



THE BEST VIEW COMES AFTER THE HARDEST CLIMB

By Michael Grahamslaw

Northern Insight Health & Fitness correspondent, David Fairlamb, is revving up his fitness offering with specialist VersaClimber classes all new for 2020.

Mimicking the motion of mountain climbing, the machine provides a total body workout, supercharging the metabolism and is known to torch three times as many calories as any other piece of cardio gym equipment.

The machine initially found fame in the 1980s and has witnessed a real revival in recent times, championed by elite athletes and Hollywood glitterati. Celebrity acolytes include Jennifer Aniston, Lady GaGa and Justin Timberlake whilst Tennis fans will be aware that the low-impact, non-weight bearing nature of the machine was instrumental in Andy Murray's return from career-threatening injury.

Now, in a massive coup for the region, David is the first trainer to offer exclusive VersaClimber classes North of London.

Sessions take place four days a week from David's base at Queen Alexandra College, a studio space which is transformed into a nightclub-esque atmosphere with multi-coloured lighting and a state-of-the-art sound system.

Clearly these new sessions called for an intrepid Father & Son pairing, so myself and son Jack, dusted down our athleisure wear for a crack at this new, totally unique fitness experience.

The benefits of the VersaClimber cannot be overstated. Recruiting both upper and lower muscle groups, the machine can burn between 400-800

calories in just a 30 minute class which makes it invaluable to those looking to lose weight and tone up. We chose a 17:30 – 18:00 Wednesday evening slot which also doubles as a great after-work stress buster.

The sight of the 75-degree vertical rail can be enough to instil fear. "It's only half an hour of your life..." my son Jack offered, to which I quipped "30 minutes is a long time on a torture rack though son." Fortunately though, David breaks the session up into manageable chunks, buoyed by the dimmed lights and music which really allow you to get in that zone and push through the pain.

As with all of David's classes, sessions are non-competitive and handle height, stroke length and resistance can all be tweaked to suit all ages and fitness levels.

Following a brisk warm up, we kicked off with a four move mini-circuit. Short, sharp feet were followed by medium stroke thrusts, deep squats and full range climbs.

The machine allows for a surprising amount of variation and depending on the exercise, activates the back, glutes, legs, shoulders, calves and core. It's a great workout for the posterior chain and in addition to targeting these muscle groups, is a real posture improver for increasingly sedentary lifestyles.

Strapped back into the pedals, we were straight back

into another circuit with different coloured disco lights each indicating a different exercise.

Throughout the session, "Disco Dave" patrolled the front of the studio, striding purposefully between each machine and offering words of motivation and encouragement. The trick here really is to let your body flow with the natural motion of the climber, find a rhythm and let the lights and music spur you on.

The rest of the session was a mix of 20 second bursts and more steady-state 90 second intervals before a 45 second all-out blast to the finish. This had been a challenging session, but we were soon in the grip of that post-workout buzz, drawing lungfuls of oxygen and basking in the afterglow of our exertions.

We'd not only torched some of the party pounds but had also dragged ourselves out of that mid-week slump and left feeling re-energised and ready for whatever the week could throw at us.

David really is a fantastic trainer with infectious enthusiasm and an uncanny knack for being able to focus the mind during the most challenging parts of the workout.

Regardless of your age, weight or body type, it's clear then that the VersaClimber is a serious piece of kit which would align with all health & fitness programmes.

For more information, visit www.davidfairlambfitness.co.uk/personal-training/versaclimber-classes