

THE CAMP

Promising to help you "drop a dress size and tone up in one week", the original military fitness and weight loss retreat is based at a secret location in Dumfries and Galloway to allow women to fight the flab on the sly. It also protects the identity of its high-profile clients, who have included Claire from Steps and Gladiator Ali Paton, when requested to do so.

Run by former British Special Forces soldier Sam Costello and his 15-strong team, The Camp is run from a country house nestled in the grounds of a 3,000-acre estate. Each course has space for 20 women, who are split into ability groups, and activities include abseiling, river crossing, self-defence, shelter building, gyrokinesis, as well as circuit training. Clients can expect to lose half a stone, plus a further half-stone when they return home.

"We put in the interesting things from the military such as navigation and survival training because you can't exercise people 14 hours a day," says Costello. "Hillwalking in a spectacular area where you are distracted by the views is a great way of burning fat. The women will do some star jumps, squat thrusts and sit-ups, but the bulk of the activities are out in a beautiful wild place.

Buttons straining to fasten?

Seams stretched to bursting point?

No prizes for guessing who ate

all the mince pies, then. What

you need now is a boot camp

to get you ship-shape for 2010

WORDS JANET CHRISTIE

"We aren't in the business of humiliating anyone, but work through encouragement and positive affirmation, using our military skills to motivate the girls. There are moments of army basic training, but we don't shout at any individual," he adds.

Courses include the Original, Advanced and Spanish-based courses, plus adventure fitness MOT weekends in the Peak District.

WHERE Dumfries and Galloway, Scotland

PRICES From £1,450 per week for Scottish courses (13 to 20 February and 6 to 13 March) and £1,500 for Spanish-based weeks (9 to 16 and 16 to 23 January). This includes transfers, insurance, kit, food and drink, three meals a day and snacks (the portion sizes are not massive as this is a weight loss/fitness course). Flights from Scotland are not included.

TRY IT 0800 335 7672, www.thecamp.co.uk