



BEYOND THE GYM: SPINNING

Tighten and tone your whole body and get ready to sweat!

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Posted by Dana Robinson in HEALTH



I'll admit it. Spinning has always been a little low on my workouts-to-try list. I haven't been on a bike (stationary or otherwise) since middle school, plus [bike riding](#) in a workout studio seemed kind of...boring.

But this life is all about trying new things, so I contacted my friend Michael Ambers, who's a Spinning instructor at [Blazing Saddles](#) in Sherman Oaks, Calif. It turns out that there was room for one more in his next class, so he signed me up and I was off to the races!

Spinning is essentially the outdoor biking experience brought indoors. The instructor's job is to guide you through a series of "terrains" that range from flat roads to steep inclines. The dimly lit room (standard operating procedure in a Spin class) began to fill up quickly as everyone picked their favorite bike and began a few rounds of gentle pedaling to warm up their muscles. Ambers adjusted my bike seat, and since I decided against purchasing biking shoes for my first class (they keep your feet from slipping off the pedals) he locked my feet into the pedal's foot cages. He pumped up the jams on his [iPod](#) and led us through a few upper body stretches before blasting, full force into the routine.

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We were encouraged to increase the resistance of the bike, which is controlled by a small knob. The tighter the knob, the more effort it takes to pedal, which mimics the feeling of biking up an incline. A looser knob more closely mimics riding on a flat road. The beauty of Spinning, unlike outdoor biking, is that students can choose their terrain. You might be having a flat road kind of day, while your neighbor is determined to bike up Mt. Everest.

Not wanting to take on too much too soon I kept the bike tension toward the looser end of the spectrum, which didn't inhibit my [workout](#) one bit. The sweat started pouring down almost immediately as we went through drills that involved pedaling while standing up straight and hunching down low. The pumped up music, plus the drill work ensured that the class was far from boring.

Although the workout left me feeling absolutely invigorated, cool down time couldn't have come fast enough. My legs were ready for a rest, plus my backside was a bit sore from sitting on a bike seat for so long (I was assured by other members of the class that your bum won't ache at all after a few classes.)

I've already booked my next class for Wednesday of next week, and I can't wait to yet again feel the burn!

The Essentials

If you do decide to give Spinning a chance, here's what you'll need:

Water: Lots of it!

Workout Towel: Spinning will make you sweat!

Biking Shoes (optional): Biking shoes feature hard soles that prevent your feet from slipping off the bike pedal. They're not essential for first-time Spinners, but you might consider the investment if you decide to make Spinning a part of your regular workout routine. [Sidi](#), [Shimano](#), and [Diadora](#) make top-of-the-line cycling shoes that just might be perfect for you.

Have you tried Spinning? Tell us about it.

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