



BEYOND THE GYM: CARDIO BARRE IS ON THE MOVE!

This Hollywood-approved workout is making its way across the country.

Posted by Dana Robinson in HEALTH



It's nearly 11 a.m. on a Friday, and I'm flat on my back looking up at ceiling tiles that are painted to look like the afternoon sky—a perfect shade of azure accented with impossibly fluffy white clouds. Clearly these tiles are meant to take my mind off the fact that I've been struggling to keep my pelvis lifted and complete eight more reps of knee touches. All of this is occurring while the Bee Gees ironically encourage me to "stay alive." I am exhausted and regretting the fact that I placed my water bottle just beyond arm's reach. A quick glance at the clock reminds me that there are only 480 seconds to go.

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The last hour of my life was spent participating in a beginner's level **Cardio Barre** workout class. The website describes it as, "Hollywood's hottest workout class...a unique, high energy/no impact exercise class that combines barre work and light weights with continual fat burning motion." You could also describe it as a high-speed ballet class with much better music and no uncomfortable leotards.

The classes are the creation of dancer/choreographer **Richard Giorla**. A Philadelphia native, Giorla was classically trained in ballet but sidelined by an injury. He opened the first Cardio Barre studio in Studio City, Calif., in 2001, and more Southern California locations began to follow. The Barre franchise now also includes locations in Quarry Bend, Utah, San Francisco, and soon, Memphis, Tenn.

As the class began students jockeyed for position at the ballet barres, which are secured throughout the class. Giorla, who still teaches at this location, wasted no time in grabbing his headset microphone and pumping up the jams. A high-speed Disco Inferno had just set in and Donna Summer, the Bee Gees, the Village People, and **Michael Jackson** were assigned the task of getting us through the class.

For the most part, Giorla walked around the room telling us what to do rather than showing us, so I had to rely on my neighbors to see exactly which body part needed to be placed where. But as much as my legs began to quiver during exercises like the Battements Tendus (standing with the weight on one foot while the other leg moves in and out in a sliding motion) and good old-fashioned ankle lifts, the words of Giorla himself kept me going. As he walked around the class he kept reminding us that, "the harder you work, the harder you get," and that, "most people only try to get through the day, but sophisticated people get from the day. What are you going to get from your day?"

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Even if **ballet** was never your thing, standard workout moves like torso twists, abdominal crunches, and scissor kicks bring a tone of familiarity to anyone who's apprehensive about approaching the barre. It's a great workout to add to your exercise repertoire—a little something out of the ordinary that will keep workout boredom at bay while bringing back memories of your childhood. Just remember to keep that water bottle close, sink into the music, and enjoy the sweat.

What's your favorite way to exercise? Tell us in the comments below!

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