

pagethree

# Boot camp heads for the beach

Residents of the capital will now be able to subject themselves to a gruelling military-style exercise regimen three times a week that promises to burn off fat and build up muscle with the bonus of healthy outdoors time – if they can stay the course. **Anna Seaman reports**

ABU DHABI // Corey Oliver gathered his recruits in single file and yelled their names from a roll call. In reply they shouted "present" and dropped to the sand to complete 10 press-ups.

Next he ordered them into two lines and shouted orders – to jog for five minutes, breaking only for sit-ups and more press-ups. And this was just the warm up.

No, this was not military training. It was the beginning of a sunrise military-style boot camp on the public beach behind the Emirates Palace where, as of Sunday, Mr Oliver will be leading regular, gruelling sessions that promise to get participants fit in four weeks.

The Original Fitness Company has just opened and through his team of instructors, Mr Oliver will be attempting to change the attitude towards health and fitness in the capital.

"When I first arrived in the country I was surprised to see that nobody exercised outside," said Mr Oliver, a former Ironman triathlete and rugby player from Sydney.

"I also began to do some research and realised that a huge number of people were suffering from diseases to do with obesity such as metabolic syndrome and heart disease. I had to do something about it."

Mr Oliver launched his first company, Physical Advantage, in Dubai in January 2007 and began early-morning boot camps. That company now runs training sessions every morning for up to 60 people, as well as sessions for corporations, women and children.

During that time, he said, morning joggers have become a much more common sight.

"I'm not saying it is solely down to me but the attitude is changing in Dubai. People are realising that they can exercise outside. It is not too hot, you just have to get the timing right."

So, next week Mr Oliver and his team will come to Abu Dhabi. Participants will be able to join three beach training sessions on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, with an optional run on the Corniche every Friday.

The sessions, which will start at 6am or 7.30pm, are based around short bursts of exercise, known as interval training.

After the warm-up, participants step through the rungs of a ladder on the sand, jump small hurdles and weave in and out of cones on the beach.

Then they take tubes filled with sand, which Mr Oliver calls rifles (in keeping with the military theme), down to the water's edge for upper body exercises such as bicep curls and shoulder raises. To complete the session there is more jogging and hurdle courses.

Mr Oliver said exercising outside is better for the body than working out in the gym. "The air conditioning, which most of us spend all day sitting in, stops our bodies from perspiring properly," he said.

"It is the same at the gym. It's better if we can get into the open and breathe fresh air and feel the wind on our skin."

"Also mentally it is more fulfilling to see the green of the trees and the blue of the sea."

Zahara Kurji, one of the participants in yesterday's preliminary session, said it was "hard work".

"I run a lot but I found this tough because we were running on sand, which is more strenuous on the legs," she said.



A military-style training camp at the public beach in Abu Dhabi. The Original Fitness Company will begin regular boot camp sessions from this Sunday. Jaime Puebla / The National



"But I loved it, it was so different from anything available in the UAE and I'll definitely be coming back." Ali Fikree, a welding inspector and a part-time scuba diving instructor, has completed three similar boot camps through another company in Dubai. He said they were effective but

took a great deal of determination. "I've done a six-week camp and one for two and four months respectively. I thoroughly enjoyed them but I would say that you have to look at them with a positive attitude." He said he had seen dramatic changes to his body after completing

the camps. "I lost 10 kilos in weight, built a great deal of muscle and I also lost a whole shoe size as the intensive nature of the training strengthened the arches of my feet so much that they effectively got smaller, or at least shorter." Mr Oliver claimed those commit-

**I run a lot but I found this tough because we were running on sand, which is a lot more strenuous on the legs**  
Zahara Kurji boot camp participant

ted to the scheme will be fit in four weeks and will lose as much as five per cent body fat. "We don't just work on physical fitness," he said. "We work on mental drive, flexibility and strength. "We also encourage everyone to take it one step further and go for a

body fat assessment with our nutritionist in Dubai. Here they will also receive advice on their diet."

Lee Mitchell, the wellness director at the American University of Sharjah and a children's sports coach, said this was more important in terms of losing fat than the exercise.

"Intensive training will get immediate results, especially if people are going from taking no exercise to three to four hours a week, but to drop body fat it is essential to change eating habits."

Before taking part, the Original Fitness Company will test each trainee's fitness so that any improvement in fitness and health can be charted over four weeks.

"It gets you fit fast. And if you stick to a good diet and remain mentally focused the transformation to your body shape and general well-being is amazing."

Mr Mitchell said Mr Oliver's scheme would have good results but that he should focus on the long term.

"After six to eight weeks most people reach a plateau with their training," he said.

"So if Mr Oliver really wants to make a difference to the overall fitness levels in the capital he must teach candidates something to prolong their results."

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@ Would you consider taking part in a fitness boot camp? Have your say at [www.thenational.ae/yourview](http://www.thenational.ae/yourview)

**Guilt Free Sub!**

**5 grams of fat or less**

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NUTRITIONAL FACTS:		Serving Size (g)	Calories	Total Fat (g)	Salt (g)	Total Fat (g)
5- inch Sandwich with 5 grams of fat or less		280g	269	13.4	4.8	1.1
Savory Turkey Breast		280g	269	13.4	4.8	1.1

We use real ingredients: bread, turkey, tomatoes, onions, green peppers, olives, and pickles.