

HEALTH *matters*

Matthews-Mint Hill Weekly editor vows to get healthier this summer...will you?

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In the last week I've taken my first Zumba class, learned the importance of protein after a workout and discovered where my obliques are. It's the beginning of my journey to get a little healthier this summer and I'm inviting you along for the ride through our



new series: Health matters. Throughout the summer I'll be writing about my experiences and offering some helpful tips from local health and fitness experts. And I want to hear from you, too. Perhaps you've made this journey before and can offer some

advice, healthy recipes or humorous stories? I hope you're willing to share so we can help, challenge and encourage each other.

So go ahead, put on your sneakers and sweat band. Let's get healthy.

Ready to 'Trim Up'

To launch this series, and whip me into shape, Matthews-Mint Hill Weekly has partnered with Matthews' Trim Up, a fitness club for women. Yours truly is a participant in their Summer Strong Challenge and I've never been more excited to workout. Trim Up owner Debi Shumaker took my measurements and I'm a little scared to admit I currently weigh 167 pounds and have a total body fat percentage of 33 percent. I don't like either number and am

eager for them to come down. After my first class I'm already convinced Trim Up, at 1319 Matthews-Mint Hill Road, Suite 102, is the place to accomplish my goals.

It's not just the top notch classes I've taken so far (for more on those, keep reading). I've been impressed with how friendly all the Trim Up women are – staff and members. They greet me warmly each day and tell me what a great job I'm doing even when I look in the mirror as I jump around during an exercise class and just want to laugh. On my second day at Trim Up, a woman I met the day before in a group training class waved to me in the parking lot as we drove past each other. It doesn't seem like something you'd find at many places, and it made me smile.

I like the convenience of registering for classes online too using their Web site, www.trimupwomen.com. And if life gets in the way and your schedule changes you can cancel via the Web too, which I have done once already.

I won't lie though, my first week had its tough moments, soreness-wise. It's been a long time since I've held myself to any type of consistent exercise schedule and my muscles – all my muscles, it seemed – were begging for mercy. I really don't know how some of the Trim Up ladies can take two classes in a row. I call them warriors and I hope to be among them someday.

There's been comical moments, too. Laughing, I tell co-workers of my mishaps, my favorite of which so far is falling flat (and

loudly, I think) against my floor mat as my abdominal muscles gave way while attempting a Pilates move. And I thought I was in for an easy hour of stretching!

I've stumbled over my two left feet in the fast-paced, calorie burning workouts. And I'll never forget sweating up a storm the first 10 minutes of Zumba class when our instructor informed us we were done with the warm-up and ready to begin the workout. Another Challenge-taker, Amanda, turned to me and said "I thought this *was* the workout." We both laughed, in an "I can't breathe" kind of way.

In only one week, I've already noticed I have more energy and find the classes fun and refreshing. There's something new each time and I think it'll be nearly impossible to get stuck in a workout rut at Trim Up.

Burning a few calories while meeting inspiring women is really a great way to start the day. □

Next time: I recently shopped the aisles of my favorite Lowe's Foods location with Mark Hoesten, a Presbyterian Hospital dietician, and got the skinny on what I should and shouldn't be eating. Some of his tips may surprise you. Also, find out what I've been up to at Trim Up.

Got a tip?

Have any health tips, recipes or stories to share? E-mail kara@matthewsminthillweekly.com and we'll share your ideas with other readers. Let's get healthier together!