

# Concrete Jungle Gym

## Military-Style Workout Redefines Getting 'Fatigued'

By Sherry Karabin

Twenty-five jumping jacks, 15 push-ups, several quick sprints around the room, and then it's on to some hurdles.

Ready for more? No? Don't tell that to Pure Power Boot Camp owner Lauren Brenner or any of her five trainers.

Pure Power isn't the kind of place where you expend a minimal amount of energy or hide out in the back of the room. Like a real boot camp, workouts at Pure Power require all you've got to give, both physically and mentally, and then some.

"When you work out at the gym, you push yourself as hard as you can, but it's human nature not to push yourself as hard as you can all the time," says recently inducted recruit Nicole Davis. "When you work out here, they push you as hard as you can every day."

Twenty-five-year-old Davis Ash describes it this way: "You're not going to the gym and simply working out one body part or doing a specific exercise. You're pushing your entire body to its limit. I have a lot more stamina and I'm much more energized during the day."

Brenner is no stranger to hard work, be it physical or mental. The 33-year-old Great Neck, Long Island native has been an athlete her entire life and a personal trainer since she was 16. She spent six years as a trader on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange and was in the process of



You will climb the cargo net, recruit—and you will like it.

training for a career in the Federal Bureau of Investigation when she decided to start Pure Power.

"I wanted to create a place where people could be equal and could be a part of something regardless of what they do or don't do for a living," says Brenner.

Becoming part of the gang at Pure Power is an experience like no other. The building, which is located at 38 West 21st St., may look like many others on the block, but just wait until you get to the second floor. There, the elevator opens and you meet Mr. Soldier himself: a life-size statue, complete with rifle, who's ready for war. In fact, recruits who sign up are required to drop down right there and do five

push-ups. Then it's off to one of the real World War II tents where you'll change into military fatigues and put on your dog tags. No exceptions to the fatigues rule, by the way.

The 6,500-square-foot indoor military facility is based on the same obstacles and construction as the U.S. military base at Fort Knox. The regimen is based on the training undertaken by our elite forces.

"It's no frills, blood, sweat and tears, and it's about building yourself up on the inside and outside," says Brenner.

Although Brenner has never been a Marine, her five hand-picked trainers are former Marines

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who have all done tours in Iraq. "This is as close as a New Yorker can get to the actual boot camp," says Ruben Belliard, who spent seven and a half years in the military before coming to Pure Power. "Any closer to the real thing would have to be the real thing."

Those who sign up at Pure Power get six weeks of training, four days a week, one hour each day. The package costs \$929. Brenner says that works out to about \$38.70 per session and, unlike other gyms, she guarantees your fitness level (not your weight—Brenner doesn't do scales) will improve by the end of your six weeks or she'll train you herself.

It's a guarantee she has never had to make good on yet. Perhaps that's because of the no-nonsense attitude and strict rules about cutting class. If you don't call and don't show up, you lose the session; if this happens more than three times, expect some harassing phone calls at any and all times of the day or night or even a visit to your workplace.

Like the real military, you will not

only be part of a platoon, but your teammates will be depending on you. Essentially, if you mess up, everyone may find themselves doing a few extra sit-ups or pushups.

"What makes this different from working out at the gym is the group environment," says Davis. "If I don't work hard, my teammates are gonna have to work harder, and that pushes you."

That said, training at Pure Power is geared to a person's strengths and weaknesses. Instructors know their clients personally, right down to their injuries and fitness levels.

Clients are also required to know and be ready to recite the 11 principles of leadership. However, unlike a real-life boot camp, Pure Power doesn't seek to demean its "recruits" who are having trouble; instead, it tries to empower and encourage them. In fact, Brenner will personally take time to teach members how to get over the obstacles. The other recruits are also supportive.

Says Davis, "When I climb an obstacle by myself, my teammates are there clapping and encouraging me."



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