



Bootcamp
SPECIAL

REBOOT YOUR BODY!

Wish you had a bootcamp trainer to whip you into shape for 2020?

Tempted to sign up for a fitness retreat to help shed that festive weight gain? We sent two *WF* writers to discover exactly what it's like to spend a week at a fitness camp. Read on to find out the truth and glean the top training tips, kit and moves you need to create your own mini bootcamp at home.



'I SURVIVED BOOTCAMP!'

WF writer Joanna Ebsworth rediscovers her fitness mojo at No1 Bootcamp in Norfolk

'What do you do when you're feeling in the worst shape of your life and have lost your fitness mojo? Book a bootcamp holiday, of course! I did several bootcamps in my late 20s and loved every second. But my last one was 10 years ago when I was fit and fabulous at 30. Since hitting 40, I'd been feeling unfit, frumpy and lacking self-confidence. But while I found the idea of bootcamp intimidating after being lost in exercise wilderness, thanks to a dodgy hip, I knew drastic action was needed. So, armed with the biggest suitcase I could borrow to haul all the kit I'd need (including 12 pairs of leggings, six sports bras, and three pairs of trainers!), I arrived at No1 Bootcamp in Norfolk on a sunny, late-September afternoon feeling a mixture of trepidation and excitement for the journey ahead.



Not even the rain can stop Jo!



PREPPING UP

'After being shown to my beautiful en-suite room that looks out onto stunning, leafy surroundings, it's a quick change into my gym kit ready for my induction with trainers Danny and Oli. I have "before" photos taken and hop on a state-of-the-art InBody weight management machine to assess my body composition so the trainers can track my progress. We talk through my health history (a medical questionnaire and dietary requirement forms were done before arrival) and I'm assured exercises will be adapted to avoid aggravating my hip. We discuss my goals, which I explain are to "stop feeling so bleurgh". I'm relieved "the boys" get this with great humour, and quickly put me at ease.

'With additional luxury bootcamps in Ibiza, Portugal and Marrakesh, No1 Bootcamp is hailed as one of Europe's leading fitness camp brands. It has helped thousands of people (including celebs) achieve body and fitness transformations. In the past 10 plus years, No1 has evolved from the traditional military style of training (think screaming PTs pushing you until you cry) to a more holistic approach, harnessing the latest training techniques to get results



Sessions are a mix of weight training and cardio

'Realising I can achieve things if I put my body and mind to it is amazing'

without breaking you. The main aim is to create strong, fit, lean bodies that lose fat without losing muscle mass, plus careful nutrition to support the training. This interests me, as previously, I've lost nine or 10 pounds in weight in six days, but had no idea if it was pure fat, or whether the training had eaten into my muscle.

'All that said, it's clear weight loss is not the main motivation for my fellow bootcampers. For the vast majority of the 15-strong group – who range in age from early 20s to late 60s – there are deeper issues at play, including a need to take time out, reduce stress, boost confidence and even heal after the loss of a loved one. I relish the idea of assessing where the future is taking me.

DAILY ROUTINE

'As a freelance writer with zero routine, I enjoy No1's daily training, eating and resting schedule, chalked up on a huge board each night so you know what you'll be doing every hour of the day. The regime goes something like this: 7.30am – 30 minutes' mobility and cardio

JO'S PACKING ESSENTIALS

- 'I took Bioglan Active Curcumin High Strength Turmeric Tablets (£24.99; hollandandbarret.com) to reduce muscle and connective tissue inflammation, and support my immune system.'
- 'I religiously used the fast-absorbing, non-greasy Ultrasun Face Anti-Pigmentation SPF50+ (£32; marksandspencer.com) to protect my skin from exposure to the elements.'
- 'Compeed Cushioned Blister Plasters (£4.39 for pack of 5; superdrug.com) are brilliant for protecting against rubbing footwear and relieving blister pain instantly so you can keep training.'
- 'I relied on Batiste Brilliant Blonde Dry Shampoo (£3.99; boots.com) to keep my scalp fresh and grease-free between washes when I didn't have the energy to wash and dry my hair.'

