

# Combining Fitness & Fun

**BINDU GOPAL RAO** CATCHES UP WITH **BHAVNA HARCHANDRAI** TO FIND OUT HOW SHE HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST PREFERRED FITNESS EXPERTS IN THE SINDHI COMMUNITY

“THE INNER DRIVE TO DO AND TO BE BETTER IS DEEP-ROOTED IN ME



**F**or someone who has led an active life for as long as she remembers, Bhavna Harchandrai made the natural progression from being a throwball player in school to becoming sports captain. In fact, as a student, she saved up her allowance to enroll in aerobics classes when they first came to Mumbai in the 90's. And while she also completed her International Air Fare Desk course in Travel and Tourism in March 1997, Bhavna consistently kept her aerobics classes going alongside.

**Early Days**

“Post-college, I was preparing for my MBA and simultaneously working at my uncle’s travel agency, Trade Wings as well as at Maersk India to gain work experience. I would see fresh graduates from IIM given mundane clerical jobs with absolutely no time for themselves. Their lifestyle made me wonder how I would be able to manage my fitness regime and career goals. So, I decided to focus on fitness as a career.”

Having spent two decades in the industry, Bhavna has headed Golds Gym, Moksh, and Pure Energy (a Shapoorji Pallonji

Enterprise) and has clocked in fitness certifications whilst on the job. “My grandmother taught me that there is no limit to gaining knowledge and whenever I get a chance to learn an exercise concept be it aerobics, step, zumba, power yoga, mat pilates, or rebounding (trampoline fitness), I do a course in it. Every exercise form has its own principles and benefits and there is always so much to learn,” she shares passionately. Bhavna is also internationally certified by the American Council on Exercise (ACE) as a Personal Trainer and operates out of her Malabar Hill home studio.

**Signature Blend**

Known for conceptualizing combination exercises (especially with the trampoline), she blends together more traditional workouts with rebounding, creating Trampoline Boxercise, Ball & Bounce, Step Up & Bounce, and Trampoline TABATA. “These easy to follow classes work the upper body with the lower body. Trampoline bouncing moves engage the core completely and you derive the benefits of an exhilarating full-body workout.”

Bhavna has also recently introduced Penalty Box

Training - a brand new concept in functional training in India. This one-hour workout uses a penalty box – essentially a 4 square agility grid when laid flat on the ground and a hurdle when pulled up. “Over 119 exercises and their endless variations can be performed using this prop. The drills incorporate plyometrics, balance, strength, agility, and co-ordination exercises for all levels of fitness to give you a great all-around workout,” she shares. Other than this, her mom and baby workout sessions with designer Nishka Lulla have also gained huge popularity.

**Workout Wisdom**

Bhavna’s advice for staying fit is by doing a 30-45 minute moderate to high intensity cardio activity, some weight training, and most importantly stretching. She cautions, “Big workouts almost always lead to big meals and big bodies. So your diet is equally, if not more, important. I recommend food journaling to keep track of your daily calorie count.”

**Support System**

Although her family is her constant source of support, Bhavna plans and executes her sessions, writes fitness articles, and is in charge of her own accounts, finance,

and social media promotions. Being a mother, a wife, and a working professional all in one, free time is a rare indulgence. But when it comes along, she makes the most of it. “I find playing throwball, gift wrapping, preparing healthy snacks for my sons lunch box, reading a good book, watching light-hearted movies and meditating very relaxing and therapeutic.”

**Fitness Mantra**

Bhavna’s fitness mantra is simple - balance is key. “I firmly believe in leading an active lifestyle, exercising moderately, eating small sensible meals, drinking sufficient water, getting restful sleep, and deep breathing/meditation. This is the best and only way to stay fit right until your golden years.”

She lives by her grandmother’s motto that a life without ambition is not a life worth living. “I do not need anyone or anything to keep me motivated. The inner drive to do and to be better is deep-rooted in me.” Next up on the agenda, unsurprisingly, is setting up her own gym, writing a book, and becoming a better version of herself!

