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Amp up your Pilates workout at Reform Chicago; photography by Neil Burgor



Maximum Overdrive

by Kate Bongiovanni | Men's Book Chicago magazine | November 9, 2012

"He pulls a knife, you pull a gun!" exhorts Sean Connery in *The Untouchables*. "That's the Chicago way!" And so it must also be with our workouts: Winter is coming at us with frigid temperatures, the ol' 5 o'clock sunset and holiday parties galore. So it's time to hit back even harder. Here, we present Chicago's toughest workouts, guaranteed to get you ripped in the cold months—in less than an hour. Get ready for total muscle exhaustion!

Reform Chicago

This studio's similarities to Pilates end at the Allegro reformer. Here, you're lunging, squatting, planking and using free weights on the sliding reformer, forcing yourself to engage your core with each move. "It's a faster-paced, more intense class than traditional Pilates," says owner Corinne Clifton. 233 W. Huron St., 312.255.1965, reformchicagopilates.com

Rebell Conditioning

Kettlebells might seem manageable—until you realize you were lifting and swinging them all wrong. One intro lesson and a strength or conditioning class with more kettlebell work, ropes, suspension training and circuits later, and you'll see how this results-driven functional training makes you stronger. "It's not just that you're working harder; it's that we take you out of your comfort zone," says co-owner Mike Connelly. 2831 N. Clark St., 773.687.8750, rebellconditioning.com

Urban Athlete

Fitness gets functional at this Ravenswood facility, where you'll find everything from monkey bars and heavy ropes to gym staples like free weights and machines. Boot-camp classes utilize all these tools in a dynamic workout that engages multiple muscle groups in single movements. 4437 N. Ravenswood Ave., 773.609.0001, ua-chicago.com

Edge

Developed by East Bank Club trainer Steve Rozhon, Edge is as tough mentally as it is physically. When the room resembles a Strongman competition, you'll doubt your ability to flip a tire or lift a 50-pound sandbag. "You tap into muscle groups and energy that most people wouldn't attempt to," says Rozhon. "It's the most effective workout we can give you in the allotted time." 500 N. Kingsbury St., 312.527.5800, eastbankclub.com

Morning Bird

Less is more at this 800-square-foot studio in Lakeview where certified personal trainer Newt Cole fuses his love of hardcore competitive cycling with a mix of intense drills. Get ready for kettlebells, resistance bands and balance balls to build strength, power, quickness and mobility in his high-energy private and small-group workout sessions. 3708 N. Halsted St., 773.351.2222, morningbirdchicago.com

Hard Pressed

It doesn't seem possible for a 30-minute strength session to render you sore beyond belief. But when a Hard Pressed coach is taking you through high-intensity strength training you start to wonder if you can lift the weight they're piling on without bowing under pressure. Feel the burn! 219 W. Chicago Ave., Suite 600, 312.285.3385, hardpressed.me

Shockwave

Equinox's total body circuit revolves around the Indo-Row machine—you're either rowing as hard as you can to stop the clock or hoping your teammate does so you can move to the next pain-inducing station. "We wanted to make this a very competitive and challenging class, something that's very different from the normal group fitness classes," says Gideon Akande, a Shockwave coach. The four to eight stations the class rotates through feature what Akande calls "big-bang movements," which are complex, multiplanar and explosive. Equinox, 900 N. Michigan Ave., 312.254.2500, 1750 N. Clark St., 312.254.4000, equinox.com

Shred415

Try one of these total body classes and the treadmill intervals fatigue your legs and lungs while the floor moves exhaust what's left of you before the hour is up. "When you're at the gym you don't push yourself to this level," says instructor Melissa Knepp. "It's difficult when you're doing it... and as soon as you're done it's like 'Whoa!'" 2156 N. Clybourn Ave., 773.360.8228; 230 W. Division St., 312.291.8722, shred415.com

Training Mob

Midtown Athletic Club's high-intensity circuit can include everything from TRX suspension training to pulling the coach around the room. "The trainers will switch it up each week," says Fitness Director Keith Mierzwa. "It's never the same class, but participants are encouraged to give it their all." 2020 W. Fullerton Ave., 773.235.2300, midtown.com

Real Ryder Revolution

Try riding a bike that moves laterally while you're pedaling—the ride becomes a lot harder, especially on your core and upper body. "It's a more dynamic workout than a ride on a regular non-moving bike," says Studio Manager Brad Johnson. 108 W. Hubbard St., 312.587.7933, realryderrevolution.com

Fuerza Contact

Lakeshore Sport & Fitness' American kickboxing concept sounds simple enough. But after you've punched and kicked a bag for 40 minutes you'll be begging for mercy. "This is a great upper-body class, and your legs are also being challenged," says Group Fitness Director Marcelo Ehrhardt. 1320 W. Fullerton, 773.348.6377, lakeshoresf.com