

# CONFESSIONS OF A GROUP FITNESS NEWBIE

HOW I GOT FIT AND CHANGED  
MY LIFE FOREVER

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BEAUTY BLOGGER



Last May, I searched for the idyllic tropical vacation destination for my sixth wedding anniversary. Scrolling through photos of white beaches, massive swimming pools, and "candid" shots of models in bikinis laughing and clutching cocktails - my stomach dropped. I was the heaviest I'd ever been in my life. My raging insecurities trumped every ounce of fun associated with planning a vacation and looked at a calendar thinking, "If I start now..."

I was never athletic. I'd never learned how to work out or what to do at a gym. ***Fast-forward and here I was as a grown adult who was desperate for a change in her body with absolutely no idea how to get there.***

Full of enthusiasm and determination, I dusted off my best sneakers, pulled on some old workout clothes, and headed to PRO Club. After poking around the cardio equipment, I quickly became bored. A Group Fitness flyer caught my eye and, without giving myself time to come up with an excuse, I marched over to the Concierge Desk to buy a punch card, making a mental goal to try out every single class on the schedule, starting out with HIGH Fitness on Friday morning with Melissa.

As I awkwardly lingered outside Studio A, I waited for a small group of people to walk by so I could jump behind and blend in. I didn't want to look like "the new girl." ***I hadn't***

***been in a fitness studio for years. I wondered, "Where should I stand? Where should I put my water? Should I introduce myself to the instructor?"*** Everyone else piling into the room seemed to know their place and each other. I gulped down my anxiety, spoke to no one, and found a space in the back where I could (hopefully) stay invisible, and attempt to keep up.

I was lost. Absolutely lost. It seemed like everyone else not only knew what they were doing, but they did it with ease. They were smiling. They were laughing. They were having fun! I had a lot to learn. My saving grace was the music. It was loud, fun, and motivating. Even if I was doing everything wrong, at least





I knew (and liked) the songs. And, after a while, I actually started picking up some of the moves. Every time Bruno Mars hit the chorus on that one song, I was supposed to squat, lunge, punch, repeat. Every time that Aerosmith song picked up, I was supposed to drop and do burpees. Melissa made it seem so easy to follow along and she was so encouraging. I don't think one song went by without her shouting about how amazing the class was doing and how our energy was powerful. Somehow, I felt part of that.

When class was over, I couldn't believe the time had gone by so quickly! **When I made my way to the locker room and looked in the mirror, I had an epiphany. I had hung in there for 70 minutes.** Even when I messed up the steps, I didn't quit. I kept going. My neighbors had motivated me to keep pushing even when I felt like my body was at its limit. I felt like I was part of a team, with all of us working towards the same end game. I had never experienced a workout like that in all my life. I felt accomplished...motivated...and strangely inspired. I could do it!

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Within the first few weeks, I had tried classes like Below the Belt, PROjam, Circuit Training, Barbell Strong and Pilates Mat. I couldn't stop. I was so thirsty for a change in my body that I woke up and went to the club five days in a row. **I was sore for weeks, but every time I attended another class, it got easier.** It wasn't as scary. Sure, I still felt clueless. Everything was new, but I was learning and the consistency started to make me feel more motivated than I'd ever experienced.

Eighteen months later... What started as "Let's get skinny for vacation" has turned into "Let's get and actually stay healthy for myself and my family." **My body has changed, my perspective has changed, and my heart has changed.** Never in a million years would I