

Why I train at Phoenix – Lisa King

Most people join a gym to lose weight and get fit, I joined phoenix for the same reason... I wanted to feel fit...

I have always had a very active lifestyle and even worked at a gym while studying. I spent hours in a pool training while growing up and if it wasn't the pool it was a cross country track or netball court. I would have never thought of myself as being unfit, but Phoenix provided me with a different view on fitness. I walked into the gym knowing that I wanted to kick stuff and just feel good, I have gained this and then some. My first session was Grunt on a Tuesday morning with Marty. It was a blur and I have no idea what we did, I do however remember feeling that sick in my car afterwards that I had to sit there for at least 15 minutes to keep down the vomit. As much as this feeling scared me I turned up again on a Wednesday afternoon to try my hand at MT. This was certainly memorable ... I am left handed- this made things a million times harder and certainly more memorable. I genuinely felt sorry for Lee- he found me hiding in the back of the class trying to understand a jab and a straight. God only knows what he thought when he saw me try and kick... then there were push ups !!! ... Push ups from knees were not accepted or counted and I quickly learnt that even if it took me twice as long push ups from my toes were the only option... this was all in the first session and there were many more to come. Learning MT was hard, I had to focus and take in all the feedback that I was receiving as well as trying to get my brain to reverse everything into left handed mode !!! The patience of the coaches was/still is amazing. Lee has gone above and beyond when it comes to dealing with me, but after all, if he doesn't support me as a left hander who will. Despite trying to focus while being completely exhausted I started to get it. I started to understand the why things. Why being on your toes with soft knees is so important, why you pivot, why you crunch through your mid-section ... I still however recognise that I have so much to learn. I think that is why I love it though- I have been doing both MT and Grunt for over 2.5 years and I still get to learn new skills and improve - nothing is ever the same and nothing comes from a cookie cutter model.

So did I get what I was after... I would say that my fitness has increased more than I thought possible. I can comfortably run without pain in my hips – I have gained the strength to prevent the pain and in turn my chicken like body has gained some muscle (not that you can tell), I can run like I have never run before, running in at 45 minutes for 10km and feeling comfortable doing it. There are certainly days that I feel very unfit, the days that I am heavy breathing and struggling to even think – these are the days that I have the most to gain though, these are the days that I get mentally tough. I certainly wouldn't change it either – I need to feel challenged, I need to feel as though I have achieved something – this is what keeps me coming back... after all who else is silly enough to train more than 7 sessions in a week. Like most female I can struggle with my body image, I can feel uncomfortable and view myself poorly, I have fat days and days were I want to change the way I look or feel. What has changed my thinking though is an appreciation for what my body can do, I can appreciate that I can lift a 20kg keg above my head or reach 10 un assisted chin ups in a row. These are all things that I couldn't do before Phoenix, these are things that I will always want to improve and these are things that I should be grateful for, these are things that make me stop and reassess my thinking.

Something that isn't measurable is the friendship and support that Phoenix has given me. There is a statement that refers to the Phoenix family and it is very true. The gym and its members has supported me through some exceptionally tough times – you need people that you can cry in front of in one moment and then punch in the face in the next one. Phoenix has provided this and more and I will always have such respect for them for this. There really is no other place like this, you join more than a gym you become part of an amazing community.