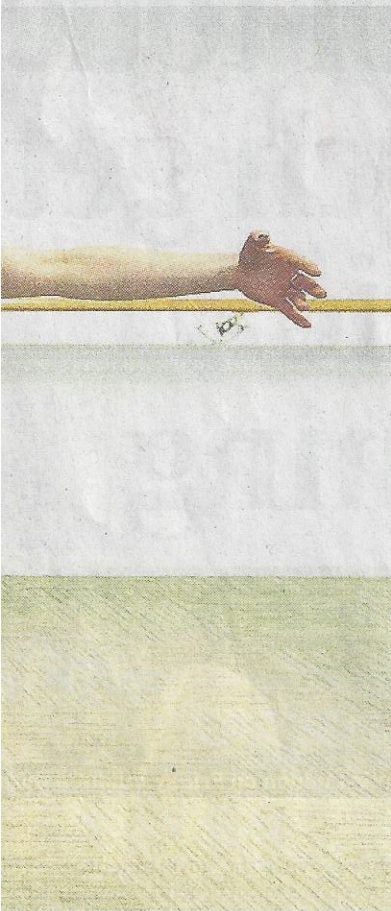


Get fit with 'bootcamp ballet'

JULIAN ANDREWS



ises used by ballet dancers

Beezy Marsh

ENDORSED by Hollywood celebrities, the latest exercise craze for women is returning to its birthplace in Britain.

Barre training is a fitness regime based on the exercises used by ballet dancers. The owners of clubs opening across the country claim that, instead of leaving you looking like a dying swan, it will “get your body MTV video ready”.

Few of the women flocking to the classes may realise that barre training was originally launched in Britain more than 50 years ago by a Jewish woman who had fled Nazi persecution in Germany.

The regime was created in the 1950s by Lotte Berk, a ballet dancer who died in 2003, aged 90. She banned men from classes and devised exercises to which she gave names such as “the Prostitute” and “the French Lavatory”.

The training, which involves using a ballet barre, spread to America, where its fans include Natalie Portman, the actress who played a ballerina in the film *Black Swan*, and Madonna.

The gruelling fitness routine has been dubbed “bootcamp

ballet”. Its revival in Britain has attracted women seeking an alternative to exercise bikes and Pilates.

A £360-a-head training course for instructors in London in May sold out earlier this month.

Others are planned in Newcastle, Manchester and Maidstone.

The Barrecore studio opened in Chelsea, west London, last year, and another studio, operated by a company called Barretone and backed by Sarah Parish, the actress, opens in nearby Notting Hill next month.

Parish, 44, attended classes five times a week while staying in the Canadian city of Vancouver two years ago, and claims to have shed 9lb in three months.

Niki Rein, the owner of Barrecore, said: “We have monitored our classes and know we burn around 500 calories a class, compared to 200 for Pilates.”

SUNDAY TIMES DIGITAL

ST

Video: View your personal bootcamp ballet workout at

thesundaytimes.co.uk/news