

The Urban Gym

From Monday 19 April 2010 Scotland's capital becomes the ultimate outdoor exercise centre as fully qualified instructors guide participants of all fitness levels around a city street circuit using the natural and man-made environment to create an invigorating outdoor work out experience. Steep streets, sneaky alleyways and shiny plazas all feature as participants swap the monotony of the treadmill for the iconic sights and sounds of Britain's most beautiful city.

The Rat Race Urban Gym employs a proven combination of aerobic, resistance and conditioning exercises, in a welcoming, social environment, to increase overall fitness and help achieve health targets, all at participants' own pace.

Classes run on Monday and Wednesday evenings, starting and finishing at a central Hub on Castle Terrace. A typical hour-long session includes about 3km of running and jogging around the city sights, interspersed every few minutes with "Rat Stops", where the urban landscape replaces gym equipment, for activities that will get the heart pumping and the muscles aching. In any given session athletes might find themselves running up the steps of Warriston Close, doing caterpillars on Princes Street, playing geckos on the Grassmarket or doing jail breakers in the New Town!

The Urban Gym concept has been engineered from the huge popularity of the annual multisport event – the Edinburgh Rat Race, the flagship of the international Rat Race Urban Adventure Series, and the ease at which Edinburgh's cityscape can be transformed into the ultimate training ground for urban adventure sport.

Jim Mee, who runs the Rat Race Urban Adventure Series throughout the world, believes that the Urban Gym's style of fitness training will become more popular as people develop a

greater understanding of their surroundings. He commented: "Modern cities have a fantastic natural and man-made environment that's perfect for creating a comprehensive all-round fitness workout. The Rat Race Urban Gym is aimed at people who have a passion for health and fitness as well as a love of the great outdoors.

"The classes are designed to teach people that they can create their own workouts in their own time and location without any restrictions. They are also a great opportunity to meet and train with like-minded people on their own doorstep and for those training for this year's Rat Race Adventure you couldn't ask for a better training plan."

Anyone who has taken part in the Edinburgh Rat Race will be aware of the potential of the capital for turning a boring workout into an exercise adventure like no other and signing up for the Rat Race Urban Gym will be the perfect opportunity to prep for this year's event.

Paul Bush OBE, Chief Operating Officer at EventScotland, said "The Edinburgh Rat Race was the UK's first urban adventure race and now this highly successful event is held internationally. The Rat Race brings hundreds of people from around the UK to participate and always draws a great crowd, showcasing Edinburgh as the perfect stage for urban adventure sports as well as a premier tourist destination. The Urban Gym is a fantastic addition to the Rat Race concept, that gives residents and visitors alike the opportunity to exercise in the heart of the city and the perfect training programme for competitors ahead of the race!"

Councillor Steve Cardownie, Festivals and Events Champion for the City of Edinburgh, said: "The Urban Gym is just the ticket for encouraging people to make more use of the city environment for getting fit. It's through initiatives like this that Edinburgh aspires to become the most physically active city in Europe by 2020. I'm sure lots of people will be

inspired to sign up.”

Now confirmed as taking place on the weekend of the 17 and 18 of July 2010 the Rat Race returns to its spiritual home for two days of tackling the city head on with a combination of brawn, brains and gutsy determination. Teams of two and three of all abilities will hike, bike, abseil, climb, kayak and navigate their way around the streets, structures, waterways and the urban landscapes of Edinburgh over one or two days; combined with surreal sporting tests and obstacles

Dean Macey, the Commonwealth Gold medal winning Decathlete, who retired last year from competitive athletics, has been appointed as a consultant for the nationwide ‘Rat Race Urban Gym’ Programme. He said: “This is all about pushing yourself in a challenging environment. There are few gym exercises that can’t be done outside and training to a properly designed outdoor fitness programme can really get the heart racing and help to achieve personal goals. I’m delighted to be on board this great project and I’m convinced that this is the future of personal fitness.”