

# BARRE-ING IT ALL

Physical fitness is more than a way of living, it requires perpetual hard work and dedication. But, which method should you choose?

By **MRINALINI SINGH**

**C**ongratulations. You've made yourself a priority and committed to a regular exercise routine. However, with such a vast variety of fitness workout choices available today, it can be slightly overwhelming to know which one is the best fit for you. To ease things up, we chat with the founder of Physique 57, Mallika Parekh for a clear cut knowledge about barre workouts and how this boutique fitness studio can help you become fitter and leaner. Edited excerpts.

**From New York To Mumbai, when did you start your journey with Physique 57 and how did the idea come into existence?**

I started my fitness journey with Physique 57 in 2011. As a double masters in Medical Science and Public Health, I was working on a healthcare venture in India when I quickly learnt that fitness was a growing industry here, but there was a gap in the market as far as boutique fitness was concerned.

Physique 57 caters to all individuals, including those with injuries or bone density issues, which are common amongst the Indian population. With the brand being born in New York City, I convinced the founders, Jennifer Maanavi and Tanya Becker, that there would be a demand for this method in India as well, and thankfully they trusted me to bring the franchise here.

**What makes the fitness centre unique amongst so many other kinds of gyms and Pilates centres available**

**out there?**

What makes Physique unique is that it covers cardio, strength training, and stretching, all in one comprehensive 57-minute workout each and every time you come. In under an hour, you get a full body, personal training experience in a group setting. The instructors who have trained for over 300 hours under the global training team in New York City are all fitness experts who have a background in professional dance. So, they are extremely well-versed with precise form and alignment to prevent injury. The facility we have built is to serve as a state-of-the-art escape from the madness of this city, all the while keeping you energised and reminding you of the investment you are making in yourself.

**You were one of the first people to introduce barre workout in India. Could you throw some light on why it has become such a popular workout routine?**

Barre workouts have proven to prevent injury, strengthen your core, improve balance, and work out muscle groups you didn't even know you had. We specifically incorporate a proprietary method known as interval overload, which works your muscles to the point of



Mallika Parekh



Physique 57,  
Boutique Fitness  
Studio



fatigue and then stretches them immediately for relief. It incorporates both isotonic and isometric movement so that you see results quickly. Our method incorporates the barre as an apparatus, but also uses light weights and your own body weight for resistance.

**Physique 57 claims that one can transform their bodies in just eight classes. Have you ever come across a situation where this goal wasn't achieved? And, what did you do to overcome this challenge?**

Physique 57 claims to see visible results within eight classes—you would need more classes if you're looking for a

complete transformation, although we have several mind-blowing, tear-jerking transformation stories that clients have shared with us after practising barre workout over time. We can honestly say that we have never come across a client who has done eight classes with us and not totally believed in the effectiveness of the method given the visible physical results that they see and feel almost immediately.

**What should Indian men, in particular, be doing to live healthier lifestyles? What common diet and fitness mistakes do you find them making and how can they correct them?**

Indian men have followed a



culture of fitness that has promoted bulk muscle building, and of late, boot-camp type workouts, which are incredibly damaging to the joints, although they may see their muscles get bigger and their fat trimmed down.

However, if you speak to many of these men, you would know that those types of workouts aren't sustainable, and certainly aren't possible to do with injury. Once you have a strong core and strong supporting muscles, occasional

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weight-lifting is safer than if you jump directly into heavy weight-lifting without paying close attention to strengthening your full body, which can quickly result in injury. As for diet, for women and men alike, we recommend a balanced diet with nutrition intake from all food groups including lean protein, vegetables, complex carbohydrates, and healthy fat.

### How do you make sure that each client's training plan is truly personalised?

Our instructors are trained to learn everyone's name in class and ask each client if they are dealing with any past or present injuries. They then provide layers and modifications throughout the workout that allow each client to go at their own pace and meet individuals at exactly where they are in their fitness journeys. They create playlists that result in a 57-minute continuous stream of music that hopefully appeals to all the senses.

### On average, how many hours of workout does one need to put in on a daily basis to achieve a killer body?

57 minutes is truly all it takes.

### What's tougher, getting into shape or maintaining it?

Muscle memory is a beautiful and powerful thing—once you get

into shape, maintaining it takes work, but your body is naturally able to do more. We play on this muscle memory through muscle confusion, so that your body never gets used to any one thing, which then challenges you each time and promotes maximum results.

### Do you recommend any special foods, supplements or vitamins to your clients?

I strongly urge clients to go about a healthy and balanced diet and lifestyle, and simply make the method a part of one's daily life. No additives are necessary, outside of the basic vitamins and nutrition one needs for their general health. People never believe us until they do a few classes and see the results. They are always convinced that there must be some extreme diet or lifestyle change that contributes to the overall physical change, but that's not the case as you are balanced.

### What can a person change in their diets and fitness strategies to increase low energy levels?

High-impact and outdoor workouts in extreme heat can quickly lead to exhaustion and injury. While you may feel soreness in your muscles, the low-impact nature of our workouts and continuous

stretching throughout leads to pain-free joints and prepares you to take on your day or your night. For those with a sweet tooth, we recommend refraining from processed sugars and sweets, which result in rapid energy burn, but maintaining healthy doses of complex carbohydrates such as whole wheat and grains, which keeps your metabolism humming by breaking down slowly and giving your body energy throughout the day. If you must have something sweet, try to replace with fruit, which includes water content as well as essential vitamins.

### There are endless celebrities and even Victoria's Secret models are talking about barre workouts and Physique 57, how do you wish to scale things up and expand the services all over the nation?

We have some exciting plans in the pipeline to expand throughout Mumbai as well as in other cities across India. While we so know that traffic is a major deterrent, we firmly believe that to understand and truly grasp the method, one must visit the studio for an optimal experience. We are working hard to open studios throughout India for every one to try out, so stay tuned in the coming months.

## FITNESS TIPS For People With Busy Schedules



**EATING HABITS**  
Eat almost everything in moderation



**STRENGTH TRAINING**  
Be patient with yourself, go slow, and be consistent



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**HYDRATION**  
Carry a water bottle with you wherever you go, and try and eat fruits with high water content such as a melon



**ATTITUDE TOWARDS FITNESS**  
Perfection is a myth, but there's magic in the process