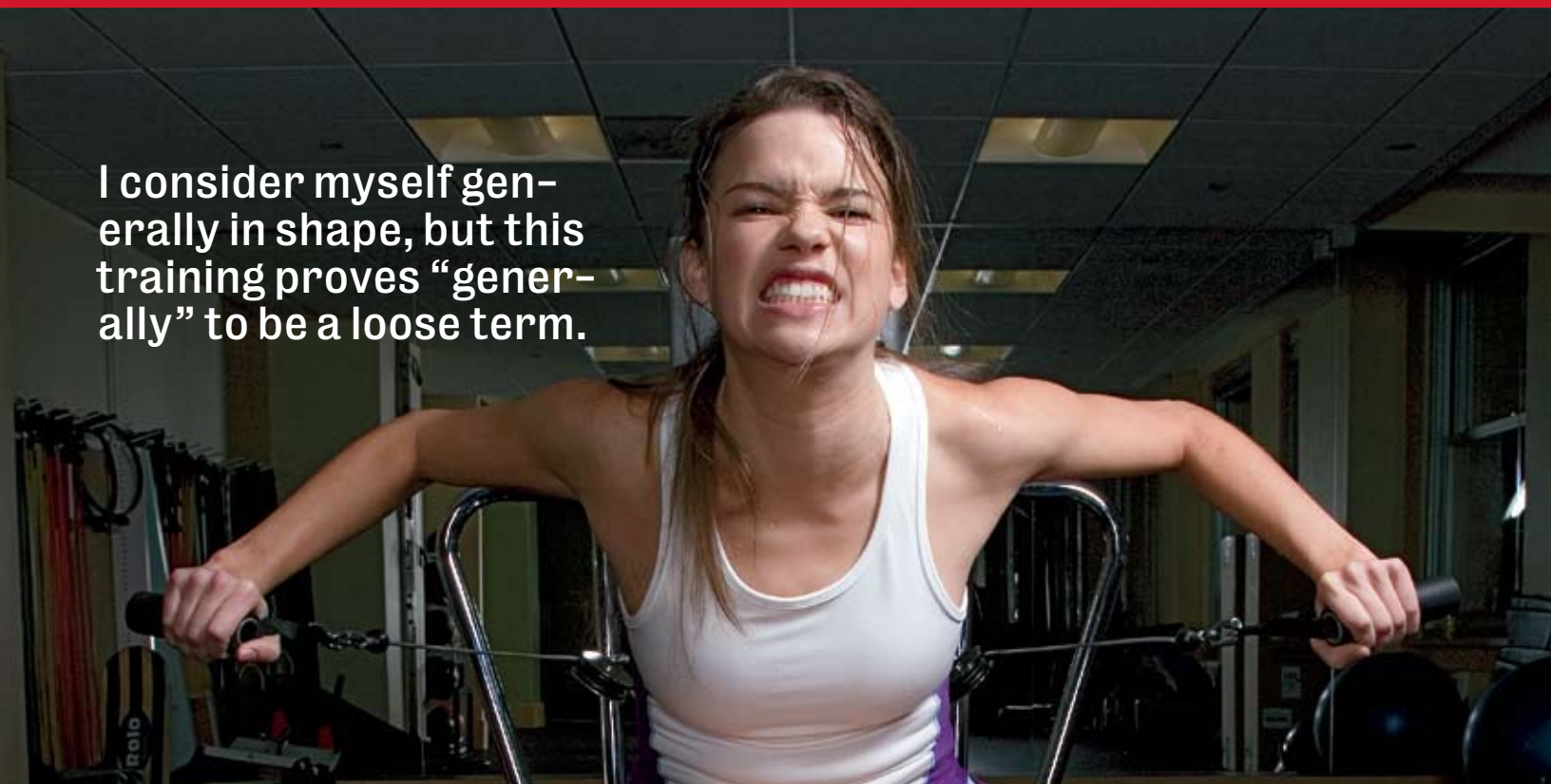


I consider myself generally in shape, but this training proves “generally” to be a loose term.



