



Wild Workouts

Spice Up Your Fitness Routine

Let's be honest: Exercise can get boring. But new activities help keep the spark alive — and sometimes, the crazier the better, says Rick Henriksen, a family and preventative medicine physician with University of Utah Health Care. “There’s that intrigue, and you tend to put a little more effort into it,” he says. As you head back to the gym this fall, pique your interest — and peak your metabolism — with one of these wild workouts.

By Chelsea Bush

Dawn Levingston demonstrates AntiGravity® Yoga at Imagination Place in Salt Lake City, Utah.
Photo by Josh Blumental



CrossFit Training at CrossFit Fanatics in West Jordan, Utah.
Photo by Kevin Kiernan

Zumba

It's no wonder Zumba is called "exercise in disguise." This high-energy cardio workout is based on Latin dances like Salsa and Merengue, with strength training moves slyly shimmied into the mix. "You're tightening your core, getting your heart rate up, and getting good toning and balance," says Michele A. Bell, a certified Zumba instructor. All the while, you're too busy laughing at your scrambled cha cha chas — and everyone else's — to notice the pain. It's all in good fun, Bell says, adding, "Ninety-five percent of the people who go don't know how to dance!"

Find a Zumba class by type, instructor or location at www.Zumba.com.

Hooping

A quick session of hula-hooping, or "hooping," packs a wallop of fitness benefits. It's excellent for the spine, getting the heart rate up and whittling down the "muffin top" that hangs over your jeans, says Bell, who incorporates hooping into her Zumba classes. Once you can spin the hoop around your midsection, add twists like stepping side to side or sending the hoop around your arms and legs. In a full-fledged hooping class, expect to keep the hoop whirling for half an hour or more. It's a lot harder than you think!

Hooping classes are offered at some yoga and belly dance centers, or pick up your own weighted hoop for around \$20.

Suspended Yoga

Not only is "antigravity" yoga a fun mix of yoga, aerial arts and pilates, but it can be better than regular

yoga if you're inflexible or injured (or just out of shape). The hammock supports deeper stretches and prolonged balancing poses, and when you're ready for a head rush, you can dip into inversions, which are beneficial yoga poses usually only accessible to the pros. "Inverted poses reverse blood flow, send fresh oxygen to the brain and decompress the spine," says Darlene Casanova, owner and director at Imagination Place, which teaches AntiGravity® yoga, the method launched by aerial yoga pioneer and Utah local Christopher Harrison. As for the tangle potential, a few introductory classes will help you "learn the ropes."

Suspended yoga is cropping up at yoga centers and aerial arts facilities throughout Utah and Idaho. For more info, visit www.imaginationplace.com.

CrossFit

CrossFit is the ultimate cross-training workout. "You're lifting, then running, then jumping, then doing pushups, then running again," says Henriksen, who is also a clinical instructor at the University of Utah. Exercises are high-intensity and randomized, and you'll probably learn more than a few new skills. "I'd never picked up a barbell in my life, and four or five months later I'm doing lifts like they're doing in the Olympics!" he says.

Sure, firefighters, athletes and the military do CrossFit, but don't be intimidated. You'll find all skill levels in the class, Henriksen says, adding, "There's a grandma doing the CrossFit class at my gym."

Search for CrossFit classes in your area at <http://map.crossfit.com>.