

Get "Zogfit"

WITH CHERYL HERZOG BEACH BOOT CAMP

Reprinted from the Sea Isle Times, July 2009



By Maura Bogue

"Are you ready to get your butt kicked?"

"Are you ready to get your butt kicked?" and "Please sign this waiver in case you die" defined the first contact I had with Cheryl Herzog, the 13-year personal trainer who owns Surfside Fitness. But the morning low-tide waves gradually washed away the initial intimidation (and, thankfully, not my vanquished, lifeless body) as I not only survived, but thrived on my first brush with Herzog's Boot Camp on the Beach.

As we jogged down the 45th Street Beach to warm up, Herzog explained that Boot Camp was not intended to be scary, because its exercises could be tailored by participants of all fitness levels.

And far from dying, following the hourlong "strength training with cardio" workout, I felt more alive at work that day than I had all summer.

"Anybody can do it" Herzog said, as I tried surreptitiously to wipe off the war paint I'd thought I'd need. "There's always a way to do it."

True, I hobbled around the office for the rest of the week, Herzog's "Bunsen burner" exercise having targeted muscles I hadn't used in four summers since my high school days of field hockey pre-season. But the class reinvigorated my exercise routine as an important reminder that it's not working out if you're not challenging yourself in different ways each time.

Although the sore muscles took a few days to appreciate, the motivating mixture of the beach, a trainer and people to work out with was an immediately refreshing change. Especially with the rise of the On Demand workout, with a growing number of friends

reporting that they no longer even go to a gym, where at least there's other humans around, but rather exercise alone. In front of the TV. In their basements.

"I've been more and more into using the beach as our fitness tool," Herzog said, mentioning the hard sand, soft sand and jetties, "...using the best tool of all - your own body:"

The warm-up jog was infused with active stretches while walking down the beach: lunges, toe touches, butt kicks and a high knee/quad stretch combination, to name a few. Then we settled onto our towels lined up along the sand, as Herzog combined "babe-friendly" Pilates moves and yoga poses, emphasizing the value of using your own body weight to strength train.

We then rose for speed drills, as Herzog drew a line in the sand for us to sprint "fast, faster or fastest" to and backpedal back from. Distance runs may be good for your heart and endurance, Herzog said, but sprints are why athletes' bodies look so good.

We then headed to Herzog's favorite beach fitness tool: the jetty, which she told us we'd never look at the same way again.

And she was right. Stepping on and off the pilings, I had an uncomfortable flashback to my mom's Jane Fonda step aerobics VHS. There were also karate kicks and air punches to remind me of her Billy Blanks tae bo phase.

But the breezy beach setting and Herzog's in-person encouragement as she trained

alongside us refreshed the old exercises. I could feel the exercises doing something, or better yet, some things. The signature of Herzog's choice of elements is their incorporation of multiple muscle groups and always the core.

"Every exercise is a core exercise," Herzog repeated.

Repeating the class doctrine that the beach is nature's gym, Herzog then led us to the soft sand for short Indian runs (a single-file jog/sprint) to punctuate two sets of jumping rope (50 jumps each time). As fatigue began to creep its way into my body as I sprinted one last turn to finish the run, I exhaled a sigh of relief when Herzog announced a switch to the hard sand for the final stretch.

Descending onto my towel, I felt perfectly exhausted. Worked enough - yet not overworked - to want to include Boot Camp, or at least some of its exercises, into my weekly routine. Even if you can't go every day or even every week, the mental and physical revitalization make it worth trying at least once.

Because that's what Boot Camp is about: giving your body, not a trouncing on, but a realistic way to incorporate exercise into your everyday life routine. After all, getting "zogfit," the Herzog maxim, is not just about a workout. It's the integration of fitness and wellness to last for a lifetime.

Life is too short to be dragging yourself out the door each time you "have to" exercise. You don't need to wear fatigues to fight fatigue at Boot Camp on the Beach. As Herzog says, conquer life, don't just survive it.

Bring a towel, a water bottle and \$10 and look for the Boot Camp sign at 45th Street Beach. Classes are held at 8 a.m. Monday through Saturday. For more information, call 263-9023, visit Herzog's web site at trainwithcheryl.com, or stop by Surfside Fitness at 39th Street and Landis Avenue.



"Anybody can do it."