

Individualised Training Programmes Vs. Bootcamp Workouts – No Contest!

By Charlotte Ord BSc

This year has seen an enormous rise in the popularity of bootcamp style workouts all around the world, with many personal trainers claiming that their bootcamps can out-deliver individualised training programmes on results and budget. Of course, they would say this, given that the hourly rate for a bootcamp class is around three times that of a private personal training session. Nevertheless, bootcamps do offer great value for money for people looking for fitness and fat loss on a budget. They provide the potential opportunity to receive expert coaching that would not otherwise be available at such low cost, great camaraderie, a structured workout and a level of accountability. Sounds great, and it seems to be a winner with trainers too, given that virtually every personal trainer I know is now offering a bootcamp of some sort or another. The only problem being, of course, that it somewhat takes the 'personal' out of their training.

And therein lies the problem with bootcamps, and the claim that they match individualised training for results. Firstly, bootcamps are usually held outdoors, where equipment is limited to what can realistically be lugged around a field or similar area for the use of a large group of people. This means that you are immediately limited on weights available, which means if you're looking for strength gains well, sorry, but you're restricted. Secondly, as I mentioned before, the 'personal' is lost. The more of an expert your trainer is, the more you stand to miss out on if you opt for group exercise over individualised programming. By this I mean that a true expert will thoroughly evaluate your lifestyle, medical history, job, activity level, functional movement scores, static posture, kinetic chain, nutritional status and every other factor that could potentially influence your goals. Then, and only then, will they prescribe a programme that is tailored exclusively for you, based on all of the information you have provided, any weaknesses or functional limitations, and most importantly, your goals. From there they will watch your every move during each session to ensure that you get the absolute maximum benefit out of each exercise you perform, and that your programme is progressed or regressed as and when you need it to be.

The bootcamp trainer, on the other hand, can offer you none of this, however well trained they are. They have a commitment to providing a workout that will vaguely meet the needs of Mr. or Mrs. Joe Average, but that's not you, right? You might, say, have a twinge in your back, which in your personal training sessions will be dealt with immediately, firstly by assessment (are the muscles in your extensor chain firing effectively and in sequence?) and then by treatment (maybe your back is compensating for weak gluteal (butt) muscles, so your trainer can work on reactivating those and get you moving functionally again). At bootcamp however, your expert trainer is 100 yards away

correcting the squat of the person twenty people down the line from you, and never even gets to hear about your back twinge, so your body is left to compensate a bit more, yielding you even fewer results, well, positive ones anyway.

So whilst bootcamp workouts are certainly better than wandering aimlessly around the gym, or worse still not exercising at all, do not be misled by personal trainers who claim that their bootcamps can out perform personalised coaching on results, because quite frankly, they don't stand a chance. If personal training sessions are out of your budget but you still want to benefit from the individualisation and goal driven focus they provide, there are two options for you. Many trainers are now offering semi-private personal training, which involves all the benefits of private fitness coaching, including thorough assessment and programme prescription, but you share your session with one or two other trainees. This is not the same as group exercise, as each of you are following individually prescribed routines, but is obviously a much more cost effective way of receiving one on one coaching. The second option is remote training, where you either meet with your trainer once a month, or even just for an initial assessment, or hold a detailed consultation over the phone, from which your trainer can again prescribe an individually tailored programme. Most coaches are happy to tailor packages to suit your needs, so before you follow the crowd to the nearest bootcamp, have a think about which option would really give you value for money, and go with it. Bootcamps may be cheap, but if you don't get the results you're looking for, it's a waste of money, right?

For more information on personal fitness and remote training, visit <http://www.charlotteord.com>