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SHAPE

We Tried It: Blitz

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There's a good reason high-intensity, bootcamp-style workouts have been all the rage for a while now. Super-successful fitness programs like [Reebok's CrossFit](#) [1] and Shaun T.'s at-home [Insanity](#) [2] DVD series not only promise results, they deliver them. Problem is, these calorie-blasting, muscle-toning plans can be intimidating, discouraging and, in some cases, injury-inducing, especially if you're new to strength training mashed up with cardio.

With CrossFit, for example, I pushed myself a little too hard while swinging a too-heavy kettlebell in order to keep up with and compete against my peers (and the clock) during my first class. I ended up having painful back spasms for four days straight. The experience hasn't turned me off to CrossFit (I just need to take it easier and focus more on my form), but I'm definitely more cautious and hesitant when it comes to programs like this.

So when I signed up for the "endurance" portion of [S](#) [3] [ports Club/LA](#) [4] and [Reebok Sports Club/NY](#) [5]'s newly launched, three-part fitness program called [Blitz](#) [6]™ (the other two are Power and Strength), I was a little nervous that I might have another CrossFit experience on my hands. I quickly found out that it wasn't anything but.

RELATED: Shake up your fitness routine with this [at-home CrossFit workout](#) [7].

Standing in this wide-open, coliseum-like space in the ridiculously nice Reebok Sports Club/NY, our group of 12 (the class is usually no bigger than six to eight) began an hour-long session with three Blitz™ trainers, including former Nike-sponsored pro track athlete [Alexis Weatherspoon](#) [8], who competed in the Beijing Olympic Trials.

Weatherspoon immediately noticed that I tended to hinge too much at the waist during our warm-up squats, which indicated to her that my lower back was weak. With this in mind, she kept an eye on my back for the next hour, making sure that I wasn't putting unnecessary pressure in the wrong places.

From the easy 15-minute warm-up, we moved onto seven plyometric exercises. We were told to do each in order for 15 reps, then start the circuit over (without rest), performing 14 reps each. The goal was to work our way down to 11 reps each within 30 minutes.

Seconds into the session, Weatherspoon popped over to remind me to lift up my chest to protect my lower back while squatting with the medicine ball. When I moved on to the burpees, another trainer commented on my excellent form and how he was happy to see that I hadn't dropped my hips once. And then someone from across the room yelled "Go, Cristina!" And I did just that. I put my head down and just kept plowing through all the movements, counting to 15 loudly in my head until I was suddenly back at the start and counting to 14.

RELATED: If intense exercise isn't your thing, check out [seven workouts better than happy hour](#) [9].

By the time I reached 12 reps per move, my spaghetti arms couldn't do a single pushup more, even on my knees. So I stood up and told Weatherspoon that I was just going to move on to the next exercise. She gave looked this oh-no-you're-not look and showed me a modified pushup off the edge of a bench.

This cheering never stopped. Wherever I was in the gym, there was a coach nearby watching, commenting, and encouraging me to keep

going while offering tidbits on how to improve my form. I loved this one-on-one coaching strategy combined with a challenging total-body routine and a motivating team environment.

"Blitz is not just about throwing around weights," Weatherspoon told me after class. "It really focuses on linear programming, training all the biological systems and form to build strength, power, and endurance. Just a slight pelvic rotation is the difference between working your hamstring and your quad. We want to develop athletes."

If you're hesitant to try a weights workout, listen up: "A lot of the ladies who show up to Blitz's power classes are much better lifters than the guys because of their flexibility and range of motion," Weatherspoon says. "It's so empowering." And that's exactly how I felt at the end of my first Blitz session, empowered. And maybe a little nauseous.