

DANCE!

MULTI-CULTURAL MUSIC & ART MAGAZINE

10 things you
never knew about bellydancing

A night with "Suzie Wong"

Burning up to 400 calories
an hour with a pole!

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Burning 400 Calories an Hour with a Pole!

by Clavice Koh



Were you one of those predictable people who shook their heads disapprovingly and tutted under their breaths upon seeing the words 'Pole-Dancing' etched on the cover of the magazine? Well you're not alone, though its people like you that are the bane of many pole-dancers out there.

Associated with *leaze*, *sex* and *stripping* and previously confined within the parameters of clubs and bars, pole-dancing has long been a terribly misunderstood form of dance, and we are boldly breaking out of the norm to feature the infamous pole-dance in this month's issue. You'll be in for a pleasant surprise when you find out the benefits that pole-dancing entails.

Women all over the world want to look good and feel good (let's get real, if you disagree, you must be kidding), and weight issues are anything but uncommon nowadays. What better way to lose all that frustrating flab than a fun, beneficial form of dance that will not only tone up your body to a taut, impressive form of which girls will jealously despise you for (with sufficient practice, of course) but boost your self-confidence?

Gone with the wind are the dreaded days where people who cannot bear to endure liposuction have to resort to starving themselves, jogging endlessly and going to the gym religiously to get in shape. Dancing is easily one of the most fun ways to stay healthy and trim!

Through the extensive working of almost every part of the physical anatomy, core-strength and upper body power is built and muscles are toned in the process of pole-dancing.

"They don't even know they're working out until two months later when they say, 'I've never had a better body in my life. I'm strong, I'm limber, I feel great,'" says American actress Sheila Kelley, who picked up pole-dancing for the film 'Dancing at the Blue Iguana'.

Professional pole-dancers all over the world tend to be extremely toned as they need the body strength and agility to perform climbs, spins and body inversions and carry their whole body weight. I reckon I may need a few extra remedial lessons for pole-dancing when my 1 year old nephew turns into 5 sacks of rice resting on

my hips in the span of a meager five minutes.

Little is known that pole-dancing is a form of gymnastics involving lots of muscle endurance and body coordination and can be extremely physically demanding.

Eleanor, an agile dance instructor teaching pole-dancing and exotic dancing teaches women aged 18 to 35. "Doing the pole routines can be tiring; it is both aerobic and anaerobic. Building up muscles boosts one's metabolism rate, which helps burn more calories!" she informs us.

Another instructor is **Renee Tan**, also says pole-dancing tones up the body from top to toe, and recommends ladies who want to tone up their body and lose weight to try their hand at it.

"Pole-dancing helps to tone your shoulders, waist, abs and legs. The dance is mainly about grace and the ability to move every part of your body, bringing out the curves and feminine touch," Tan remarks.

Elaine Te, an exercise fanatic and another pole-dancing and exotic dance instructor adds that pole-dancing boosts a woman's sexual confidence, helping them lose their inhibitions and be able to present their sensuality and sexuality through movement and body expressions.

Ladies who join pole-dancing classes are encouraged to praise and cheer each other on to add to the fun of lessons.

"I guess it is more, ahem, comfortable for ladies due to the absence of a 'package'. But seriously, our classes are ladies only so that the girls feel more comfortable," Eleanor jokingly replies when asked why pole-dancing is only offered to ladies.

Clubs and bars tend to take this pole-dancing and fusion strip-tease and lap dancing into the routine, making the performance lean towards the erotic and less athletic side. It's unfortunate that dancers who pole-dance as gymnastic art forms have to make second thoughts before telling others about their passion for expectation of another grim yet awkwardly polite face. All three instructors interviewed at *Groove* commented that the biggest misconception about pole-dancing is that it is sleazy.

"It isn't about stripping in bars," says **Joann Tsan**, a dancer and instructor also who defines her style of dancing as exotic and hip-hop.

Pole-dancing is, indeed, a valuable art form which takes perseverance, strength, flexibility and so much more. If you're looking for a fun and exciting way to lose weight, then look no further, because the answer is right here before your very eyes – take a shot at pole-dancing! It's a steal how the work of one single pole can bring all these benefits to any one. Get ready, because this form of dance is taking the dancing world by storm! ☺

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