

Bootie camp

Fed up with your kids eating fast food and mooching about in the malls? *Joanna England* talks to fitness guru **Corey Oliver** about Dhabi's new boot camp for kids

So Corey, what is Kids' Phys Ed Boot Camp and what kinds of exercise do you do?

It's a whole range of things rolled into one. We help the kids learn about how much food and water they should be having, as a lot of them don't know basic nutritional facts. In terms of exercise, we play a lot of games like British bulldog, tag and relays. We also do the more military-style exercises, such as squatting and crawling. We teach them how to do basic exercises safely, like sit-ups, push-ups and very light weights. Setting tasks is another activity. For example, we'll form the group into teams, and blindfold one member. Then team mates have to instruct the blindfolded person to carry out a task.

It sounds tough. Is it fun?

That's the idea. We have to make sure it's stimulating and challenging – otherwise the kids would get bored and probably wouldn't turn up for more than one session. It is a challenge for instructors and kids' boot camp can be quite draining because we absolutely have to make sure it's entertaining and full of theatrics, like shout-outs and forfeits. Adults do boot camp because they know they need to get fit and they have that motivation. With kids, it's a different ball game.

Why not just let them have a game of footie then?

Football is great because it involves a lot of running around and it's a good way to exercise your cardiovascular system. However, it only works out the lower body – and there isn't the resistance training either. Boot camp works out all the muscle groups and offers resistance and cardio exercise. It's great for building self-esteem, team work, discipline, flexibility and improving your all-round fitness. In fact, boot camp is a great session to do before a game of footie.

That's quite a lot of exercise. How much running about should kids actually be doing?

At least an hour five – or even six – times a week, especially considering the fast food culture here. Kids have a lot of energy but, in my experience, the vast majority of them don't even get half the amount of exercise they need.



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But how can you get kids to join when all they really want to do is sit indoors?

Parents should be proactive about it. Lots of expat kids belong to after-school sports and football clubs, which is great. But there are also those who go to the malls after school instead. They are surrounded by fast-food joints and the temptation usually leads to them consuming junk instead of eating healthy meals.

The kids' boot camp age range is eight to 15 years. Do they all do the same exercises?

Yes. In this age range it's perfectly safe because the younger kids have been

through a bit of a robust growth spurt and are able to keep up with the class. I wouldn't recommend children below eight doing it, though. They are too physically fragile and would find the classes overwhelming, which is why we apply the age restriction.

And it's not just for really fit kids?

Not at all. The point is that everyone can do it – and the team atmosphere and challenges make it enjoyable. We offer encouragement to those who join by doing a fitness test at the beginning of the course, and one at the end as well. The results usually speak for themselves, which helps kids maintain a sense of achievement and motivation.

Are there any physical reasons why you shouldn't do boot camp?

Hmmm. Not generally. Adults tend to have more problems. If you have lower back issues, or you've just had a knee or neck operation, or if you have problems when you run, then boot camp may not be for you. But it's really down to the individual being sensible and knowing their limits. A lot of kids who come to boot camp play football at weekends and can hurt themselves doing that. So at the beginning of every class, we do a role call and at the same time ask them if they have any problems. We also get them to fill out a medical history questionnaire when they register, so we know of any previous problems. The instructors can also offer those with weaknesses alternative exercises during the session.

Boot camp basics

WHERE? SAS Al Nakhl, Khalediya Village and Golf Gardens

HOW MUCH? Dhs600 for eight classes over one month, or Dhs90 for one session. If you are a resident of the above communities, you pay Dhs550 for eight classes or Dhs80 for one session.

WHEN? Sundays and Tuesdays at 4pm

CONTACT? Call 02 406 9404, visit www.originalfitnessco.com or email info@originalfitnessco.com.



Give me 50! Corey Oliver