

HEALTH AND FITNESS AT ANY AGE

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Turn "Bad"
Calories
Good

Gloria Estefan
Life in
balance

group dynamics

If the idea of doing pelvic rotations next to a coworker makes you wince, imagine what it's like for a celebrity to sweat through an hour-long class alongside a gawking fan. A few classes, however, have an instructor so dynamic, a buzz so powerful and a workout so satisfying that even major players have been known to make a public appearance for them. Here's a roundup of the classes that bring out the stars on both coasts.

Rough and tumble fitness

Tae Bo Aerobics, a hybrid of tae kwon do, boxing and aerobics conjured up by karate champ and sometime actor Billy Blanks, has been a celebrity favorite since its beginnings in 1988. Why? Because Blanks's complex combinations of jabs, punches and kicks set to pulsing dance music provide both a mental and a physical challenge even to fitness burnouts. Also, the hour-long classes are so packed with students that a prolonged glance at a beautiful person would likely win a starstruck fan nothing more than a Nike in the eye. Although both men and women are drawn to Tae Bo (**Gail O'Grady**, 34, **Brooke Shields**, 32, **Paula Abdul**, 35, **Valerie Bertinelli**, 37, **Lela Rochon**, 31, and athletes Shaquille O'Neal, Wayne Gretzky and Sugar Ray Leonard,

to name a few), Blanks feels that women in particular stand to gain valuable skills from the punching practice: "Tae Bo builds self-confidence and self-assurance. If you asked a woman who's only taken traditional aerobics to put up her dukes, she might not be able to do it. In my class, you can learn to be your own bodyguard."

Karate is hot at New York City's tony Reebok Sports-Club/NY. Sensei John Mirrione teaches four classes every week and also gives private lessons. He uses the shorinjiryu style, which "incorporates mind, body and spirit in harmony." Students such as **Kathleen Turner**, 43, learn quickly that this class goes way beyond Hollywood-style karate chops. According to Mirrione, his karate is "an intensive program of fitness, philosophy and meditation. It is very peaceful and positive."