

News

The heat is on as I put every joint in my body on the rack

Gemma Thornton overcomes her nerves to try Bikram yoga

A NEW Bikram yoga studio has opened in Admirals Way offering Wharfers the chance to keep fit.

The aim of the 90-minute sessions is to work every muscle, joint, ligament and organ in the body in testing conditions.

Its classes, performed in a heated room, give participants a cardio workout as well, are run throughout the day, with fees starting from £15.

I headed down to the centre to check it out. The room is 45C, the prospect of a 90-minute workout (as well as being told not to eat up to three hours before the class) had me feeling light-headed.

However, assured that dizziness and sickness is normal, I entered the room and the heat hit me.

I ponder whether it's physically possible to work-out in these conditions. I'm surrounded by seminaked bodies scattered on yoga mats in a class of about 20.

There's a mixed crowd of men, women, young and old, and to my relief, beginners and pros are in the same class so I took comfort in some equally petrified faces.

Taking up my position at the back of the room, Conny Chitnis, director, who runs the studio with husband Jay, enters, headset in place.



Gemma Thornton hard at work

We begin with a warm-up - light stretches I'm told but I'm already out of breath, and before I can grab my water the sequence of 26 postures begins.

Instructor Conny guides us through every position and counts down from 10 when the hold is coming to an end.

Her encouraging words are the only thing that stops me from collapsing, but she does advise

beginners to take it slow and stop if they need to. I do.

While sipping some water, I glance in the mirrors and see the determination on people's faces. I'm spurred on.

Each posture is repeated twice and an hour into the 90 minute session I'm dripping with sweat.

I haven't run, jumped, skipped or hopped, and all movements have been slow yet I feel worn out - but also strangely energised.

We near the end of the class finishing with breathing exercises, which are done lying down.

Conny dims the lights and I'm left in a relaxed almost euphoric state, glad to have done the work-out but even more thankful for the rest.

People get up in their own time, hang up their mats and head to the changing rooms. Downing the last of my two-litre bottle of water, I feel exhausted but calm.

The thought of going to this class had made me anxious but now the only thing I'm worrying about is squeezing in the time to go back.

Nice atmosphere, lovely company and above all a work-out that I'm sure I will reap rewards from.

Call 020 7537 2002 or go to bikramyogalondon.com