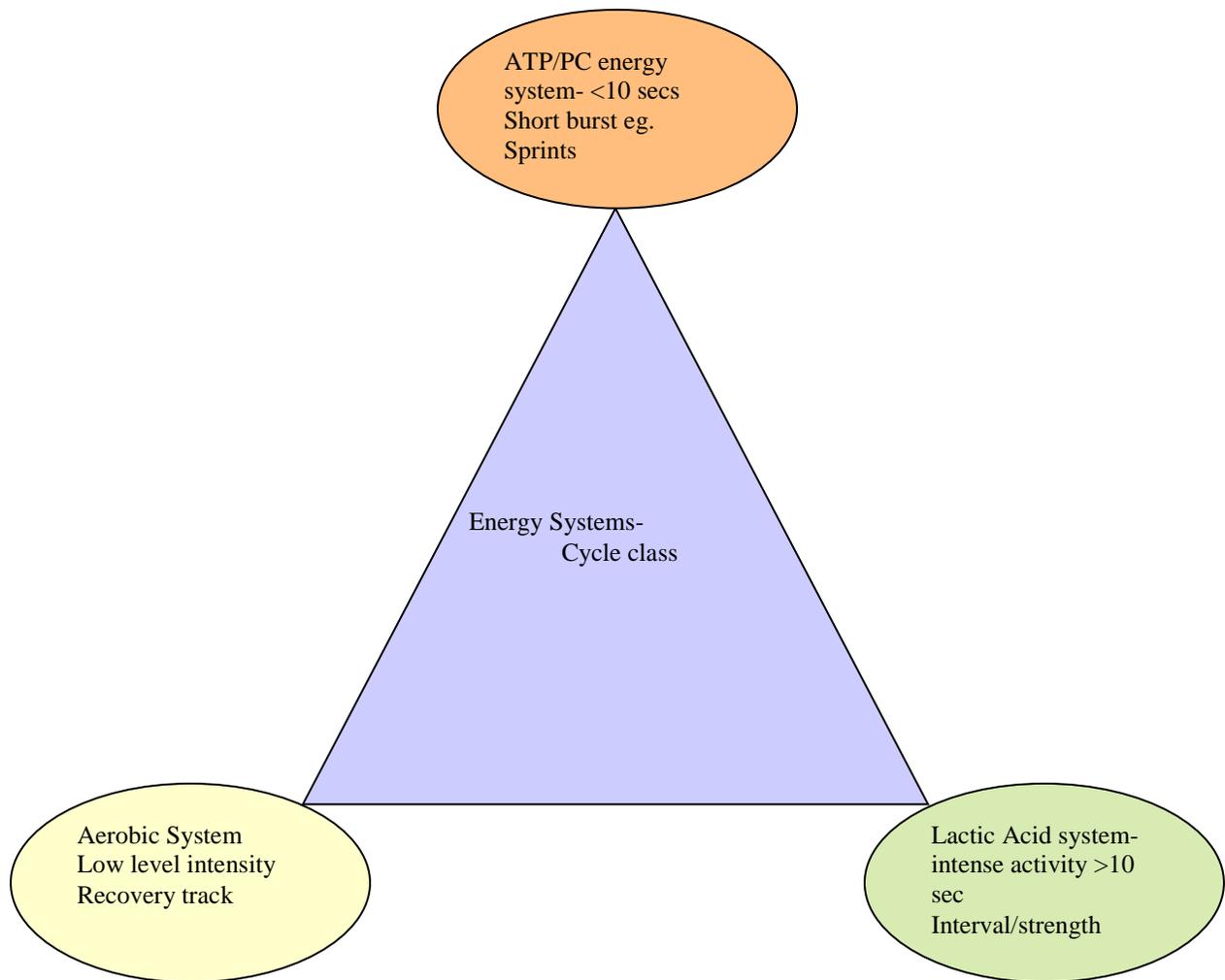
- most classes designed to run 45 min sessions, this allows time to set up equipment and go through pre-set phase before class
- a warm up track, allows body core temperature to rise encouraging blood flow
- next is 6 workout tracks, these will vary utilising different training modalities, to ensure a complete workout.
- Followed by cool down, ensure full recovery has been attained prior to stretching