I’m Just a Girl

I’m about to get an “ass-kicking.” Those were the words my trainer, Jess, used to describe the “fitness gauntlet” she put together for this issue. And before you go thinking that taking a hard-core exercise class five days in a row is ridiculous (it is), consider this: There are actual women in Boston who pay for this sort of weekly torture at Healthworks, my gym in the Back Bay.

I, on the other hand, normally meet with Jess on Thursdays with a friend. For me, it’s as much a social as a sweating experience. So the first morning of the gauntlet is a rude awakening. Let’s take a moment to appreciate my outfit: pajamas plus a sports bra. I consider myself generally in shape, but this Results training proves “generally” to be a very loose term. At the end, I find myself pathetically dangling from a pull-up bar.

Tuesday it’s on to Gravity, a class I’ve spent the past year ridiculing. Girls exercising in unison, as Gwen Stefani blares in the background, make an easy target. My teacher, Alaina, arranges the machine for me, explaining that the slanted

glideboard has eight settings (think Chuck Norris and the Total Gym). “Eight is the hardest. We’ll start you there.” I’m not laughing now.

Nor am I laughing the next morning. I’m in serious pain and swear never to make fun of Gravity again. Thankfully, I have Pilates with Nadja, a former dancer who gently guides me through the movements. I learn about breathing during exercise (obviously important) and pelvic placement (surprisingly important). Next it’s Extend with Helena, which involves lying on a massage table while being stretched in the cardio room. Awkward? Yes. Relaxing? Hell, yes.

Thursday, I finally get to kick some ass. Ryan, my tattooed

There are women who pay for this torture.

kickboxing instructor, breaks it down: “People like to hit things.” Turns out, I’m one of these people. After teaching me the basic punches and kicks, he lets me go. I’m like Rocky. Well, Rocky with an opponent who high-fives me. Still, I’m reinvigorated.

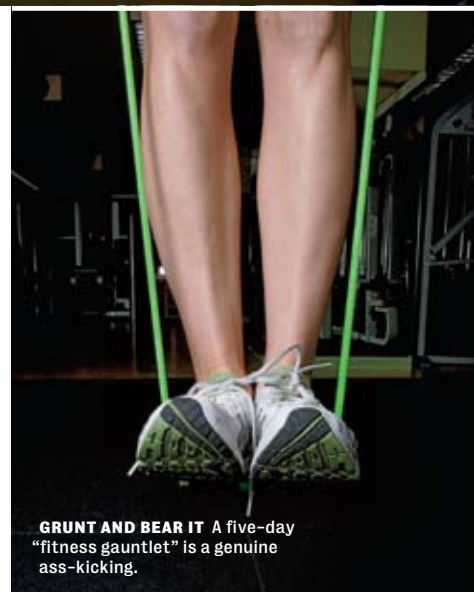
Until I wake up for my last session, which meets at 6 am. That’s just not right. My mood improves slightly when my teacher, Tara, gives me headphones. If I’ve learned one thing, it’s the power of music. I’m exhausted by this point in the gauntlet, but to be honest Burn—a group class that combines treadmill intervals and strength training—would be tough regardless.

At the end of the week, I do feel more in shape. I’m also slightly off-kilter. I’d recommend incorporating a couple of these types of classes into your routine. Using a trainer does have huge benefits, even if it hurts. And involves Gwen Stefani.

Megan Lisagor

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Healthworks Back Bay
441 Stuart St., Boston
617-859-7700
healthworksfitness.com
Prices vary*
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*Single-session rates: Results and kickboxing: \$74-\$98 depending on trainer’s level; Gravity, Pilates and Burn: \$37; Extend: \$25, 15 minutes; \$45, 30 minutes



GRUNT AND BEAR IT A five-day “fitness gauntlet” is a genuine ass-kicking.