warm-up; 8am – 60 minutes of fat-busting cardio; 9am – breakfast; 10am – 60 minutes of strength and conditioning; 11am – protein shake; 11.30am – 60-minute boxing session; 12.30pm – lunch; 2.15pm – 45-minute circuit training session; 3pm – protein shake; 3.30pm – hiking off-site; 5pm – stretching and chill time; 6.30pm – dinner; 7pm – three laps of the outside track to aid digestion. For the rest of the evening, we relax in our rooms, watch telly in the communal TV room or enjoy a treatment. During the week, I indulge in two full-body deep-tissue massages to aid muscle recovery and one Decléor facial with a hot stones massage with the incredible on-site masseuse and beauty therapist.

ALL FIRED UP

'I'd heard how good the food was at camp, and I'm not disappointed. Every meal is delicious and satisfying, from yummy muffins with peanut butter, banana, berries and nuts for breakfast, to beef burgers with halloumi and steamed veg for dinner. During the week, we have "ghost weigh-ins" to monitor our progress, and notice our

Prep your body before setting off

Try these tips in the weeks leading up to your bootcamp holiday to get the best results from your experience.

- 1 Pick up the pace – bootcamps cater for all fitness levels but you can lessen the stress on your body and reduce the risk of injury if you put in work prior to arrival. Try walking for at least an hour every day in the build-up, to prepare your body for the physical demands ahead.
- 2 Up your water intake – drink around two litres of water a day before arrival so you're fully hydrated. Most bootcamps ban caffeine and alcohol, so try to reduce or stop your consumption to keep cravings away while on camp.
- 3 Prepare your feet – you'll be on them for up to 10 hours a day, so book in to see a podiatrist beforehand to get your feet in tip-top shape and check your gait to reduce any hip or knee issues.
- 4 Book a massage – if you sit at a desk for long hours, or are suffering neck, shoulder and back ache, a sports massage will help iron out kinks and free up stiff muscles to mobilise your body and reduce the risk of strains.



Jo adored the boxing sessions which got the group fired up



'THERE'S NOTHING I CAN'T DO NOW'

WF writer Sharon Walker checks in to The Body Camp, Mallorca, and sees the inches shrink and her body confidence grow

'It was a photo that drove me to the Body Camp. I was sitting in my underwear on a high stool clasping my knees to my chest, beaming at the camera. The photo session had been billed as an exercise in building body confidence and though the photographer had done a stellar job with the lighting, even the arty dark shadows could not disguise it was time to clamber back on the fitness wagon. The gentle folds of flesh hanging from my waist weren't "ugly", I'd done with body shaming myself years ago, but they weren't healthy either. A reminder that I'd been spending far too long sitting at a desk and had let the gym slide, kidding myself that walking to work was enough exercise for any sane person. That, coupled with a few too many pints at festivals, and I was feeling bloated and lethargic. Not the best version of myself.'



portion sizes increasing or decreasing to ensure we're getting the correct nutrients to fuel our training and still get maximum results. I never once feel hungry.

Mealtimes aside, my favourite thing is the training. All sessions take place outside, come rain or shine, with the exception of Spinning classes held in the studio. There's a huge mix of weight training and cardio sessions, including high-intensity HIIT workouts in the morning to get our metabolisms revving, to LISS (low-intensity steady state) workouts in the afternoons to keep us burning calories without risking injury. I adore the daily boxing sessions which get the group fired up just when you think you can't pull any more energy out of the bag. Our "happy hike" at 3pm takes us over the stunning local countryside and beaches, wonderful for body and mind, as well as a chance to natter and build relationships. I'm astonished how quickly my body responds to the training. During one challenging circuit session where we move from battleropes to kickboxing to TRX pull-ups to pushing sledges, I break down in tears when Oli says how much I've improved in the week, literally from the sheer joy of realising how newly strong and empowered I feel. Experiencing a return to

form and renewed self-confidence, plus realising I can achieve things if I put my body and mind to it, is an amazing moment. In short, I feel like I've found "me" again.

