

SPINNING: UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Written by Helen M. Ryan



I remember my first Spinning® class vividly. With 50 pounds left to lose, an out of shape body and baggy black sweat pants, I wore my insecurity like a badge. As I hesitantly got onto the Spin bike the instructor walked in - and I froze. Taking one look at his very lean frame, I thought, “Uh oh. I’m in trouble.”

But I survived. The instructor turned out to be supportive and encouraging, my fellow students welcoming, and though it made my hind quarters hurt, by the end of the class I had fallen in love...with Spinning, and the way it made me feel after.

“The beauty of the Spin program is that a beginner can ride right alongside an accomplished cyclist,” says Kelly Gill, mother of four and the founder of Temecula’s first Spinning center, Pulse Training Facility (now part of the Rancho Wellness Center). “It’s a hard workout for those who choose to make it hard. But our goal as specially trained instructors is to set up a successful experience for those beginners.”

Spinning, the original indoor cycling program, was created in 1989 by world-class cyclist “Johnny G.” (Johnny Goldberg) as a safe and convenient alternative to outdoor cycling. The cornerstone of the Spinning program is heart rate training – one of the most effective ways to improve cardiovascular strength. Riders control the resistance on their own bikes, thus maintaining the ability to go at their own pace while still participating in the group. Regardless of age or level of fitness, the program enables individuals to customize their workouts.

Pete Ohllasso (65+) of Temecula, agrees. “My wife dragged me to a Spin class nine years ago as way to get me to exercise more during the week rather than just weekends. I’m an avid skier, and the classes have made me both a better skier and a better cyclist. But what keeps me motivated is watching a beginner come in, struggling, getting guidance from the instructor, and then watching them make tremendous strides. That’s powerful.”

In addition to challenging their hearts and

lungs, Spinning class participants burn up to 500 calories per class, something Sonnie Straw of Temecula discovered first-hand.

“My trainer suggested I also begin taking Spin classes,” says Straw “I had taken cycling classes before, at chain-type gyms, but burned out on the fast speeds. But at that first Spinning class I realized that I was in a different setting. First off, everyone wore cycling shoes and heart rate monitors, and although the class was tough, nobody, other than me, was gasping for air. I knew I had a lot to learn.” Straw credits the instructors with teaching her how to breathe and use proper pedal stroke. She concludes, “Since beginning my adventure with training and Spin I have lost 30 pounds. I feel like I can accomplish anything now and this time, I will.”

John Baudhuin, President and Co-founder of Mad Dogg Athletics, the developer and owner the Spinning program, writes, “The motivating environment our instructors create, the camaraderie that develops among students and the results that Spinning participants see over time keep them coming back for more.”

And come back they do. “The number of success stories I’ve seen is staggering,” says Kirby Colas, an outdoor cyclist and cycling coach who has taught Spinning for nine years, first at Pulse Training Facility and now at Rancho Wellness Center. “From previously sedentary parents reaching a life-best fitness level, to elite cyclists using Spinning to replace an outdoor ride, to cancer patients gently riding towards a more relaxed mental state and physically improving response to treatments, I’ve seen some terrific results.”

As for me? That very first Spin class four years ago both frightened and inspired me. I learned I was much more capable than I thought and have come much further than I ever dreamed possible, both on the bike and in my life. I also discovered a need to give back. I am now a certified Spinning instructor - and can only hope I am able to touch someone’s life in the same positive way that mine was.

To locate an official Spinning center near you, visit www.spinning.com.

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