

Beyond the Bike: How Spinco's Community Sets It Apart from Other Boutique Gyms

By Addison Fallis

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At Spinco Ottawa West, a boutique indoor cycling studio at 5734 Hazeldean Rd., the beat of music drives riders forward as they push through each high-intensity class. But beyond the sweat and endurance, instructors and attendees say the real appeal of Spinco is its strong sense of community, one that prioritizes inclusivity, personal growth, and mental well-being.

Spinco instructors emphasize that their approach to fitness isn't about competition or pressure, it's about welcoming every rider, no matter their experience level.

"Truthfully, coming in as an instructor from a previous studio, I was treated with the utmost kindness," said Alexis Dion, Spinco instructor, who has been teaching spin classes for five years. "I think we still try to make that our [...] main goal—that people feel welcomed and appreciated the way that they are."

An Inclusive Space for All Riders



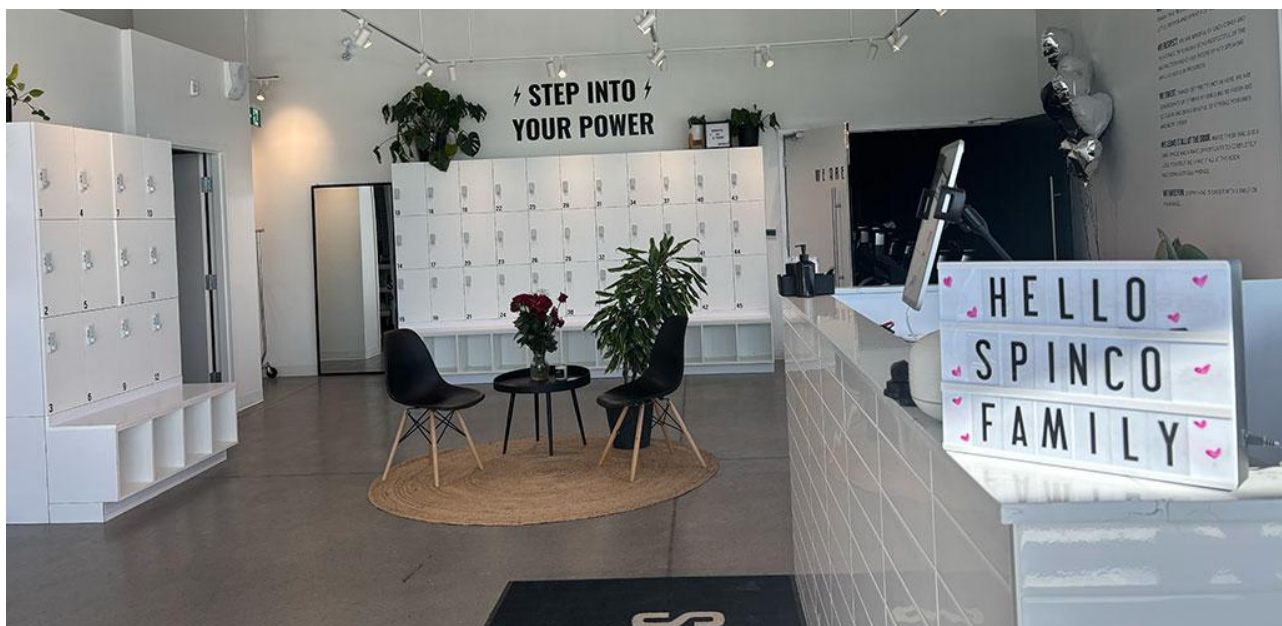
In the world of boutique fitness, some studios have gained reputations for fostering an unspoken pressure to keep up with intense workouts. SpincO, however, actively works to create an environment for all fitness levels.

“We always like to introduce the new riders to the instructors,” said Elisa Ghannai, a Key Lead and instructor at SpincO. She emphasized the acceptance at SpincO, no matter your experience, “People in here have five rides, people in here have [...] 1,000 rides—you make it what you want it to be.”

Alexis also encourages new riders to position themselves at the front of the class to ensure they feel supported. “There’s 37 of us in the room, and we’re all doing the same class, but everyone’s on a different journey and headed to the same direction,” she said.

For Rileigh Cournoyer, a dedicated Spinco participant, that sense of support and inclusion was what made her fall in love with the studio in the first place, “I had been taking spin classes at my gym and loved it. However, my friend was going to Spinco and convinced me to give it a try, so I did,” she said. “I immediately loved every aspect—the environment, being provided spin shoes, the dark room, loud music, the energy of both the instructor and the room.”

She now works at Spinco, helping maintain the studio, and continues to ride frequently. “If I’m feeling anxious or sad, I know that I will feel better once those doors open,” she said. “No matter how the class goes, I will always feel like a better version of myself after.”



Balancing Challenge with Mental and Physical Well-Being

Unlike some high-intensity fitness programs that promote a “no excuses” mentality, Spinco instructors say they take a different approach, encouraging riders to listen to their bodies and prioritize recovery when needed.

“In terms of other fitness boutique studios that I’ve been to personally, I’ve almost felt pressured to show up regardless of whatever state the world was in or I was in,” Alexis said. “I don’t think that’s something we promote at Spinco.”

Elisa echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that instructors closely observe riders during class and provide modifications when necessary. “We give them an advanced class, but there are always options to take it a bit slower,” she said.

Raleigh agreed that Spinco offers an environment where all fitness levels are welcomed, but she acknowledges that it’s natural to feel a sense of comparison in a room full of strong riders, “It’s impossible to not feel a certain pressure considering the instructor in front of you is good at what they do, and so are some people around you,” she said. “The thing is, there’s always going to be people better than you at something. That’s why we emphasize individuality as much as we do community [...].”

Spinco also places a strong emphasis on mental health and building resilience beyond the bike.

“Both the studio and instructors put a lot of emphasis on recovery, mental health, and balance because they are even more important than just simply training,” Raleigh said. “The purpose of spin class is to have a moment to work on yourself and build that mental strength, to then be able to take that work and carry it into our lives.”

More Than a Workout

At Spinco, success isn't just measured by physical endurance—it's about commitment and personal achievement. Instructors acknowledge riders' milestones, whether it's their first class or their hundredth ride, "Yes, it's just 50 rides, but that's 50 times you dedicated to you, took time for yourself, and pushed yourself," Elisa said.

For Rileigh, what sets Spinco apart from other types of fitness is its clear purpose beyond exercise, "It's the community and the deeper meaning behind everything we do," she said. "It may only look like regular spin classes, but they're not. Spinco and their instructors have a clear purpose—to give people a space in which they can become their most physically and mentally powerful selves, experience growth, and share that exact energy with others." And, she added, it's just fun. "You get to dance on a bike to your favorite music!"

"No matter what you look like, no matter where you're from, we're all in this room right now," Elisa said. "Spinco is all about staying true to yourself, taking up space, being authentic, being loud if you want to be [...]."

For many, Spinco isn't just a workout—it's a place to grow, connect, and be part of something bigger.