

fitness

# New ways to get fit

Bored with your fitness routine? **Fiona Marsden** checks out some left-of-field suggestions to help you get your motivation back

**N**o matter what your goal is – boosting cardio fitness, losing weight or toning muscles – there are times when your exercise routine will start feeling exactly that – routine. If your motivation is starting to slip, maybe it's time to inject a bit of variety.

"The best way to keep motivated is to find new methods of achieving your existing fitness goals," says Nathan Smith, Senior Trainer Manager at Booty Camp, which specialises in outdoor group fitness classes for women.

According to Smith, the key is to look for activities that are not only fun, but suit your personality. If you're someone who prefers to exercise

outdoors, maybe the gym is not for you. If you'd rather not exercise solo, try a group fitness session or team sport. "You might need to try a few different activities before you find one that will hold your interest long-term," says Smith.

It's also sensible to choose an activity that balances out your current program. If you're gung-ho on running, for instance, try a weekly yoga class to stretch out those tight leg muscles.

## Pole dance your way to fitness

If you thought pole dancing was confined to seedy late night bars, think again. Since 2001, pole dancing strictly for fitness has become increasingly

popular in Australia, and specialist studios have begun appearing over the last couple of years.

Jennifer Critelli is director of Studio Verve, which teaches pole dancing to women wanting to experience the fitness benefits, without the sexual elements.

A former classical ballet dancer, Jennifer drew on her ballet background to develop a program called PoleFit. "The focus is on improving core strength, toning muscles and developing body confidence," she says. "The classes are for women only, and students wear gym clothes, not sexy or exotic gear."

Beginners learn single movements that involve

wrapping the torso around the pole or holding the torso away from the pole, using the arms and legs. They combine the moves into a short dance routine by the end of the first term. To encourage a light mood, Critelli chooses music ranging from rock, to retro, to Sinatra.

As students progress to the next level, they learn to climb the pole, which helps increase strength in the biceps, upper body and legs. At the more advanced levels, students pull themselves into upside-down positions on the pole. This is no mean feat; students need good muscle strength in the rhomboids and abdominals to move with control and lightness, and avoid injury.

# get fit

If all this sounds daunting, don't worry. "You don't have to be fit before you start pole dancing," says Critelli, whose students range from teenagers with poor posture, to 20 and 30-something professional women, to mums in their 40s and 50s.

"When they first start, some women feel self-conscious because they can't hold themselves up. But that's the reason they're here – to become stronger."

Twenty-six-year-old Nathalie Philippsen initially felt awkward when she took up pole dancing 18 months ago. "I was sweaty and out of breath because I didn't have much strength," she says. "But after three months, I really noticed a difference. My

core strength was better, and my leg and shoulder muscles were more toned. I felt more confident about my body and expressing my femininity."

The single-sex environment makes her feel comfortable and supported. "Women of all shapes and sizes do pole dancing. I never feel I'm being judged about my body shape or ability level."

## Sail away from it all

Love the outdoors, but feel like a change from exercising on dry land? Give sailing a go. Tony Legg is director of the Dockland Sailing School in Melbourne. "Sailing is a great sport if you want to develop muscle tone and endurance," he says.

"Because the boat moves constantly, you have to brace

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