

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

# Social aspect to boot camp exercise

BY AMY CROFTS  
Staff Writer

My legs flail in the air as I try to do one more sit-up. I'm panting and I look like a tortoise stuck on its back.

The two other ladies beside me also have a death grip on a seven-foot long, 40-pound plumber's pipe that we're trying to lift using our abdominals.

Sure the weight of the pipe equates to about 13 pounds of metal that each of us has to bear, but this is much easier said than done. I'm struggling to keep my side of the bar in line with the other girls.

You have to work together if you don't want to get your teeth knocked out or conked in the head, warned Jada Avon, owner of St. Albert's Backyard Boot Camp.

Avon runs boot camps Monday through Friday, alternating morning classes with evening classes at Fowler Track Park.

Twelve women show up for the Thursday night session I attend, varying in age from their early 20s to mid-60s.

Today is the "Balls and Bars" workout, a name that always gets a giggle out of the girls, said Avon.

We split into two groups. One group starts off with the plumber's pipe. In groups of three we lift the pipe over our heads for shoulder presses – at least 40 times – upward rows, bicep curls and deadlifts a.k.a.



CHRIS COLBOURNE/St. Albert Gazette

**BAR WORK** – Gazette reporter Amy Crofts, right, and her exercise partners struggle with a 40-pound plumber's pipe during a session at Back Yard Boot Camp at Fowler Track.

"the silent killers."

Transitioning between the exercises should be seamless, but is highly dependent on communicating with your teammates if you need to take a break, go faster or slower. Failing to do so means struggle and in the worst-case scenario, a casualty (don't worry, it wasn't me and it was only a tiny bump on the head).

It was significantly easier manning the pipe with a group of three than with just two, noted my colleague Victoria Paterson, who joined me

at boot camp in preparation for her upcoming nuptials.

After a bit of wrestling with the pipe, Avon stepped in to help. The boot camp workouts are all about teamwork, she emphasized.

The other half of the class worked with plastic play balls that upped the ante of squats, lunges, crunches and push-ups (holding the ball with one hand while doing a push-up). Ten repetitions of each were followed by a sprint around the track.

See "Boot camp," page 15

## Boot camp

Continued from page 13

"Scoop! Scoop!" Avon would yell, an indication that the faster runners who had finished their lap would have to sprint to catch up with the ladies that were lagging behind.

"We target people who are just starting out, the ones that say, 'I can't do it,'" said Avon.

Participants at a higher fitness level get a challenge while the others get motivation. No one wants to be the last one in the group, she noted.

"It was a good full body workout. Everything hurts about equally," Paterson remarked the morning after boot camp. "It's a good sore, but I'm not completely incapacitated."

I left boot camp feeling like I demanded more from my body and yet didn't completely exhaust it. Plus it's a nice way to get some sun and openly commiserate with your fellow boot camp sadists.

[acrofts@stalbert.greatwest.ca](mailto:acrofts@stalbert.greatwest.ca)