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SIX3NINE review: getting to the core of personal training

Shape up at a London gym that focuses on fitness without fads - or treadmills

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Lockdown did few favours to many people's fitness levels, with working out-from-home initiatives quickly running out of steam. But personal training can get that exercise regime back on track for those of us whose planned daily jogs morphed into meanders to the shops for wine and snacks.

Of course, no matter how long, hard or often you work out, you simply can't out-train a bad diet. That's why London gym Six3Nine provides sensible and realistic nutritional guidance alongside bespoke PT programming that is available both in person and online. Dan Price is the resident nutrition expert and works with your trainer to help you get the very best outcomes.

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Six3Nine was founded in 2012 by fitness coach James Conci-Mitchell, who wanted to create a space dedicated to creating long-lasting changes for his clients, with no gimmicks and empty promises of quick fixes. Initially established in Covent Garden, Six3Nine now has a second branch in the heart of The City on Gun Street (inspired marketing or just a coincidence?) - which is where I went to be put through my paces.

Some gyms can seem intimidating, but I was given a super-relaxed welcome and directed to the changing rooms, which were spotlessly clean and packed with thoughtful touches such as hair bands for the unprepared. Which was me that day - life (or at least hairdo) saved.

Tresses tamed, I headed back up to the modern, spacious gym, where the first thing that struck me was that there was no cardio equipment. As my trainer, Mike Brooks, explained, the Six3Nine team focus instead on functional, big muscle movements to get those endorphins pumping - and after all, having your PT standing watching as you run on a

treadmill is not the best use of either of your time. The philosophy here is that it's not about the equipment you use so much as how you use it that really counts.

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Each workout is tailored to your individual goals, which in my case was to gain functional strength that would last, while taking into account my various injuries. My programme focused on my core muscles, with Mike giving great hints on technique and reminders when I was, to be honest, starting to cheat. Training with just the voices in your head for company, you tend to go through the motions, but having someone telling you to do five more, take the squat lower, brace your core more... it meant that the following day I was aware of muscles I'd forgotten existed.

Full disclosure, I'm a retired PT, but I was impressed by the extent of Mike's in-depth knowledge. Trainers often instruct and then just sit back but Mike, who has a B.Sc in Strength & Conditioning Science, was incredibly thorough. He explained what I was doing and just as importantly, why, and gave constant feedback. All of the instructors at Six3Nine are trained to at least level 3, which covers programming, nutrition and assessment techniques, so you know you are in safe hands.

Six3Nine also offers small group training, plus the Covent Garden branch has classes to mix things up a bit if that's your bag. Or if you can't attend the gym in person, Zoom sessions are another option to help you stay on the training wagon.

Whichever approach takes your fancy, this gym's core strength is providing expert training and advice minus the fads, to help instil maintainable training habits. Because Six3Nine is a gym that actually takes training, well, personally.

Six3Nine is based at Covent Garden, 41-44 Great Queen St, London WC2B 5AD; and The City, 50 Gun Street, Spitalfields, London E1 6AH. For more information, see [six3nine.com](https://www.six3nine.com)

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