

Keeping Fit & Happy – exercise outdoors

We were looking around for suggestions about keeping fit and well during the lockdown and happened to spot Fit & Happy on Facebook. Fit & Happy run Personal Training sessions and Boot Camps for Women.

Their classes have a maximum of 12 people and they meet in local parks in Edinburgh. The outdoor exercise class may be called a boot camp, but Julia McCabe who founded the company explained: “There is no shouting, it is not military style, but exercise in small groups , and it is about getting together in the fresh air and exercising. It is quite social and a lot of the women come for the social aspect, the feel good and having a laugh. It is not too serious and it is for all ages and fitness levels. We do not compete on an individual basis, it is very relaxed. Everyone works hard, but they do that at their own level.”

There are classes in The Meadows, Victoria Park, Spylaw Park, Ravelston Park and Inverleith Park. There are also LIFE classes (Low Impact Fun Exercise) classes in Colinton and Holyrood aimed at those who don't really want to jump and run. These classes are for people who like being outdoors and just don't like exercising in a gym for whatever reason.



Julia is a personal trainer who was voted one of the best in the UK in 2019 and 2020. She began working with women outdoors on a one to one basis. She says there are many additional benefits of being outdoors, mainly for mental health and wellbeing. She added: "For me it is all about being in nature. But running one to one classes I could only reach so many women, so I started group sessions in The Meadows first about three years ago now. The demand was there so now we have more coaches and classes available."

After a brief period this year when all classes were online, there are still some online classes for anyone who prefers to exercise at home and now there are also yoga, stretch and mobility sessions. Julia realised that this is a stressful time for some people and that the boot camps may not be for everyone.

The benefits of this outdoor exercise are many – getting out of the house and being with other people are the big attractions. Julia is emphatic that even if it's raining it makes you feel good afterwards

After a warm up to get the heart rate going, every session is different. They used to have equipment but of course can't do that right now. But every class varies around the themes of strength, cardio, vascular endurance, agility and balance.

Exercises will include the usual kind of squats, lunges but they throw in some animal movements too for a bit of fun. They work the upper body with hands on the ground so gloves are recommended – but nobody is rolling around in the mud.

Prices depend on how many sessions you book for and range from £3.50 to £9.50

www.fitandhappy.co.uk

