



press clip

# True love can be a workout

## When training and dating collide

By KATE SIKORA Health Reporter

IT IS not the romantic setting found in a *Mills and Boon* novel: sweaty man in gym shorts falls madly in love with red-faced woman in tank-top.

But that's what happened to Jamie Barclay and Tonia Leigh Cramp when they gave fitness dating a try last July.

Instead of embarking on a relationship over a glass of wine and romantic dinner, the pair met over a few dozen sit-ups.

Six months on and the happy couple has moved into a love pad in Woolloomooloo.

They have also started a life coaching business together.

"The ice is broken for you so you don't have the nerves [when you meet through exercise]," Mr Barclay, 29, said. "I went along to help out a friend. I didn't expect to meet anyone."

Fit2Date is a novel dating craze which started in Sydney last year and is about to be launched in Melbourne, Brisbane and the US.

Founder Erica French, 29, was tired of hitting the bars to find "the one".

"I have been single for two years and I was sick of going to bars and meeting randoms, where alcohol is involved and you are not meeting the real person," Ms French said.

"This way the barrier has been removed ... you get to see the person's true colours."

Singles train as a group in parks around Sydney's CBD, Manly, Cronulla and the inner west once a week for a month, each week swapping a fitness buddy.

At the end, the group of 16 head out for dinner — where the sparks fly.

However, fireworks arrived early for Ms Cramp and Mr Barclay after their first "date".

"We were blindfolded and had to make animal noises to find our training partner. When I found Tonia, we hugged. I immediately knew something was going on," Mr Barclay said.

"I wasn't nervous the first time [training], but I was after the

second week after I had met Jamie," Ms Cramp said.

Despite having to wear lycra and leaving the make-up behind, Ms Cramp, 34, swears by the match-making concept.

Having tried various dating methods, the life coach was keen to try something new in a relaxed environment.

"You don't have time to sit back and contemplate the date," she said. "You are too focused on the training."

At \$200, it is a cheap way of getting fit and possibly meeting a soul mate.

While the company hasn't boasted a wedding yet, there have been a few "hook ups" and successful relationships.

"It's a hard workout," Mr Barclay said. "You wouldn't want to come along and not be fit."

Daily Telegraph  
Video: Watch the "fit" couple's love story at  
daillytelegraph.com.au



'My training buddy is fit ... Jamie Barclay and Tonia Leigh Cramp yesterday. Picture: CAMERON RICHARDSON