



Time to Ramp Up or Shake Down Your Workout

Published April 28, 2003
FoxNews.com

NEW YORK – If you're looking to get in shape for summer, you're just in time to Ramp it Up or shake it down.

Ramping, a new exercise poised to become the next step aerobics, and **Zumba** ([search](#)), a Latin dance-aerobics fusion, are the latest workouts for the fitness-forward.

"Ramping seems like it's for everyone, and it gives you a little bit more of a workout on the backside than step," said Carol Scott, owner of ECA World Fitness, which sponsors a major annual fitness convention. "As for Zumba, we love, love, love, love it. It puts the fun back into low-impact aerobics."

Zumba, a spicy mix of Flamenco, tango, salsa, hip-hop, calypso and belly dancing, was invented by Alberto "Beto" Perez, who began his career as a boy in Colombia dancing on street corners for spare change. This soon evolved into a fitness and dance career (he's choreographed for Shakira), and eventually into Zumba.

"It's the next **Tae Bo** ([search](#))," said Zumba Productions Vice President Alberto Aghion, referring to the fading martial arts workout craze.

Zumba, a Colombian expression that means to move fast and have fun, is already bringing Latin rhythm to major gym chains such as Lucille Roberts. And at its un-official ECA debut last month (the class was taught by someone who claims to have trained Beto,) Zumba was hot, hot, hot, according to Scott.

"I'm old-fashioned and I love non-prop cardio," Scott said. "One song is samba, one is mambo. It's one big Latin party. We loved it."

Popular with kids, Zumba's also creating little J-Los and Ricky Martins. The company has plans to partner soon with an American breakfast company to promote healthy eating and exercise habits for children. It has also sponsored a "mini Beto" contest.

Meanwhile, Ramping, a workout created by Georgia-based step aerobics inventor Gin Miller, simulates the feeling of walking up a ramp – easy on the joints but hard on the backside. The new workout also debuted at ECA last month, to mixed reviews.

"It flows nicely and offers a program for beginners and a challenge for those who are advanced, but some gyms were burnt by the slide," said Scott. "They don't know if they need another piece of equipment in their studios."

Miller said she designed the Ramp to create a workout that's more accessible to fitness beginners and that targets the rear and hips more than step aerobics does.

"It's great for people who can't or don't want to do high-impact aerobics or put stress on the joints," Miller said. "And the shifting into the hip fires the rear muscles, the glutes and the hams (backs of the thighs)."

Miller currently offers two programs – Ramping 1-2-3, which uses slow, Cirque de Soleil-ish music and caters to the heavier exerciser, and Ramping Up, a harder program for fitness enthusiasts.

"In the first Ramping Up class, people had to stop because it was too intense," said Miller. "I did a couple of classes at Crunch in Atlanta and people said to me, 'I'm coming back because my butt is sore.'"

Several major gym chains have placed orders for the Ramps, which should be available in May.

As for Zumba, the first large batch of instructors won't be certified until next month, but do-it-yourself tapes featuring "Beto" are available now at zumbafitness.com.

So whether you want to shake your hips or just tone them, Zumba and Ramping are coming to a gym near you. Scott said she's excited about both new workouts.

"We're always looking for new ways to do cardio in a group setting," she said.

