



The Making Of Tone House

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By Elvira Yambot & Alonzo Wilson

Tone House is the athlete's workout. This Union Square studio embraces serious and constant athletic movement, as opposed to stationary running, lifting, or spinning. Workouts take place on the Tone House "turf," and each class starts and ends with a team chant. Tone House is a haven for athletes looking for an extreme workout in NYC; think along the lines of an NFL practice. Tone House creator Alonzo Wilson is a former pro football player, and co-founder Elvira Yambot is just as responsible for giving the idea its legs — both founders left their corporate fitness careers to create this space. Elvira and Alonzo share their love for Tone House, and why they changed their whole lives to start it.



ALONZO WILSON

Tone House has really been 3 years in the making, but all the moving parts (getting our partners and Elvira on board, securing the right space to showcase the workout, developing the team) didn't really come together until 5 months ago, which makes me think everything happens for a reason.

The decision to open Tone House stemmed from a desire to fill a void in the industry – the public is ready and yearning to take their fitness journey to the next level. Tone House allows the mainstream to experience the extreme in athletic-based, sports performance training, and more importantly, exposes our clients to a positive, encouraging, and memorable team environment, where everyone in class makes the varsity squad.

I was introduced to athletic-based extracurricular activities in high school with football, basketball, and track, which initially ignited my passion for fitness and a healthier lifestyle. My sports background grew as I moved on to play at the collegiate level, and then professionally for a short period of time. I also realized in high school that only 500 students out of my class of 5,500 were involved in a sports-specific activity. Aside from the average Physical Education class that all students were required to attend, only 10% of my classmates were exposed to challenging workouts through team sports — as well as the camaraderie and support that came along with it. The other 90% were missing out on this intense physical activity on a daily basis, a habit that I felt should be instilled at a young age.

Early on in my professional football career, my mother became extremely sick with cancer and sadly lost her battle to the disease. I was tremendously close to her, and her passing had a profound and lasting impact, ultimately changing my career path. Obesity was a contributing factor to her situation, and I began to think of ways I could have changed the outcome, all which kept coming back to fitness. I know, deep down, that exercise and a healthier lifestyle would have significantly lowered her risks, or even prevented the disease from occurring entirely. My mission is to keep as many people healthy as I can, and it starts here.

ELVIRA YAMBOT

Athletics, fitness, and a healthy lifestyle have always played a prevalent role in my life — in those formative teenage years on the volleyball, cheerleading, and soccer squads; and then throughout adulthood, in marathons and adventure races, and in the midst of a budding professional career in the corporate fitness world.

My early involvement in athletics not only kept me fit and out of trouble (my parents' main goal), it was the perfect platform for character development, because it taught me the value and importance of discipline, leadership, teamwork, self-improvement, and self-worth.

Post-college, I ended up in Marketing and Business Development for a privately-held, startup finance company in Chicago for about seven years. (Ugh, anything but the Corporate World, with its nightmares of stuffy suits and Groundhog Day dancing in my head!) In retrospect, however, that position allowed me to really understand the ins and outs of building a business. It gave me the tools and arsenal to weather the growing pains (and gains) that have come along with the inception of Tone House.

Early on in my move to New York City in 2012, during my two-year stint in Corporate Sales at Equinox, I met and developed a friendship with Alonzo. In addition to securing a sales commission for his membership, I also started private training sessions with the best coach in the Big Apple. Win, Win! It was during those horrendous, yet endorphin-producing, hour-long workouts that I deemed him the MacGyver of Trainers. He had the innate ability to create effective, muscle-shaking exercises with the most unassuming items — handing me a backpack full of rocks and paper towels, and sending me huffing and puffing up and down some random stairwell or back alley. I'm a self-proclaimed masochist, so I found the cause and effect of his workouts to be PURE GENIUS. Sign me up for more pain... and pleasure!

After two years of 50- to 60-hour work weeks (Corporate Sales Advisor of the Year at Equinox!), I knew it was time to either move up or move on. Timing and organic development is everything in life, and it was the perfect storm when Alonzo approached me about Tone House. Entrepreneurship had always been my end goal, and leaving the corporate world behind to be part of something really cool and different? Done and done! The transition from employee to employer is far from simple or easy, it is the road less traveled, and it was most accurately described to me as, “the best time of your life that you never want to repeat again.” The Tone House concept and program is quite special, though, and it's a vision that our growing team firmly believes in. We want everyone to partake in this unique experience and be part of the Varsity Squad — they're just going to have to work for it.



Alonzo Wilson is the Founder and Director of Training at Tone House. He has a BS Degree in Movement Science Education & Professional Instruction, and is also a TRX Certified Instructor. He lettered in football, basketball, and track in high school, and played defensive lineman for the two-time Division II National Championship-winning football team at GVSU, before moving on to the professional arena. He is also a fitness model with the Wilhelmina Modeling Agency.

Originally from Chicago, IL, **Elvira Yambot** is Chief Operating Officer at Tone House. She is a proponent of staying active and healthy at any age, was involved in high school and club soccer, as well as competitive cheerleading, and currently runs marathons and adventure races. Her entrepreneurial spirit led her to Tone House, where she firmly believes everyone has the potential, ability, and mental toughness to accomplish the workouts, as well as life's challenges.

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