TRACK	INTENSITY	ENERGY SYSTEM
1. warm up	Low resistance 50%	Aerobic
2. interval	Moderate resistance 50-70%	Aerobic
3. jumps	Moderate-high Resistance 0-80%	Aerobic & Anaerobic
4. sprint	High resistance 60-80%	Aerobic & Anaerobic
5. Hill climb	Very high resistance 80-95%	ATP/PC, Anaerobic and aerobic recovery
6. Down hill	Moderate resistance 50-70%	Aerobic recovery
7. Interval/endurance	High-very high Resistance 60-90%	Aerobic & anaerobic
8. cool down	Low resistance 20-30%	Aerobic recovery

→ Ensure drink breaks are in between tracks, continue to pedal with zero resistance to allow recovery

→ Include stretches for hamstrings, quads, calves, hip flexors, lower back, glutes

- Cycling helps build an aerobic base, which is critical for improving heart and lung capacity. Without a sufficient aerobic base, you'll lack stamina necessary to exercise for long periods and boost intensity. Cycling also increases your aerobic capacity, which affects the body's ability to store and transport fuel (oxygen and nutrients) and produce energy. High aerobic capacity also allows for faster recovery between workouts. This type of training improves fat metabolism, by increasing enzyme activity in the working muscles. This boosts your ability to use fat as an energy source.
- Indoor cycling has been used by many people for years, as a conditioning and preparation phase of their training. For the average person, cycling provides a great lower body and abdominal workout, thus improving their fitness level.
- People with minor upper and lower body injuries are able to maintain their level of physical fitness during their rehabilitation period.





Example of Martial Arts/Combat/ Boxing class choreography

Cardio Peak #1 - Martial Arts drills are designed to raise the heart rate while practicing some basic kicks and punches. During this routine participants will achieve a cardio peak (heart rate above 85% absolute maximum for less than a minute.) Cardio peaks challenge cardio vascular capacity and help the participant improve their fitness level.

The Martial Arts' song will always contain some punches and kicks performed slowly (to promote control and strength), then faster (to feel the power potential of the punch or kick), followed by some type of high intensity drill work (speed bag, jumping jacks, jabs, jabs with a weight shift.)

Be sure to watch the knees closely. Remember that side kicks should be performed with a soft knee on the grounded leg. It is very important that the heel on the grounded leg points toward the target - that means that participants should be taught to pick up their toe on that leg and point it toward the back of the room before kicking. This form queue is largely ignored and the result is too much torque on the grounded knee - the source of a good percentage of kickboxing injuries.

Don't be afraid to stop the music and take a minute before the Martial Arts song to review proper form. The participants heart rates will not drop enough to be at risk, just don't talk for too long.

Tap That Meghan Macauley

Major Movement

Verse - hooks & side kicks

Chorus - jabs with footing change

Objective

Cardio Peak #1 - work upper and lower body together

Appropriate For

DRILLS - Martial Arts

STEP - replace step for DRILL in Vertical Cardio Challenge spot

Remember proper squat technique and talk about it often during the movement. Change your orientation in relation to the class to allow the participants to see your form from all angles. Make sure that your participants put their weight on their heels during the all phases of the squat and that they stand up tall at the top.

Cotton Eye Joe Rednex

This routine will become the one everyone comes to see you teach! Truly a signature routine - once you do it with your class they won't forget it. Not only because it breaks everyone out of their comfort zones, but because it's so much fun.

****NOTE:** You have to use the original version of 'Cotton Eye Joe' by the Rednex - this is the best version that has been made. It's on a really old CD called "Ultimate Dance Party" and on the Rednex CD called "Sex and Violins" - but I found it on Napster.com. The link is below.

There are 4 things to remember about this routine

- 1 - home base: woman is singing
 - 2 - diagonal alt. knees: man is singing
 - 3 - diagonal alt. kicks: fiddle
 - 4 - kick one side, 2 jacks, kick the other side, 2 jacks: banjo
- *this will all make sense once you have tried it!

