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Getting back to BodyPump

-Jill Thompson

Winter. I'm cold. I'm tired. It's grey. Again. I have an open hour and I know I "should" do BodyPump but I'd rather take a nap. But here I am, at Bronson Athletic Club and quiet places to rest are tough to find. It has been a long time since I have done this class despite the fact that I like my physical body more when I do it regularly (I prefer twice/week).

Not only am I going to do this class, I will use my experience today to write in the hopes of relating to the countless individuals who have embarked on exactly the same journey I'm about to. New to BodyPump, been awhile, haven't worked out in a mask yet? Read on.

Les Mills' fitness classes are often referred to as "the world's best". That is because every workout is designed by exercise scientists, together with choreographers, and participants of all sorts.

Speaking of honest reviews, it's only right that I review myself, right? I'm a 43 year old fitness professional who is relatively active, but while I'm familiar with the euphoric rush of endorphins that follow intense cardio, I'm also a sucker for the snooze button. So I wouldn't call myself a fitness fanatic. This BodyPump class will feel like a new experience and I'm excited to share that with you.

If you're familiar with BodyPump, you'll know the class is almost exactly what the name suggests – a full body workout designed to burn fat fast through reps, reps and, you guessed it, more reps: between 800-1,000 in fact, which increases my heart rate just thinking about it.

Heading into the new studio at the BAC, I'm reminded and comforted that this class attracts bodies of all shapes, sizes, and ages. The friendly people who surround me seem to have no idea how much energy they are inadvertently sharing. I grab a bench top and a variety of weights plates and set up in the back of the class, being coy so no one catches a whiff of my nerves. I remind myself that group fitness is a learning environment. More than anything, people are together, paying attention to their form despite some having been in studios for decades. I LIKE to be a participant and remember my experience when I did this class the first time.

Beginners, take note: BodyPump is all about high reps and low weights. Participants use all the major muscle groups doing all manner of lifting moves, from rows to presses, demonstrated by your instructor. I should have remembered this before loading up my bar with the same warmup weight that I did pre-pandemic. **Start light and work your way up.**

The clear benefit of this kind of exercise is that it rapidly raises the heart rate and helps build muscle faster, while also improving bone strength and density. In other words, it's really good for you. You can see why it's so many people's favorite workout.

Music is a huge part of BodyPump. Not only do the high-octane beats give your body a wakeup call (perfect if you attend our 5:30 a.m. class), but each track fits specifically to a different set of exercises. Throughout the class, you'll listen to 10 tracks in total and work different areas of your body for each. It's amazing how the sound of P!nk in your eardrums can make your brain push your body harder.

As we switch between muscle groups, I lower my weights, sometimes using bodyweight instead of my bar and get in the groove. As we progress through each track, the thumping bass provides our tempo and keeps me engaged, the instructor directs my movements, and my body starts to really enjoy the challenge.

Before I know it, the hour is up and I am cooling down to Daughtry. **I'm tired. I'm sweaty. But I am genuinely fulfilled.** I've officially completed my first Pump class this year, and I'm pretty sure it won't be my last. It was a full-body workout that challenged me in every way.

One of the best things about the class is that anyone can do it, and I was inspired to see how fit the other people in the class were – especially the veterans.

I am actually smiling beneath my mask and feel elated. I can't think of a better re-start on my fitness quest. I would highly recommend BodyPump to anyone thinking about trying their first group fitness workout.....or, their first workout wearing a mask. Take it one repetition at a time and you will get results. I have seen lives and bodies transformed by BodyPump.

So am I a chiseled, fitness deity today? Not quite. But I'm definitely feeling a burn that I haven't experienced in a long time...One that lets me know I am off to a great start. I am not leaving here today until I know when my next Pump class will be. When's yours?