NEW YORK POST

The home stretch

Put your gym memberships on hold this summer and get fit for free! Two health nuts roadtest the best outdoor workouts at local parks all over NYC

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Yoga in the 14th Street Park presented by Chelsea Improvement Company (managed by Biederman Redevelopment Ventures) and Laughing Lotus yoga

Laughing Lotus yoga

7 p.m. at the 14th Street Park, 10th Avenue between 14th and 15th streets; Through Aug. 31

Cars whiz around this small park near the High Line, which one might assume would make for a less-than-Zen experience. But once this Vinyasa class gets going, it's easy to tune out the NYC noise — and gawkers at nearby tables — by focusing upwards on the deep blue sky. I suggest arriving at least 15 minutes early to snag a space and set up your mat (none are provided) among the dozens of yogis facing the center of the park in a circle format. Overall, the class is a fairly vigorous flow, but it's nothing a beginner can't do — during my class, instructors stuck with straightforward downward dogs, warrior sequences and various lunges. The hardest part was maintaining my balance on the gently sloping, slightly bumpy lawn. A handful of instructors help with adjustments throughout the class. — Christina Amoroso

PHOTOS: OUTDOOR WORKOUTS

Bryant Park Yoga

Tuesdays from 10 to 11 a.m. and Thursdays from 6 to 7 p.m.; Through the end of September

Bryant Park's Midtown location is perfect for those looking to stretch out the stress before or after the office.

I went on a Thursday evening, and showed up five minutes before 6 to sign a waiver, grab a mat (provided by Lululemon) and set up among the 100 or so others. The class, led by various instructors from Lululemon, who wear headsets so everyone can hear directions, started right on time.

Seeing the top of the Chrysler Building through your legs while in downward dog is quite a novelty, but I never completely lost myself in the movement enough to forget I was in the middle of Midtown. In fact, be prepared for tourists and oglers to flash cameras in your face. Still, I walked away feeling refreshed and limber. Namaste. — Calla Salinger

Sunset Pilates in Brooklyn Bridge Park
7 p.m. on Pier 6, entrance at Atlantic Avenue and Furman Street; Through Sept. 16

Lou Cornacchia, founder of Cobble Hill's Body in Balance Studio, leads this hourlong session of core work set to upbeat contemporary pop music from the likes of Katy Perry and Lady Gaga.

Having two years of pilates experience, I was able to recognize the names of poses — such as "saw" and "seal" — although novices won't have a problem following the sequences. (Just try to snag a spot near the front for a better glimpse of Cornacchia demonstrating, as well the beautiful view: The pier, which juts into the river, faces Manhattan's skyline.) Bring sunglasses, though. For most of the class, I faced the setting sun. Oh, and don't forget a thick mat. The pier is made of concrete and can be a bit uncomfortable on the spine. We also used Dyna-Bands, but Cornacchia brings extras if you don't have your own. — C.A.

Boot camp in Union Square
9 to 10 a.m.; Through Aug. 11

Forget enlisting: There's a war-worthy boot camp featuring a heart-pounding hour of resistance and circuit training right in Union Square led by Ariane Hundt, founder of Brooklyn Bridge Boot Camp.

Mats and resistance bands are supplied, but bring a water bottle. Hundt delivered on her promise to "kick my butt" by working in 100 to 200 pushups in between squats, jumping jacks and work with the resistance exercise bands fitted around our arms and ankles.

The last 20 minutes of the hourlong class is devoted to abdominal- and butt-toning exercises — but sitting down offered no relief. This was hard-core muscle-burning stuff. After the class, I felt like I'd been pummeled by a total body workout — and definitely needed a shower. The next day, every muscle hurt. But it was that hurt-so-good feeling that pushed me to go back again. — C.S

Capoeira at socrates sculpture park
Noon, 32-01 Vernon Blvd., at Broadway, Queens; Through October

I knew nothing about this centuries-old Brazilian martial-arts practice, which incorporates music and dance movement, when I decided to try this 90-minute class. Fortunately, instructor Formando Abara, an 18-year capoeira vet, led us through the most basic moves, such as ginga (a side-to-side lunging movement) and au (a basic cartwheel). Then, after learning each move, we repeated it 10 times before trying it with a partner in front of the group. (Shy types, bring a friend! Even for someone like myself, who has no qualms about shaking my booty at zumba, it was intimidating.)

I suggest wearing light, loose clothing to avoid overheating in sweltering midday temps, as well as sneakers if you don't want to get your feet dirty.

I left the park sweat-drenched and thirsty, but mostly from the sun's heat. Luckily, a farmers market near the park's entrance was my saving grace, offering ice-cold organic fruit juices — perfect for bringing some blood sugar back to my head after all those cartwheels! — C.A.