Zumba Is a Fun Way to Lose Weight!

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Imagine if all it took to lose weight was hitting a dance party often enough to melt off the pounds--with the appropriate tweak to your diet, of course?

At first, I didn't know what Zumba was. My sister told me about it just before the 2010 Thanksgiving holiday. She had a promotion DVD that featured the Zumba dance party. So one evening after I got home (late again) from the office, I decided to try it. I knew I had to get cracking and get back into my exercise program. From what I could see of my stretched-to-capacity clothes, I needed to drop some weight ASAP.

What my problem was (and is) is late hours at the office and getting home too tired to think about working out. But when I popped in the Zumba dance party DVD, hit play and heard the music, suddenly I wasn't tired anymore. Just watching the people on the CD made me want to join the party, so I did.

Today, I'm still learning more about Zumba. For example, what shoes to wear. Did you know that you should wear cross training or aerobic-type shoes for Zumba dancing? They have the correct cushioning and medial lateral support needed for knee stability and to avoid knee ligament injuries when you're doing activity that puts stress on this body part. (Some Zumba dances have lots of side-to-side movements.) Zumba shoes should have low traction rubber for easy sliding and turning, according to the Zumba Fitness website.

In simple terms that means put on the right shoes before you try Zumba. According to the website, running shoes won't work because "they use a heavy tread on the bottom and are designed for forward movement." I learned this the hard way when I used my jogging sneakers and started to get knee pain from some of the moves. Lucky for me, I found a pair of still-usable cross trainers in my closet.

And imagine, you can burn hundreds of calories in a Zumba class. According to the site, the number of calories each person burns per class varies, depending on their body type, how much fat vs. muscle they have, how much effort they put into their Zumba dancing and how full and complete their dance movements are. (Naturally, I give it my all.)

But the cool thing about Zumba is that the whole DVD is such fun that the workout is over before you know it. I know I sound like an infomercial, but the Zumba experience isn't like a workout at all. There's also a Zumba video game for those with Wii, Xbox, and PS3. Plus there's an aquatic fitness version of the workout--for you pool lovers. (Summer's coming!)

And last, but not least, there's a Zumba workout designed especially for kids. With childhood obesity rates soaring, I think this is a great way to get children moving.

But later for the kiddies and back to me. Zumba got me back into loving my workouts. It's easy; it's fun and it helps you burn calories so you can lose weight while you dance.

What's not to like about it?

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