THE NEW ME

'The day before our final weigh-in, I realise I don't need scales or a tape measure to tell me I've improved my fitness levels and lost weight. I can see it in the mirror and feel it in my looser clothes, renewed energy levels and the way I can run four laps around the park by the end of the week when I couldn't run one on the first day without gasping for breath. It emerges I've lost 4cm off my chest, a whopping 7.5cm off my tummy, 2cm off my hips, 3cm off each thigh and 1cm off my arms. Overall, I've lost 3kg in fat (without losing muscle) while my BMI has dropped by 1.7 per cent. But the stat I'm most pleased with is that my visceral (internal) fat has dropped by two whole points from 14 to 12 – a shocker as I hadn't realised it was that high. Since returning home reinvigorated and with the tools, motivation and inspiration I need to continue my fitness journey, I've made further gains towards leading a much healthier and happier lifestyle. I can't wait to return to No1 Bootcamp in the future.'



Before

After

No1 Bootcamp is open all year round, with all fitness levels welcome. Prices start from £1,070 for 7 nights' accommodation, weigh-ins and body compositions, all meals and daily training schedule (seven hours a day). Shared and private rooms are available. Discounts are offered for longer stays. Visit no1bootcamp.com.

CELEB CRED

'I'd heard good things about the Body Camp's transformative retreat in Ibiza. It had opened six years ago to rave reviews and had hosted a galaxy of starry guests from the likes of Jodie and Jemma Kidd through to Mel C, Caroline Flack and Millie Mackintosh. Then last summer they opened a second venue in Mallorca offering a fitness focused holiday, with more free time in the afternoons. It sounded like a dream holiday. I could catch up on those unread novels and get my body back on track. The first thing you see after the Body Camp's gate slides open and you drive down the gravel drive is Derek the Dinosaur, with a hand dangling from his mouth. Other than that there is nothing alarming about the venue, which is a gorgeous traditional *finca* with a nice pool, surrounded by hammocks and sunbeds, with a long outdoor dining table, flowers and cacti plants.'

HOUSE RULES

'Inside I was met by Vicky, the house manager, who showed me to my room and then it was time for "rules and regs" with coach Antony, while G, the in-house nutritionist and all-round good egg,



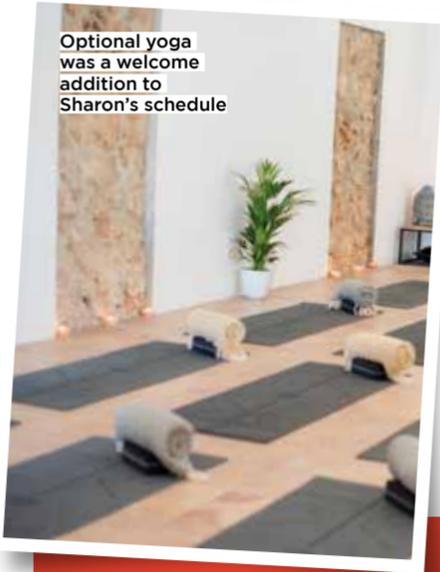
Sharon found that as her belly shrank, her confidence and energy soared

'The classes were cleverly designed to target every aspect of our fitness'

took our measurements. Antony explained the Body Camp's approach: "We believe that positivity spreads, but so does negativity." So rather than groaning that our muscles hurt or we were starving, we'd be getting sexier. Or ready to refuel. Exercise was not hard it was challenging. "Some days you're going to feel something in your thighs, as you come down the stairs," Antony told us. "Some people say they can't lift their brush to comb their hair, but that's what we're here for, we're going to change your body." He asked us to think about what we wanted from the week. I wanted to feel in control, not just of my diet and drinking, but also of my stress levels and moods. We were to be in our rooms, lights out by 10pm ideally, on the basis that sleep is as important as the training. "It's a package deal," said Antony. The last time I

was in the Balearics had been for a hedonistic week of wine-drenched lunches and cocktail-fuelled DJ beach bars; the Body Camp, by contrast, is booze-free.

