

Trainer leads women in boot camp that stresses fat loss, strength, diet



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Long before the sun rises each morning, Maribel Bleeker is maneuvering her way through an obstacle course assembled in the parking lot of the North Palm Beach Community Center.

The Palm Beach Gardens resident and fitness instructor runs the North Palm Beach Adventure Boot Camp, a four-week outdoor program of fitness instruction, nutritional counseling and motivational training for women.



Cydney Scott/The Post

[enlarge](#)

Laura Henry of West Palm Beach pushes herself through a pre-sunrise workout with the North Palm Beach Adventure Boot Camp in the parking lot of the North Palm Beach Community Center.

Five days a week, she and her high-energy class gather in front of the community center for an hour of circuit training, sports drills, fitness kick-boxing and core conditioning.

"We do a lot of things," said Bleeker, 42. "We change things every day. We do a little bit of the agility ladder and the drills and a little bit of running. It's not constant all-out running, but we have little running drills throughout, and they have the option of walking. Anybody can come in and work at their own level."

So far, 17 women have.

Bleeker's first camp, which started Jan. 28, drew participants of all ages - the youngest is 19, the oldest is 53 - and fitness levels. All share the same goal of improving their health.

"I feel stronger," Palm Beach Gardens resident Sherri Wagner said. "That's the best part about it. I can go longer. I have more energy on the weekends. I feel motivated."

Others feel lighter, firmer and fitter.

The Adventure Boot Camp, which is available to women throughout the country, helps reduce body fat, improve endurance and posture and tone the midsection.

"They lose inches," Bleeker said of her clients. "They may lose some weight, but the weight they're losing is fat weight, not just water weight and muscle. We really try to preserve muscle and strengthen muscle through weights.

"We focus on losing inches, and just feeling better. Right now, the obesity rates are so high. So I really focus on my ladies really looking at, health-wise, how this is going to help them. The fact that they lose some weight and really start to see a difference in their bodies and in their clothes is an added plus."

Throughout her 10-year career in the fitness industry, Bleeker has seen many women, and men, experience the benefits of exercise and strength training.

But the North Palm Beach Adventure Boot Camp has provided the Homestead native her first opportunity to blend nutritional education, motivational training and outdoor fitness instruction.

"I decided I really liked the concept of a boot camp and bringing women in a community together," said Bleeker, who worked as a fitness instructor at the Florida Power & Light Wellness Center in Juno Beach for 4 1/2 years before launching the North Palm Beach Adventure Boot Camp.

"I actually trained with (Dr.) John Spencer Ellis out in California. He's the person that came up with Adventure Boot Camp.

"'I'm not your drill sergeant, I'm your coach,' is basically the way I look at it. I really long to just help women come into a group setting like this and understand that fitness can be fun, that it's not about being really thin. It's about being healthy."

The North Palm Beach Adventure Boot Camp is held in four-week sessions year-round. Participants have the option of choosing three-day per week classes (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) or five-day per week classes (Monday through Friday). Classes are held from 5:30 to 6:30 a.m.

Cost is \$199 for the three-day-a-week session and \$299 for the five-day-a-week session. Cost includes nutritional counseling, pre- and post-evaluation conferences and a T-shirt.

For information, call (561) 315-1239 or visit www.npbbootcamp.com.