Cotton Eye Joe - Rednex 3:13

Track Information: STEP - Moderate to Moderate/High Cardio
Objective: Keep heart rate up while keeping students engaged

Standard:

music counts Choreography Repeat

intro

man singing 'if it hadn't...' basic on home base

beat & fiddle kick in alt. knees (starting L knee up) on home base 2X

if it hadn't been...' alt. knees on diagonals (partners on opposite diagonals) 4X

fiddle kicks on diagonals 4X

woman sings 'he brought...' home base alt knees 4X

if it hadn't been...' alt. knees on diagonals (partners on opposite diagonals) 4X

banjo kick & 2 jacks (kick L diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner; kick R diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner) 2X

woman sings 'he brought...' home base alt knees 4X

if it hadn't been...' alt. knees on diagonals (partners on opposite diagonals) 4X

fiddle kicks on diagonals 2X

banjo kick & 2 jacks (kick L diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner; kick R diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner) 1X

fiddle kicks on diagonals 2X

banjo kick & 2 jacks (kick L diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner; kick R diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner) 1X

if it hadn't been...' alt. knees on diagonals 4X

fiddle kicks on diagonals 2X

banjo kick & 2 jacks (kick L diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner; kick R diagonal, 2 jacks facing partner) 1X

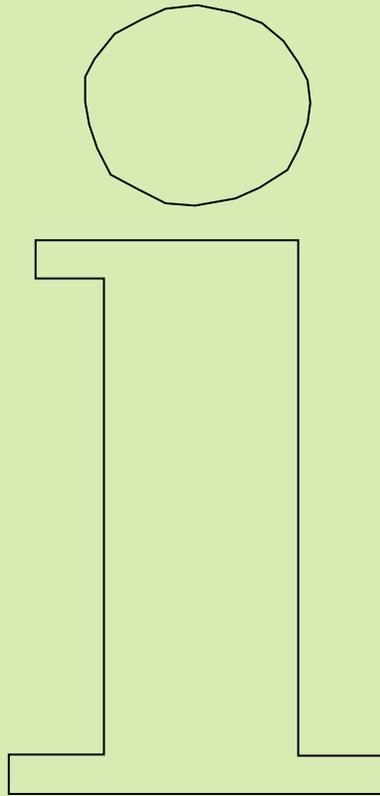
TIPS

- A set of helpful hints to assist you in avoiding the mistakes that many have made already...
- § Personality and motivation ability in group exercise delivery is of utmost importance and directly related to participant adherence and attendance. Instructor “presence” should be positive assertive and approachable
- § Resist the temptation to become so involved with “setting the class” that a lack of personalised involvement with the group occurs. The ability and awareness of the need to use effective form correction and alignment techniques should always remain just as important as the need to use effective cueing and directional techniques
- § Presentation Attitude should at times show contrasts (light and shade) sometimes referred to as “ATTACK” or simply dynamics.
- § Personal presentation (clothing, grooming etc) should be consistently clean, athletic and professionally geared.
- § The ability to stay in time with the music is of utmost importance to the instructor. The tendency to perform movement either just “in front” of or “behind” the beat, usually only results in making movements look messy indecisive, and very difficult for participants to follow and anticipate.
- § Movement patterns which require participants to remember too much detail usually tend to reduce training effectiveness, to some degree, even if well cued
- § Tendency to design movement patterns which require participants to remember too much information, too fast, usually results in coordination difficulties and also a reduction in training effectiveness.
- § The practice of giving too much verbal information or long detailed instructions relating to choreography or alignment while the class is in progress, results in most of the information being lost-because of the volume of the music the participants may not hear everything that is said

- § The practice of depending on count down teaching techniques to mark the end of the exercise is fine, but is not effective in indicating and warning participants of a change of direction or of what movement pattern is to follow.
- § Avoid composing movements in uneven phrasing blocks
- § Avoid concentrating solely on combined exercise routines.
- § Teachers own form and alignment if presented inaccurately usually results in inaccurate participant performance which can ultimately result in inefficiency of movement, ineffectiveness of workout and even injury over time



GLOBAL FITNESS
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You are a powerful role model, demonstrate excellent technique and you can inspire and motivate your participants to a new level of fitness!

Essential element of clear instruction: large vocab. of non-technical words, exciting repertoire of imagery and sounds, mastery of scripting and cueing movements

A group exercise class incorporates all techniques used by great performers: drama, expression, costume, energy, humor, theatrics, rhythm, sensuality, passion

Staying relaxed and communicating in a positive way will guarantee you a large class full of participants

Signs and Symptoms of Injury

Heat, swelling, redness and pain

When an injury occurs: stay CALM

C linically assess

A sk

L ook

M anually examine

Initial Treatment

R ice

I ce

C ompression

E levation

Do NO more HARM

H eat

A lcohol

R unning

M assage





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