



“The South African Callanetics Programme changed my shape totally – Unlike years of gym and swimming. It has firmed my body and lifted many areas! I love slow exercise and the toning effect, and feel more energetic and healthy.”
(Helen, aged 40)

Callanetics is a highly effective non-impact exercise programme. Small precise movements (pulses) are used to shape the body, with the focus on elongating muscles to produce lean rather than a bulky physique. There is no jarring of joints, and first visible results are achieved in a remarkably short time – it is said that 1 hour of callanetics is the equivalent of 24 hours of aerobic dancing in terms of visible sculpting of the body!

The South African Callanetics programme is taught in small classes of no more than 12 participants, so everyone receives individual attention. Classes take place in studio-type environments, often with mirrors and barres to facilitate anatomically correct use of the body. As classes are small, beginners, intermediate and advanced clients can be accommodated in the same class.

IS CALLANETICS LIKE YOGA?

Callanetics uses a wide variety of stretches, many of them taken from yoga, which are held for at least 30 seconds. This is to improve flexibility and suppleness of the joints, ligaments and muscles, but also to strengthen the muscles. However this is only one aspect of the programme.

TYPE OF EXERCISE DONE

The movements are tiny, with as many repetitions as possible at the client's specific fitness level. Muscle groups are isolated and worked intensely while relaxing the rest of the body. All movements are executed three-dimensionally. Spiral muscle movements, intensive use of the deepest level of the pelvic floor and consistent lengthening of the spine play a central role in the exercises. The correct alignment of the feet is as important as a long and open neck, relaxed shoulders and a lengthened waist.

Correct load bearing on various joints is emphasised, which relieves, improves and prevents pain. By exercising the body this way the deepest muscle layers are activated and toned, resulting in a deep inner strength, which helps the body to maintain an upright posture, an efficient way of moving, and elimination or improvement of postural imbalances in day-to-day life. In the words of one woman, “Through doing callanetics I've “grown” an extra couple of inches and have lost a couple of kilos; my rounded shoulders have straightened up; my core body muscles are stronger... and my flexibility is maintained at a time in life when stiffness starts to creep in.” (Renee, aged 50).

HOW CALLANETICS BENEFITS BODY AND MIND

Besides the physical advantages and changes achieved with the SA Most people find that they “grow”. Increases of up to a few centimetres are not rare due to consistent stretching and lengthening of the spine.

Many people with back and joint problems find that they have less pain, even after only a few classes. Clients often report the need for less sleep, and improved appetite control. This is in addition to the tightening/lifting effect on sagging body areas and loss of centimetres all round., the improvement (and sometimes disappearance) of cellulite and better skin tone with enhanced circulation to the skin, improved lymphatic drainage, better self image and generally a more positive outlook on life, as well as less depression. “Callanetics has changed my posture (no more lower back pain) and life so much ... I started doing the SA Callanetics Programme when I was 6 months pregnant. After my baby's birth I was wearing size 11 and 12 pants. Now, 4 years later I am wearing a size 6! I had no arms! And now there are definite muscles. I have become a Callanetics instructor myself –this I will be able to do even when I am in an old age home!” (Madeline, age 30)

Another advantage of the SA Callanetics programme is that it is suitable for any age and fitness level. Top sports people will improve their performance in their specific sports, and older people who might never have exercised will improve their quality of life greatly with improved flexibility, strength and balance.

WHAT TO WEAR

People wear comfortable clothes that don't restrict the waist. It is best to wear clothing that is not too loose, so that the client and instructor can observe the body and how it works, and can see whether postural correction need to be done. In winter people are encouraged to wear layers so that they can take off outer items as they warm up. Socks are worn, but no shoes.

The emphasis is on exercising, having fun and feeling relaxed afterwards, on shaping and strengthening the body, on improving flexibility, increasing energy levels, and on friendly companionship – Not on fashion. As one woman expressed it. “It beats a noisy gym full of kudzels and sexy brown bodies by far.”

Affordable classes are available at studios in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Cape Town, the Natal Midlands, Mpumalanga, and the Garden Route, with more studios opening on a continuous basis as more and more people complete the SA Callanetics Teacher Training Course. For people who don't have a studio nearby them there are DVDs offering workouts of varying lengths for home use.

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