

Group Fitness Instructors Introduction

Jennifer



Hi! I'm Jen and I have a lot of experience under my belt (no pun intended). It started in college at a body sculpting fitness group class where I was the only participant. I asked the instructor if we could dance instead of body sculpt. She laughed and I told her I wanted to teach dance fitness (Zumba was not even born yet). She said her supervisor was looking for new fitness instructors and that I should apply. I applied and I started teaching abs, body sculpting, and even buns! Then Shakira's first USA album came out and I became obsessed with wanting to move like her. I remember seeing a very famous belly dancer on YouTube and asking my mom for her Pops, Locks, and Shimmies DVD for my birthday. She got me the DVD and I was so excited to try it. I tried it a few times and I gave up very quickly because I thought the moves were too difficult.

I did not, however, stop teaching group fitness classes. I have taught group fitness classes for 20 years and I have taught many different formats, including dance.

A very funny story I have is that I had never attended a Ballet class, and I always had wanted to take one. Walking into an Adult Ballet class for the first time was the most terrifying, intimidating thing for

me. All the students seemed to know what they were doing. Luckily, I followed the lady in front of me because I did not understand the French terms the teacher was calling out. I didn't want to do any individual leaps and turns at the end of class, but I eventually attempted to try to do them. Stepping out of my comfort zone helped me understand and connect with how students must feel when they first step into any type of dance class for the first time.

Another funny story is that I didn't try belly dancing again until 2020. I was super bored, and I decided to create a belly dance account on a social media platform. I tried to make short clips of me dancing in my hip scarf in the kitchen. I started really connecting with belly dance students and teachers. And then something even funnier happened: professional Belly Dancers started following me and encouraging me to practice more and take more classes.

Fast forward to 2025, I have performed on stage three times. I have taken many workshops and classes from famous Belly Dancers. I entered my first Belly Dance competition in August of 2024. Never in a million years did I think any of this could happen. And it all started with, "Can we please dance today instead of body sculpt." Lol.

When I am not dancing, I like to hang out with my husband. I love to cook, and I love taking care of our three animals: Callie, Tater Tot, and Libby. I am also learning how to sew hip scarves and belly dance costumes because I love anything that sparkles!

I am so excited to teach you Shimmy Fit. It is a great way to give yourself your "me time" while embracing your body and learning this beautiful art form.

I am looking forward to meeting you and I can't wait to dance with you!

Happy Shimmies!

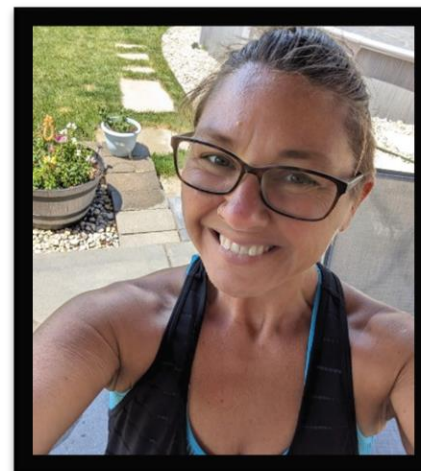
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Kara



Kara is a wife to her high school sweetheart and mother of four daughters. She grew up on the east side of Elgin and currently resides in Hampshire. Kara started doing yoga over 5 years ago and instantly fell in love with the calmness that it brought her. After being in healthcare for over 22 years, Kara took a step back from medicine to pursue her dream of yoga instruction and she completed her yoga teacher training focused in Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga in November of 2023. She strives to awaken her students to the many possibilities of yoga, whether it be flexibility of the body, peacefulness of the mind, or lightness of the heart. Her classes are a judgment-free and fun exploration of the yoga practice and always include an amazing playlist. Besides yoga, Kara enjoys gardening and canning, watching her daughters play sports, and of course tacos and margaritas.

Melissa



Melissa is proof that it's never too late (or too crazy) to chase a wild new dream—like launching a fitness class the same week she turns 45!

A former 310-pound yo-yo dieter turned strong AF movement junkie, Melissa knows firsthand that both losing weight and staying the same are hard—but choosing your hard can change your life. She's dropped over half her body weight, picked up dumbbells (and confidence), and wants you to feel like the strongest peach in the patch.

When she's not leading you through booty-burning circuits, you'll find her delivering babies, coordinating a husband and three kids (including a daughter with executive-level sass), or hosting community events in Pingree Grove—where she thrives as a proud volunteer and queen of getting stuff done. Melissa believes in sweat, sass, sisterhood, and the power of showing up for yourself—and for each other. Expect loud music, belly laughs, and a judgment-free zone where weirdness is welcome and community is everything.

Also: don't be surprised if she pulls a tarot card to set the class intention.

