



Spas & Sport

50 fitness classes reviewed



The **TONY** staff rates everything from Warrior Boot Camp to Booty Slide. (And, um, Eye Yoga.)

Intro to Horton

The Ailey Extension (405 W 55th St at Ninth Ave; 212-405-9500, aileyextension.com). \$16.50 first class, package deals available.

Length: 90 minutes

Type of activity: Dance

What to expect: Rather than being a cardio-based workout, this class (one of many offered by the Ailey Extension, the Alvin Ailey dance school's equivalent of a continuing-ed program) teaches the Horton technique, a series of codified movements invented by Alvin Ailey's mentor, Lester Horton, to help correct a dancer's physical faults.

How in shape you need to be: Couch potatoes welcome

The verdict: Amazingly, I—who have not been to a gym in years—made it through this 90-minute session without a heart or a fit of embarrassment attack. I'm also not a dancer in any form, but I still benefited from the miniroutines, which largely focus on balance, muscle strength, core work and the general yogaish idea of becoming more aware of your body so that you can do everything in your life better. The most difficult part was following instructor Iquail Johnson's quickly rattled-off combinations, but even though I barely understood the language (*planche*, *arabesque*, *ronde de huh?*) and couldn't keep eight counts of anything in my head, I was able to clumsily find my way after many repetitions. What's more, thanks to the genius idea to use a live djembe drum player instead of a crappy playlist, and because of Johnson's jokey energy, I had a stupid grin on my face the whole time—even when we had to lope across the floor in nerve-racking groups of three. In the end, the class was a little frustrating, since the skill level of the other participants made it seem like anything but an intro course, but it did whet my appetite to try other classes here, especially since you can take them on a no-pressure, one-off basis.—*Billie Cohen*



Samba

The Ailey Extension (405 W 55th St at Ninth Ave; 212-405-9500, aileyextension.com). \$16.50 first class, package deals available.

Length: 90 minutes

What to expect: It starts with stretching, moves into basic samba dance steps, and then continues with vigorous samba dancing in rows.

How in shape you need to be: Occasional exerciser

The verdict: The class is led by a leopard-print-leotard-wearing teacher named Quenia Ribeiro, and as you'd expect, she's fantastically flexible and entertaining. The students, meanwhile, are mainly young girls—some of whom are pretty good at the samba steps, others who are total beginners. After a stretching session, a band of live drummers accompanies the main workout, which starts with basic steps, then quickly acquires flourishes and extra moves. It's high-energy stuff, and because the class is pretty packed, it can be hard to see what you're supposed to be doing; basically, the better you are at the steps, the more you'll benefit from the workout. But as one grinning beginner said at the end of the class, "If you wanna get rhythm, which I sorely lack, this is a good class."—*Sophie Harris*