



CONCEPT 10 10 AT DUBAI HEALTHCARE CITY

Tried & tested by Sudeshna Ghosh

What is it: This revolutionary new style of exercise challenges the basic premise on which traditional workouts are founded. Devised by Swedish fitness expert Jorgen Albrechtsen in 2003, Concept 10 10 promises to deliver a complete full-body workout in just 20 minutes, once a week.

Busting well-established notions that aerobic exercise improves heart and lung health, this strength-training workout claims that only through improving muscle strength can you improve the ability to draw oxygen from the blood, thereby reducing demand on your heart and lungs. According to Albrechtsen, this workout is all you need to get and stay in shape, as it not only strengthens muscle tone but also, indirectly, improves cardiovascular health.

How it works: This is a very minimalist, fuss-free approach to exercise, with workouts conducted on a one-to-one basis with a trainer — no music or other distractions — with the purpose of focussing all your concentration on the training. A specially designed set of six machines — which mimic traditional strength training equipment, but with certain modifications — covers all muscle groups, from lower back and abdominals to arms, shoulders and even the neck muscles.

Each exercise is meant to be done in extremely slow, smooth movements, which negates the effect of momentum and gravity, thereby exerting the muscles to the maximum possible level, and getting them to do all the work. You are meant to continue doing that exercise until your muscles reach the point of fatigue.

In spite of being so high-intensity, because of the temperature controlled environment — portable fans are switched

on as you exercise to cool down the body, over and above the air conditioning — and the deliberately measured movements, you end up not sweating at all.

Each individual's suitable equipment settings, based on an initial assessment, are kept on record and the equipment made ready ahead of arrival. There is no separate warm-up or cool-down required because the movements happen so slowly, there is no risk of injury, and the first rep of the first exercise works as a warm-up for the body.

My month at Concept 10 10: Being a complete gym-phobe, it was only the prospect of being done with exercising in 20 minutes flat — and then not having to worry about it for another week — that motivated me to join. Disappointingly, at my evaluation session, I was told that they usually recommend two sessions a week for the first month.

Because of my embarrassingly low fitness levels, to say the first couple of sessions were difficult would be an understatement. As I'd stagger out, wobbly-kneed at the end of the 20-minute session, I'd wonder how my body could get so tired, so quickly.

But I'm glad I didn't give in to the temptation to give up, because soon enough, I started feeling the difference. Performing the exercises started becoming easier, and my stamina and energy levels soared.

Benefits: In the long term, this workout does show tremendous results, as James, a co-exerciser who has been doing this for nearly a year, promised me. "I have increased strength and stamina which reflects in my day-to-day life," he said.

The best part of Concept 10 10 is definitely the time factor, as you can literally be in and out of there within 25 minutes (including changing time), making

it ideal for anyone who is struggling to fit exercise into their busy, modern lifestyles. Whether it will truly change the way the world exercises remains to be seen, but in the meantime, it is definitely a well-kept fitness secret that can deliver the same results as hours spent sweating it out in the gym, in a fraction of the time.

Results: While a month was not enough to see visible results, I definitely felt my muscles getting stronger, and that I had more energy and could pack a lot more into my day; my overall sense of wellbeing improved. Concept 10 10 doesn't believe in recording progress through body weight and other measurements (fat lost is made up for by increased muscle), the only way to keep track of improvement is through the progressive increase in the resistance weights you use during exercise. During the course of the month, the weights I was using for my lower back exercise went up by 2lbs; 6lbs for the leg press; 4lbs for the abdominals; 8lbs for my neck muscles; 10lbs for the pull (biceps and triceps) while my chest press weights remained static. Overall, I was told I had made reasonably good progress but it could have been better if I hadn't fallen ill and been away travelling in between!

On the downside: If you expect your exercise time to double up as social time, or need a fun, lively environment to keep you motivated, this is probably not for you. It's quite intense and it's just you, the machines and some prodding from the friendly trainer to keep you going.

Cost and contacts: The Concept 10 10 studio is located in Dubai Healthcare City. Dh\$375 for a single session. Dh\$2,950 for 10 sessions. Visit www.concept1010.com or call 04-4298567.