

GLUTEAL MORNING

Sunday morning. Time to sleep in a bit. Time for that extra cup of coffee as you linger over the newspaper. Time to relax. Or for a crash course in physiology and biomechanics with Melanie Grubisha.

Hip-hop blasted from the stereo at the kickboxing class. Second-year med student Grubisha, leading a group of nine, shot her right leg upward at a 45-degree angle. Her charges followed suit.

"Keep your abs tight," the Medical Scientist Training Program participant exhorted.

Grubisha, fit and muscular enough to have recently won three awards at a natural bodybuilding competition, moved more quickly and surely than her students—which makes sense, considering she learned Tae Bo from the master himself, Billy Blanks.

"Get lower," she shouted over the music as the group faced the floor, extended their legs back like pistons, and worked the glutes.

The class held all physical types—from a young woman as fit as Grubisha to folks older and less so. After 20 minutes had elapsed from the hour-long class, all were sweating profusely, and many were winded.

Not Grubisha, who ordered the class to drop and give her eight push-ups. "Go! Make 'em good ones!"

Before beginning her medical education, Grubisha played volleyball at Carlow University, her undergraduate home. That ended when she fractured her back during her sophomore season. Clearly, though, the injury didn't curtail her dedication to fitness. She's often at the gym by 7 a.m. and teaches six fitness classes plus an occasional on campus kickboxing class for med students.

She also studies cell signaling in prostate cancer development and plans to get a PhD in pharmacology.

The class began to cool down with a jog around the room. The lone spectator wandered out to his car, where a thermos of coffee awaited. Time to relax. *—Joe Miksch*

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