

Velo: Healing through cardio

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Indoor cycling, after the atmosphere velo provided, was not only a sport anymore, it provided members with not only a physical journey but a mental one. With that, it has brought a whole new meaning to fitness studios in Qatar. With its trendy themes and challenges, it has adapted to the lifestyle of the youth just as much as they adapted their lifestyle to it. What differs velo is that it is not exclusive to anyone, and accessible to all.

An active member of the community, Najla Alhajri, 20, shares her experience with cycling and how it has become a part of her daily routine because of Velo. A factor behind Velo's growing popularity is how it aligns itself with social media culture. Classes are designed to be visually appealing and engaging, encouraging members to share their experiences online. This strategy has played a major role in turning indoor cycling into a lifestyle trend rather than a niche activity. "I first heard about velo from a friend around 2023, what made me go there was I would see a lot of people post about it and I thought it was a really, like, it was a really vibrant community, and I went there and my assumptions were correct.", "The community is very vibrant and the people there are very passionate about fitness in general and the way they approach fitness is like so unique and it feels like, like, it doesn't feel like something I would dread." Alhajri said. That was particularly why indoor cycling in Velo stands out because it aims to attract the younger generations by creating fun themes for classes and challenges that adapt to their interests. "After I finished my first class, I felt empowered and confident. Cycling became a part of my daily routine" she said, "it made me challenge myself in ways I never anticipated." Alhajri said.

Velo is also distinct from other fitness studios in Qatar is the sense of belonging it creates. Unlike traditional studios that often focus on physical results, Velo focuses heavily on community, motivation and emotional well-being. Andrea Zahedi Brown, 31, gives an exclusive

insight on what it means to coach indoor cycling and the reasons behind it becoming a trend in Qatar. “At the beginning when I first came here, I was recruited to help with the start-up of Velo, everything from branding to coaching, to growing.”, “Obviously the beauty of it is that we did, I can say probably a good job with Velo, and it did reach to the potential that we wanted it to from the beginning and I'm very proud of that and I'm so happy to see that in the Qatari community, especially the ladies community.” Brown said. For many young people in Qatar, attending a Velo class is as much about self-expression as it is about fitness.

Instructors also play a crucial role in shaping the experience. Rather than limiting themselves to trainers that coach the class only, they work on being motivators that help members even beyond classes. “For coaching styles, I would say that it can vary between coaches and studios, but for me, music has always been very important to me. Very therapeutic and very motivating to myself, and so everything that I feel through music and through my authentic genuine self is what I like to portray. And I feel like when I'm being a hundred percent myself and vulnerable in class and showing the studio and the space who I really am when I'm on the podium teaching class, I feel like that's something that really gets people to maybe relate or feel connected with me to some degree.” Even their words often go beyond the class itself, reminding participants of their strength and resilience. This personalized approach, according to Brown, makes members feel seen and supported, reinforcing the emotional connection to the studio.

All these experiences and insights merge to capture the essence of not only a fitness journey but a connection to oneself and people around them. “It's the 45 minutes a day where I get to fully disconnect and get to immerse myself in the music and in the beat and with the people around me.” Alhajri finalizes. “The lights come off and when the lights come off, I feel like that's a

moment of capturing the room, capturing the authenticity of the practice, and just what it means to be in that dark, loud room for 45 minutes.” Brown confirms.

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References

Velo. (2025). *About us*. In *Embrace every movement*. <https://velo.qa/> – Embrace Every Movement