

It costs £1,500 a week and calls itself the most robust and challenging physical course of its kind in the UK. *Workout* reporter Mary Ferguson found out more about The Camp, designed for women taking a military approach to their waistlines ...



Women are put through their paces.

# A military approach to getting into shape

AS an increasing number of ladies-only fitness facilities cash in on the female pound, The Camp is taking things one step further.

Run from a country house in Scotland, the week-long courses claim to help women lose a dress size in just seven days, with the help of ex-Army instructors and a strict diet and exercise plan.

Delegates, who range from fitness fanatics to complete novices, stay in ensuite rooms and spend their days taking part in everything from yoga to mountain biking and self-defence to orienteering.

Getting them up at 6.30am, the aim of The Camp is to keep the women moving all day, even conducting information sessions on fit balls.

Clients exercise before breakfast to kick start the metabolism, then spend the day hill walking, abseiling, river crossing, or even taking part in navigation and 'survival' lessons. Yoga is always done to stretch off and relax before bed.

Nutrition also plays a large part in the programme, and The Camp's clinical nutritionist Helen Oades works with the delegates to devise strict menu plans for the week.

Founder Sam Costello, who



Sam Costello

has worked all over the world with the British Army, leads a team of former military officers and soldiers to help the women shed the pounds.

He said: "We set up The Camp because we noticed over the years that when people took part in military exercises they lost weight without trying to, through being active and busy all day long.

"We decided to recreate this in a weight loss course, which has increased in popularity because it's effective and fun – and like America, the UK is gaining weight."

The decision to make the course women-only came as the organisers recognised females as the main marketplace, although there are plans to run mixed or male-only courses in the future.

Despite the instructors being male, Sam said the women respond well to the staff because they understand the men are there to make things safe and effective, and they always act in a professional manner.

He said: "In some circumstances women work better together and feel less self-conscious and threatened in a female environment – although we appreciate that some of our clients would also be happy in mixed sex groups.

"Women come to The Camp to mark a key change in their diet and exercise habits. We give them the motivation and information to carry on when they leave, and the opportunity to do things out of the ordinary when they are with us."

Many of the lessons are designed so that clients can continue the good work at home, enjoying a boost from the ultimate kick-start to a healthier lifestyle.

Sam added: "We have identified a safe system of rapid weight loss and we provide the motivation to make it work. There are other weight loss courses in the UK, but The Camp is unique in its activities, military style – and most importantly – its effectiveness."