

THE WORLD'S BEST WORKOUT

Barry's Bootcamp, product of America, has crossed the Atlantic Ocean to tackle the British fitness scene. Guaranteeing a high intensity workout the bootcamp promises fast results. How could advocates Kim Kardashian, Jessica Biel, Katie Holmes and Jake Gyllenhaal be wrong?

"The best workout in the world", claims the camouflage-coloured sign at Barry's Bootcamp in Euston. That's a big claim. Even bigger is the statement that no other workout changes your body as fast as Barry's. I gave credit to this idea when I read that

one hour-long session works off around 1,000 calories. That's the equivalent of around half the daily recommended calorie intake for the average female, a roast dinner with all of the trimmings, or close to five full size Mars Bars.

"You'll be fine", says trainer Derek DeGrazio as I peer nervously into the workout room. The previous class is drawing to a close. All I can see is rows of perfect bodies as around twenty people crunch in unison. Am I in the wrong place? Where is the workout room for people who actually need to work out? I grimace at the girl next to me who echoes my sentiment. "What are you worried about?" she says. "I bought twenty classes." All I can do is smile in sympathy.

Derek leads the way into the room and flashes us an all-American perfect-

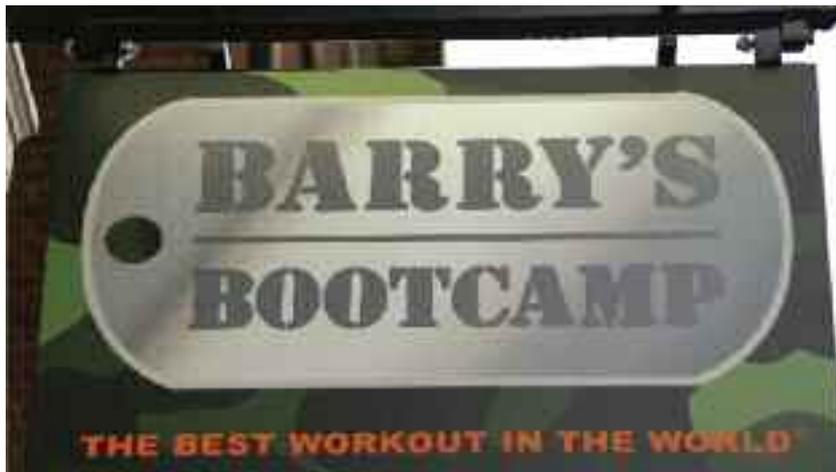


consistent rhythm of my feet pounding on the treadmill Derek directs us to increase the speed. He gives options for beginners, mid level and advanced. As a reluctant runner, even the beginner speed is stretching me. "Two minutes," Derek yells over his headset. "Just give me two minutes." After two minutes we go back to jogging pace.

Just as I am starting to think I can survive this ordeal, Derek pushes us to an even faster pace. I am sprinting as fast as my rather short legs will go. The only thing that is keeping me going is Derek's voice, as he rather impressively runs through everyone's names, offering personal encouragement. "When you hear your name, you personalise that experience", explains Derek later. "It makes you work harder."

a gentle back tap, a light pat on the knee, or a gentle stroke of the arm, correcting a movement while heartening each of us. This small gesture of affection feels somehow genuine, and is enough to spur us on to the end of the set. "I'm notorious for being hands on, but I feel like if you're a trainer you have to be," explains Derek later. "It's instruction, but it's also encouragement. It's saying good job," he elucidates.

After 15 minutes we rotate back to the treadmills, then back to the benches. By the end of the class my legs are leaden and my arms are heavy, but my body is flooded with endorphins. I am ready to take on the world. I am proud that I have made it through the most intense workout I have ever done, although I am dreading coming back for my next session.



The next day I wake up and feel surprisingly good. Until I reach down to pick something up. My arms at full extension offer up a million aches and pains. Even lifting my cereal spoon feels like hard work. It takes three days for me to be able to function like a regular human being and then my next session is scheduled. Shoulders

and chest, combined with the standard interval running. Knowing what to expect does not make it any easier.

After only two sessions, I am already starting to feel the difference. Once I start feeling anything other than muscle pain, that is. I am keeping pace a little easier and not feeling quite so out of place. I can do this. So can you. So Derek says.

For more information see:
www.barrysbootcamp.com

toothed grin of encouragement as he directs us to split into two groups. I vow to use his movie-star good looks as motivation. I want to have the body shape of someone he would be seen in public with. He points me towards a treadmill and I reluctantly step on. He then hits a light switch and the fluorescent overheads flick to red nightclub style lighting. I feel far less conspicuous in this dim, dusky atmosphere. The music blares as Derek instructs us to start jogging at a comfortable pace.

At about the point that I have been lulled into a false sense of security by the

I survive this bout and we move on to running up a steep incline. We alternate between jogging, sprinting, and acute inclines for a total of 15 minutes by which time my legs have turned to jelly. The red lights cancel out my red face. I am sweating profusely. It's time for my half of the class to collect weights and start working on our arms and abs.

We lie on the benches provided and perform interval weight training, largely focused on our arms. When they turn to mush we move on to intense ab exercises. Derek roams through the class blasting out instructions. As he walks by each participant in his theatre of pain he gives