'I first met my fellow Body Campers at dinner, which was served around a long table in the courtyard. There was a Swiss financier, who loved his first week at the Ibiza Body Camp so much he'd transferred directly to Mallorca, a deputy headmistress who was staying for three weeks and a bunch of teachers. One woman was here with a friend, all the way from New Zealand. The conversation flowed easily, but we were also told to eat mindfully and put away our phones. Everyone gets the same meal, just in different sized portions, though they'll also adapt if there are things you don't like or can't eat. All the food is plant based, not just because it's harder to get fat on veg and pulses, but because it's better for the planet. I signed up for the slow lane for weight loss, but the incredible Thai green curry still came in a bigger portion than I would eat at home.



Optional yoga was a welcome addition to Sharon's schedule

CLEVER CLASSES

'Before bed that night I took a good look in the mirror, examining the swollen curve of my belly with a growing feeling of confidence that it would soon be shrinking. The next morning, I was sweating through a fitness test we'd repeat at the end of the week. Cheered on by my buddy Carol, I pushed through more sit-ups, press-ups and burpees than I'd thought possible. "Way to go Sharon. Great job!" Carol yelled and I felt my body surge with a new power. If only Carol could come to all my workouts.

'The mornings flew by in a whirlwind of imaginative classes: The Gladiator Gauntlet, The Terminator, Baywatch. *We are the Champions* blasted over the stereo as I punched my way through Rocky. "Sometimes I can feel goosebumps in the warm-up," said Antony, who's wearing white bunny ears. "We're all freaks here. Welcome to the madhouse." But far from being mad, the classes were cleverly designed to target every aspect of our fitness and catapult us out of our comfort zone with a mix of circuits, fartlek training (fast and slow running), boxing and aqua aerobics, and with every exercise adapted to the different fitness levels: as economy, business class and first class, there was nothing I couldn't do. One day we donned

The Body Camp's 5 ways to mindfulness

Beat stress and achieve your goals by staying in the moment with these tips from Rick Parcell, head trainer at The Body Camp Ibiza.

- 1 Stop, breathe and listen. So much power comes to us through our breath. It's the thing that keeps us alive.
- 2 Getting enough sleep is so important. If you can get to bed early and rise as early as you can, you're winning. Seven to eight hours sleep is ideal.
- 3 Exercise releases endorphins and they keep you happy. It's as simple as that. Healthy fit body... healthy fit mind.
- 4 Live in the moment. You can easily work on your mental health and you can adjust things now. The past is the past and the future is the future. Now is all that should matter when you're trying to work on your mindfulness.
- 5 Be aware of the choices before you when it comes to the environment you place yourself in. Never doubt the fact you're in control and can choose to alter your path.

bike helmets and sped off to a local cafe under strict instructions to order nothing more than water or coffee, and the hikes through pine forests to the sound of tinkling goat bells revealed the most stunning scenery. But the highlight had been arriving back feeling like a conquering hero to the tune of *I would walk 500 miles* by The Proclaimers to be met by Kate and G holding trays of freshly-made lemonade.

TOTALLY TRANSFORMED

'When I booked the trip I'd imagined I'd spend the afternoons reading by the pool, but instead I found myself swimming laps and joining the optional yoga class, ticking off each accomplishment on the white board. The Body Camp has a wonderful way of encouraging you to do more than you thought possible. It was competitive, but the only person I was up against was myself. Before The Body Camp, I'd assumed it was inevitable my fitness levels would diminish as I neared the mid-point of my sixth decade but, in fact, the boxing and bleep test weren't a problem, circuits in the disco gym? Water off a duck's back. OK, so I was rubbish at the music quiz, but every day I clocked up more laps of the pool and watched my belly shrink as my confidence and energy soared.

