

HEALTH

Fitness classes keep students on their toes

Stacey Murray
Reporter

During the past school year, UPEI has introduced a series of free fitness classes to get students pumped about exercise. The classes, which run at various times during the week, offer students a structured workout and support from an instructor. The most popular classes have between 20-40 students.

Angela Marchbank, UPEI's health and wellness coordinator, said while the classes aren't new, the promotion of them is.

"We decided to put extra funds to spruce up the classes."

Most of the promotion came after UFIT, which offered students fitness classes for a fee, was cancelled.

The classes are a great way for students to get their money's worth out of the sports centre, Marchbank said. The classes are free for UPEI students and Sports Centre members. For non-members, they're \$4 a class or \$75 a semester.

Next year, Marchbank plans to build on the current classes. She is trying to add pilates and dance classes to the schedule, although it's not an easy task.

Finding a certified instructor to agree to be paid by session and not per person is a problem, she said.

Another problem is finding gym space to hold the classes.

"We're still working on it. We're working out the bugs."

But the fitness program is in place after receiving good reviews from students.

Michelle MacMillan teaches several of the classes, including Ab Lab/Rock Bottom and STEP 101. She's been instructing for nearly 20 years.

She said students of all fitness levels can attend her classes, but they must remember to go at their own pace.

Sarah Ritcey, a second-year education



Chelsia Gillis, a third year nutrition major, works out during a fitness class at UPEI last week.

Murray Photo

student, attended MacMillan's boot camp class and said it offers a good complete-body workout. Having a class also motivates her to work out.

"It's nice when you're having a rough day to know you're coming to a class."

Chelsey MnInnis, a second-year psychology student, said she won't go to the gym because she loses interest when working out alone. The classes give her the sense of direction she needs to stay active.

"The classes are well-directed and they're fun and upbeat."

On Jan. 18, 14 students braved the frigid temperatures to come to a weekly boot camp class, many for the first time.

MacMillan, who instructed the class, put them to work carrying equipment to set up a series of stations. One had body bars, another had yoga mats. There were also exercise balls and Reebok steps scattered through the gym. Other stations

had no equipment and are used for running stations and jumping jacks.

The instructions were simple: go through the stations with your pre-assigned group and rotate to the next one after a minute.

"Stopping is not an option," MacMillan added.

Oh God. This isn't good.

The class began a warm up consisting of step exercises and various stretching techniques. Within a minute, some in the class began to wonder what they've signed up for.

"I hate you right now," a girl said to her friend.

"I hate myself right now," came the reply.

"You've all got hips, so use them," the instructor shouted as she demonstrated her meaning, swaying her hips.

Once the warm up was complete, the groups scattered to their assigned start-

ing point. The body bar looked simple. Lift with both hands over your head and lower to your chest. Repeat. After a minute of this, the group was tiring.

"Switch," MacMillan shouted.

Next was push-ups. The group, which included McNinnis and Ritcey, struggled but fared better than most.

"Switch."

The time went by fast as MacMillan ran around frantically helping people maintain good form. She also shouted encouragements to the tired girls.

"Work those shoulders...you want abs? Then work."

She also eased up on the not stopping rule, encouraging short water breaks.

Soon, the class had nearly finished two rotations.

"Thirty-second sets," MacMillan called out.

The rest of class sped by and before they knew it, they were completing cool down exercises.

UPEI Fitness Programs:

Weight Room Circuit Class –
Tuesday and Thursday 6:45- 7:30 a.m.

In the fitness centre

Ab Lab/ Rock Bottom –
Monday 5:00 – 5:45 p.m.

In gym 3

Boot Camp
Thursday 6:45 – 7:30 p.m.

In gym 3

Cardio Blast Challenge
Wednesday 12:05 – 12:40 p.m.

In gym 3

Power Body Bar Class
Monday 12:05 – 12:40 p.m.

In gym 3

STEP 101
Tuesday 6:45 – 7:30 p.m.

Friday 12:05 – 12:40 p.m.

In gym 3

(source: www.upei.ca/athletics)

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