

Shop Local Leader: Raising the bar

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Jennifer Curtis turned her passion for fitness into a thriving business

KRISTIN COLELLA



The Bar Method Mountain Lakes is a fitness studio that teaches The Bar Method, a workout program now popular in studios around the country. Owner Jennifer Curtis was a Bar Method student in Summit, and she opened her own Mountain Lakes franchise in March 2009.

WHAT IS THE BAR METHOD?

It's a non-impact workout that uses the body's own weight to isolate, strengthen and sculpt all major muscle groups. The

program draws on the muscle-shaping principles of isometrics, the body-elongating practice of dance conditioning and the intense pace of interval training. Class routines involve free-weight exercises, intense leg and seat work with a ballet bar, abdominal work at the bar and on mats, and stretching to elongate muscles. The program was originally founded by an exercise instructor in California in 2001.

WHAT MAKES THE WORKOUT DIFFERENT FROM OTHER EXERCISE OPTIONS OUT THERE?

There's a huge personal training element to the class, even though it's given in a group setting. Each student gets a lot of individual attention from instructors because proper form is so important. The fact that the workout is non-impact also sets us apart. Our founder, Burr Leonard, consulted with physical therapists to make sure the exercises were safe and wouldn't cause injuries.

WHAT WILL THE BAR METHOD DO FOR YOUR BODY?

It gives you a lean, strong, tight dancer's body and is a very effective way to carve muscle and quickly burn fat. It can also help improve posture and flexibility. We've seen students who couldn't touch their toes at first do a split after a few months. The benefits are unreal.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO OPEN A BAR METHOD STUDIO?

Prior to starting this business, I handled sales and brand management for a luxury eyewear company, but I always had a passion for fitness; I practiced ballet as a child and worked as an exercise instructor through college. I thought this venture would be a great way to apply all of my skills and interests. But the main reason was because this was the best workout I had ever tried—it literally changed my body. I wanted to share it with others.

WHY THIS LOCATION?

I grew up right in Mountain Lakes, so I wanted to bring the workout to my hometown. I also live back in the area now, so I like being close to my family.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU?

My young son keeps me inspired, and The Bar Method definitely helps me keep up with him and stay as healthy and strong as possible. Although the workout can be really tiring, it ultimately makes you so much more energized.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR OTHER PEOPLE WHO ASPIRE TO OPEN THEIR OWN BUSINESS?

To be successful, I think you really have to have a passion for what you do. I'm a huge believer in The Bar Method and take the class at least four times a week. I really wanted to pursue something I enjoyed doing, and to me it doesn't feel like work.

GETTING THERE

THE BAR METHOD MOUNTAIN LAKES

135 Hawkins Place

Boonton, 973.263.BAR9

mountainlakes.barmethod.com

Open 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily