

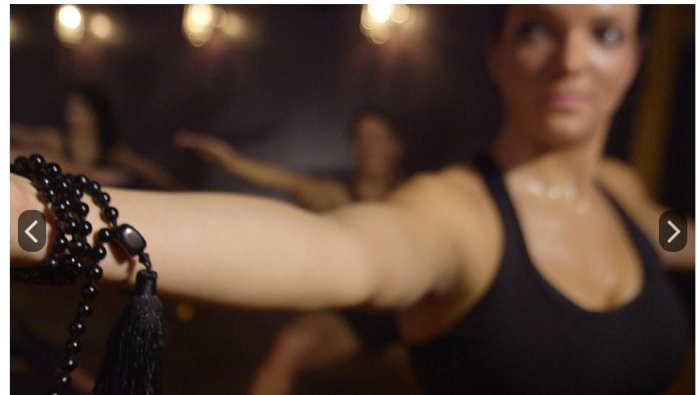


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— HEALTH & FITNESS —

Find Your Fire

Jennifer Ruisch / Jul 31, 2017



The first thing that hits you is the heat.

Step in and let it slide around your body and envelope you. Relax into it. You can feel it in your chest when you breathe. Your eyes will adjust to the dark. The bright fluorescent lights of other gyms put the focus on the mirrors and meters and your fancy workout clothes, for better or for worse.

Here at Melt Fitness, the lights are off, the heat and music are up, and the focus is on you. In the dark, you look inward, and that's exactly how the bosses like it.

Kelly Sodergren wants to melt your face off. Figuratively speaking.

The founder of Melt Hot Fitness is evangelical about her intense exercise methods, and the lifestyle she wants to support. Earning her first certification at age 19, Sodergren has had a lifelong relationship with intense physical fitness.

"Fitness has always been my first love. I knew I wanted to make it a full time job. It only took me fifteen years to get there. Fifteen years in banking. I ran the studio by myself for a year and a half while I held a full time job. Looking back... I don't know how I did it."

Steeling herself through tough emotional situations, and living with severe ADHD, she discovered that running helped center her like nothing else could. Heat, she found, accelerated that process. This inspired her to turn up the temperature on her classes— to 90 percent humidity, and 105 steamy degrees.

"We keep it hot—we keep it humid. The layers start to come off. The physical layers that we see literally in their clothing, and the emotional layers that we can't see, but they can feel... It is so important to what we deliver here and our experience that we are able to just purge all of that stress away. We do that physically with (the help of) our building."

The mechanics of this sizzling system are much more complex than just cranking up a thermostat. To maintain the proper heat and humidity to teach the hot classes, Sodergren has taken each step of the energy process into consideration.

At her Westerville location, the building's walls are double insulated and wrapped. A special HVAC system was installed that controls and equalizes heat, along with a state of the art system that pulls humidity into rooms. The new 8,000-square-foot space in Dublin Village Center has all this, plus infrared radiant heat panels to dial up the thermogenic effect.

A studio and method designed with intention from the ground up, that's what Sodergren wants for her customers. Leading a team of 30 "bosses," she oversees a split schedule of various scorching sessions. From barre to lifting, hot yoga to method, stride and beyond, Sodergren and her team want to whip not just your body, but your mind and soul into shape.

"We aren't with them just in the fitness part of it. We're really trying to be their lifeline to be the best version of themselves. We're really like their partner on this journey. This community is amazing, and the work here is legit. It changes bodies, and it has changed a bunch of lives."

Sodergren sweats with her team in the heat and the dark to get to an intimate physical and mental space that takes people out of their day to day. Changing of old habits sometimes requires a shove. One needs to heave oneself out of a rut. The push and pull of steamy 105-degree yoga, or the thumping music and 90 degrees of the hot stride class, or lifting weights in the dark and the heat might be what you need to shed a few extra pounds, or the psychic strain of the pattern and grind of your day to day.

"We really want people to dig in and go 'I remember when I was excited about something,' or, 'I remember when I was fired up about life.' People lose that. For whatever reason, they get beat down. Job, family, relationships... Life beats people down. They come back in here and they start to find their fire again and it's pretty awesome."

Melt Hot Fitness

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