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## Zumba burns most calories, study says

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TIM CHAPMAN / MIAMI HERALD STAFF

Lauren Sepe, left and her sister Jackie Sepe rock at Pinecrest Fitness.

A study by the Department of Exercise and Sport Science at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, found that Zumba classes were an efficient and effective way to lose weight due to the high number of calories burned and cardiovascular intensity.

The study was commissioned by the American Council on Exercise (ACE) and sought to determine the average exercise intensity and energy expenditure of participants in a typical Zumba class.

The group dance-fitness program, which reports 12 million class participants in 110,000 locations across 125 countries, was identified as one of the most popular workout programs in ACE's 2012 Fitness Trends to Watch.

Exercise physiologists began the study using a test group of 19 healthy females ranging in age from 18 to 22, all of whom had prior experience in a Zumba class. To establish a baseline of fitness, study

subjects each performed a maximal treadmill test to measure their heart rate (HR) and oxygen consumption. They then completed a single Zumba class — all taught by the same instructor — while wearing a heart-rate monitor.

All participants reached a heart rate maximum of 80 percent — an average of 154 beats per minute — which is well within industry guidelines suggested to improve cardiovascular fitness. Class participants also burned an average of 9.5 calories per minute.

That's more calories per minute than power yoga, cardio kickboxing, step aerobics and even advanced Pilates group classes, which were all previously tested by University of Wisconsin La-Crosse researchers.

“The participants perceived the workout to be much less challenging than it actually was, which we believe is the sign the fun factor of a Zumba workout provides a positive

distraction,” said ACE Chief Science Officer Dr. Cedric Bryant. “The number one reason people give for not engaging in physical activity on a regular basis is the perceived lack of time. I would argue that we find time to do things that we deem fun and engaging.”

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