

## Health & fitness: Zumba mixes merengue with mambo for cardio workout (w/video)

*This story was published Thursday, September 13th, 2007*

By Ingrid Stegemoeller, Herald staff writer

Whose sweatband weighs the most?

That's the big question when Toni Austin and her classmates finish their Zumba workout.

"An hour flies by," said Austin, of Pasco. "It makes exercise easier."

Zumba combines several different styles of Latin dancing, such as merengue, mambo, salsa, rumba, cha-cha and others into a cardiovascular workout. It was developed in Colombia about 10 years ago by fitness trainer Beto Perez and in recent years has made its way to the United States.

"You just feel the music, you don't have to count," said Zumba instructor Jennifer Monroe of Pasco. "You're having so much fun you don't realize you're working out."

Songs start out with a slower tempo and get faster to bring the heart rate up. The fourth or fifth song slows down a little, then the beat will speed up again, said Theresa Radder, a Zumba instructor. She co-owns Ladies Workout Express in Pasco with her sister, Pam Reynolds of Burbank.

"It works your hips, abs, thighs, calves," in addition to your heart, said Radder, of Sunnyside. And because Zumba offers a variety of different music mixes, instructors can shake up routines as often as they choose, she added.

There are 120 registered instructors in the state, according to the Zumba website, most of them on the west side. Fit For Me, a 24-hour women's fitness center opening in Richland in November, will also offer the class, owner Carrie Smith said.

"When I tried it, it was so energizing and fun," said Smith, of Richland. "I didn't realize how much of a workout I was getting until I stopped."

Tuesday night, Monroe led a few women at Ladies Workout Express in a Zumba routine.

Austin, a veteran of the class since the gym started offering it in May, helped first-timer Ardean Armitage of Kennewick with some of the moves.

"I don't know if I'll be able to move tomorrow," Armitage said while learning pivots and arm swings of a combination salsa and cha-cha dance.

"Oh yes you will," Austin said.

The two took some extra time during a few of the songs to go over footwork.

"The group is helpful," Armitage said after she finished. "It's lots of fun and it gets your heart rate up. It's a better workout than circuits because you're constantly moving."

Austin added Zumba to her workout because it rounds out her routine, she said. It has helped her build endurance and lose weight.

"This is a really good way to introduce exercise into your life," she said. "It's the normal woman who comes here," she added, explaining that anyone can learn the moves and have fun.

Other fitness classes have more strict routines that are harder to follow, Monroe said, but with Zumba, all you have to do is move. The hardest part is helping people find their comfort zone and get over being self-conscious, she added.

"It took me a long time to learn at first but I can keep up now," said Austin, who helped Monroe remember part of a dance. "How can you listen to this music and not want to move?"

\* Ingrid Stegemoeller: 582-1537; [istegemoeller@tricityherald.com](mailto:istegemoeller@tricityherald.com)

---

Get the entire Tri-City Herald delivered to you at home - [subscribe now](#).

Call 509-586-2138 or 800-750-4967

6 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

7-12:00 p.m. Saturdays

7-10:30 a.m. Sundays and holidays

© 2007 Tri-City Herald, Associated Press & Other Wire Services