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Physical

You want to work out with the hottest Spinning instructor in New York City or the coolest choreographer in Los Angeles? Then join the waiting list. These cult trainers are inspiring true fitness obsessions. By Lesley Rotchford

Julia Stegner
and Hilary
Rhoda, 2006

Attraction

ART + COMMERCE

says. There is a lot of loud music and booty shaking, and because she keeps the room at 86 degrees, it's not unusual to see her clients (among them Jessica Alba and Jenna Dewan Tatum) wringing sweat out of their shirts. "The class is sexy. You feel like you're getting down in a club," says Robin Fisher, who works at Freecity, a fashion company. "But she also sneaks leg and ab moves, like jumps, squats, and pliés, into the choreographed numbers, and that makes them even harder." Johnson says her secret is "a banging playlist." Some songs that have never let her down: "Jerk It" by Thunderheist, "Floor on Fire" by Lil Jon (featuring Pitbull), "Long Heels Red Bottoms" by Trina, "Bounce" by Iggy Azalea, "Wile Out" by DJ Zinc, and "Thinking About You" by Calvin Harris.

Diana Newton

Fitmix Studio

Newton was a Pilates instructor and runner when she and a partner opened Fitmix Studio in West Hollywood, which features a class called the Mashup that combines the two disciplines. Each session kicks off with 25 minutes of interval training on the treadmill, followed by 30 minutes of Pilates Reformer work. "It's one of the hardest workouts you'll ever do," says Nina Petronzio, an interior designer. Beyond the appeal of combining muscle-lengthening and calorie-burning, Newton's cult status comes from her encouraging demeanor, backed up by firm but friendly comments, like "We'll get through this together!" Newton explains, "Bad days are still good. I say, 'You're here.

You made it. Push through this workout, and tomorrow will be different." Lauren Jacobs, who works at a hedge fund, attests, "She connects with you—she remembers you went on vacation or that you went on a date. You feel like you're part of a family."

Richard Giorla

Cardio Barre

If you dropped in on one of Giorla's classes in the Studio City area of Los Angeles, you might think you were witnessing a group-therapy session. "How would it make you feel to finish these leg lifts? How do you want to feel when you leave the room?" he asks his students (including Dakota Fanning, Ashlee Simpson, and Samantha Harris) as music spills from an old-school stereo system instead of an iPod. Giorla teaches three days a week, and women show up half an hour early to fight for a coveted spot in the front row. "His hour-long class completely transforms your body," says Susan LeMoine, the owner of Dancers Barre, a dancewear store in Studio City. "You really do get a dancer's physique." Giorla believes that "people don't like to be told what to do. I inspire them to think on their own by asking questions throughout the entire class: 'What drives you?' 'What motivates you?'"

Stacey Griffith

SoulCycle

Griffith has been with SoulCycle since it started in 2006—and hasn't actually ridden a bike since suffering a knee injury five years ago. That hasn't stopped her from attracting an obses-

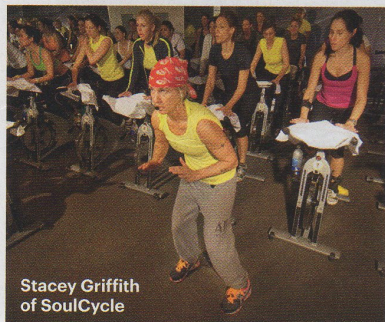
sive following in New York City and the Hamptons. "I was a competitive swimmer, and my favorite coaches coached from the floor. I found it was a more effective way for me to teach, too," she says. Griffith tosses out pieces of soulful wisdom ("She's a spiritual master," says Glynis Karp, who works in merchandising for Ralph Lauren) and, occasionally, slips neon bracelets that read #ICRUSHEDTHERIDEWSG on the wrists of riders—who instantly feel like chosen ones. "She gets everyone in the room to drop their ego and get lost in the music," says Silvina Leone, an interior designer. Kelly Ripa and Madonna are regulars. Griffith sums up her attitude: "I come from a place of positive. One thing I say in class is 'Sexy, strong, and confident is who you are.' I also have funny sayings that aren't so spiritual. When it's time to pedal fast, I say, 'Charge it hard like your AmEx card.'"

Justin Gelband

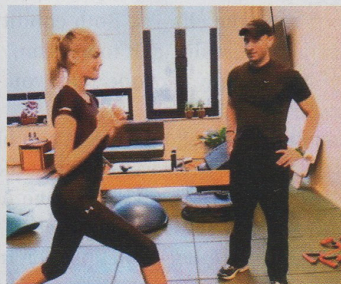
ModelFit

It stands to reason that sculpting a Victoria's Secret model is a trainer's best calling card. So after Gelband coached Angela Lindvall before the 2006 Victoria's Secret show, word spread. Last March, he opened ModelFit in a former photo studio in New York City, blending balance and stability movements with boxing, Pilates, and yoga. "It's my job to be fit but thin, and with other trainers, I have to explain that I don't want to use heavy weights," says Suzanne Diaz, a model. Gelband prevents boredom with variety. "It's not 25 repetitions (Continued on page 137)

"She's my therapist, my church, my temple, my coach, my teacher, and my trainer."



Stacey Griffith of SoulCycle



Justin Gelband of ModelFit with Kate Upton



Anna Kaiser of AKT inMotion



Jay Centeno of SLT

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DAVID COOK

PHYSICAL ATTRACTION

(Continued from page 119)

of one exercise," he says. "I change the movements to keep people going."

Anna Kaiser

AKT inMotion

Dancers may have cornered the market on desirable body types. Kaiser, who toured with *Fame!*, helped Tracy Anderson launch her New York City studio and then struck out on her own in the Hamptons, New York City, and New Canaan, Connecticut, with AKT inMotion, a dance interval program that she changes every two weeks to keep students challenged. "It feels like you just went to a party," says Sarah Easley, a co-owner of the boutique Kirna Zabête. "The class is high-energy and has such fantastic music," like "Dare (La La La)" by Shakira (who has been known to join in herself). Kaiser monitors her clients' progress. "We take measurements to make sure your body is changing," she says. "You can gain muscle and get smaller but not see a drop on the scale—and that's discouraging. When inches fall off, you know your body is changing."

Jay Centeno

SLT

Reviews for Centeno on the fitness website Rate Your Burn run to the flirtatious: "I'm in love.... When he walks by you during class, I'm pretty sure...little fake hearts bubble around my head." Six years ago, Centeno was a guitar player between gigs when he became a gym instructor and ended up teaching a sweaty, supercharged version of Pilates at SLT in New York City. Much of his popularity has to do with the intensity of his 50-minute classes, which attract followers including Sofia Vergara and Kyra Sedgwick; the rest can be chalked up to pure sex appeal. "He'll wink at you like it's a toothpaste commercial," says Emily Calhoun, a visual merchandiser for a luxury fashion house. "It helps with motivation." Centeno says, "There are people who are stronger than you and thinner than you. You can surpass them by working harder. I say, 'What we lack in pretty, we have to make up for in gritty.'" ♦

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