'By the end of the week I'd sworn off booze for the summer, made new friends who share jokes and progress on WhatsApp, and six months later I'm eating more plant-based dishes. I've kept the weight off and I'm exercising more than ever. On our last night we donned silly hats and traded our highlights from the week. For me, it had been the people who'd made it. I've been to many spas that have felt like lonely punishments. The Body Camp, by contrast, felt like one big joyous party, no booze needed.'

Body Camp Mallorca opens May 1. Prices for a week's stay start from £1,500 (course runs Friday-Friday), which includes the programme, accommodation and all food and drink. Shorter stays of three nights (Fri-Mon) or four nights (Mon-Fri) start from £900. More information at thebodycamp.com.

Kit-bag essentials

Jo Ebsworth reveals how to gear up for a bootcamp class or fitness retreat



Nimble Active's Mesh With Me Tight (£80; nimbleactivewear.com) has moisture-wicking, four-way stretch fabric with mesh panels for added ventilation, plus a hidden drawstring in the waist.



Contur UK's Block-rocker Crop (£57; conturuk.com) is double-lined and has an uber-supportive, comfortable underband for incredible bust support, and even offers UV protection for outdoor workouts.



Stay dry and toasty on hikes with this waterproof, incredibly lightweight Berghaus Nula Micro Jacket (£140; berghaus.com) that has an adjustable hood to keep out the elements.



Smartwool's Merino Sport 150 Tee (£54.99; smartwool.com) is lightweight and moisture-wicking, keeping you dry during the toughest workouts. Great alone or layered, it's also anti-bacterial so can be worn for a few sessions before washing.

Giesswein's Wool Cross X Sport Shoe (£149; uk.giesswein.com) has a 100 per cent Merino wool lining to wick moisture and regulate foot temperature, plus micro-grip sole technology to tackle all terrains.



The Body Camp fitness circuit

Boost your fitness and build a tighter frame with this circuit from The Body Camp's head trainer and former Navy man, Rick Parcell. It's designed to help you lose inches all over your body and keep your enthusiasm up.

'Mix up these key exercises as you please. Break down the seven exercises into 30 second pulses with a 10-second rest and make sure you have good loud music on to help aid your workout! You can also add time to make it a longer circuit. If you're with friends then team up and work out together. Always begin with a nice gentle jog or stretch before you start working out with circuits to warm up your muscles.'

1 PRESS-UPS

If you're a beginner, press-up with your knees on the floor – know your limits. You can start small and then go harder. These are great for good arms – it's important to keep upper-body strength up.

2 SIT-UPS

Whether it's tight crunches or full-blown sit-ups, these are going to help your stomach get ripped if done regularly. Be careful not to pull your neck up with your hands.

3 BURPEES

Yes, these are the pits but they're

incredible for building your general fitness. Get onto YouTube to look at the easy, medium and hard versions. Add a little jump at the top for turbo bonus points.

4 PLANK

It's one of the most dreaded but best exercises you can do for core conditioning. It's also great at activating your glutes and hamstrings, so is well worth the pain. Start small by holding a well-formed straight-as-possible plank for 20 seconds and gradually build up to a minute.

5 SQUATS

The exercise to work on your Beyoncé bubble butt! The deeper the better. Keep your hands clasped out in front of you, feet a nice distance apart and a good straight back sitting into the squat.

6 LUNGES

From feet together (arms by your side with a small weight or above your head) take a gentle step forwards, bending your front knee and bringing your back knee as near to the floor as possible. Alternate your legs and keep it controlled – this is more about form not speed.

7 SKIPPING

There's nothing better for aerobic activity than skipping. It's amazing for getting your heart rate up and it's low impact. It's actually a lot of fun, too, and you can take a skipping rope with you everywhere!