

Tips To Get You Started On Barre Better

With all the trendy barre studios popping up everywhere, it may seem like ballet-inspired workouts are just the latest fitness fad. But in fact, barre classes have been around since the '50s, when former dancer Lotte Burke opened her first studio in London.

Fast forward half a century (!) and Burke-inspired barre classes are more popular than ever.

1. Think quality over quantity. This is not Insanity; this is not CrossFit. Barre fitness is not about how many reps you can do in a minute or how many pounds you can lift. Rather, most barre classes focus on precision and proper form; you'll do smaller, slower movements, but you'll definitely feel them because you're isolating specific muscle groups you're not used to using.

2. If you're doing it right, you're going to shake — and feel that burn. You're not going to look super graceful doing these moves, and it's not going to feel easy — even if you think you're in good cardiovascular shape. (Don't be fooled by those tiny little hand weights and cushy balls — they really do get heavy!) Luckily, students are instructed to focus in on themselves, not to watch other people around them. You can't be intimidated by what you look like — or by hard work.

3. Dress the part. People are encouraged to wear grippy socks, with little rubber nubs on the bottom. This keeps you from slipping when you're on the barre, and it's more sanitary than going barefoot. Another apparel tip: Don't wear short shorts. You'll be doing a lot of inversions and open-leg poses, so capris or full leggings are suggested.

4. It's ballet-inspired; not ballet. You don't need dance experience or prior knowledge to take a barre class, and you don't even have to be familiar with the ballet barre. Most classes use the barre, which runs along the side of a mirrored wall, as a prop for stretching and strengthening: You'll work your glutes and your legs in standing positions, and you'll also get on the floor, underneath the barre, to work your upper body and isolate your core. Some classes also use additional props, like mats, balls, and light hand weights, which will all be provided for you.

5. It's great cross-training. Barre classes are all about strength, balance and flexibility, and if you're weak in any of those areas it will be challenging. If you go to the gym on your own, you're probably just going to do the things you're good at. In class, we focus on the areas that you're probably not working otherwise — and that will make you stronger and less prone to injuries.

So there you have it — now you've got no excuse not to get to a class. BCH&F offers classes mornings, lunch and after work. Just check the schedule. Because we limit the number of students to 16, call the day before, after 8:00am, to reserve your space. Anyone who reserves a space and does not cancel more than one hour prior to class, or anyone who simply does not show, will be charged a \$10 NO-SHOW fee.

