



BEYOND THE GYM: POLE DANCING

Our health and fitness editor turns to the pole for a workout.

Posted by Dana Robinson in HEALTH

1 122

Determined not to let this life pass me by without doing just a few things that scare me, I gently placed my fear of looking like a fool in public aside and tried my luck at a **pole dancing** class. I've heard it's a great way of getting fit, and if embarrassment is inevitable then I might as well get a good workout in the process.)

My venue of choice was the **Luscious Maven Pole Dance Studio** in North Hollywood, Calif. It resembled any other female-friendly workout facility: a comfortable sitting area, a polite receptionist...and a retail corner of the lobby dedicated to what my grandmother would call Hooker Shoes. These strip-club-approved platform heels are not for the faint of heart nor the weak of ankle. I decided not to put my life in jeopardy by rocking a pair of stilettos my first time out, so my bare feet would have to do for now.

After a brief warm-up session of stretches and **sexy** snake-like floor work (which surprisingly requires a lot of upper body strength) it was time to hit the poles. I was happy to see that the 12 students in my Level 1 class ranged from tight and toned 20-somethings to curvy 30-somethings. Some came dressed for the occasion in their best boy-short panties and half shirts, while others (like me) chose standard-issue gym clothes. Experienced pole dancers and newbies were separated into groups, and I came face to face with 14 feet of polished steel.

[ALSO READ: Beyond the Gym: Cardio Barre is on the Move!]

The soft studio lighting, perfumed air, and sultry up-tempo beats that enveloped the room made it easier to get comfortable with the poles. Selenia Logan, our instructor, took us through a few basic poses, leg and hand placements, and the all-important sexy walk around the pole. "You're not walking in the grocery store, ladies," Logan reminded us. Try as I might, I couldn't get my "sexy" walk to stop resembling an awkward, somewhat robotic traipse around the maypole.

The goal of the day was to master a basic jump-twist-swing move ending in a graceful glide down the pole with a soft knee landing (which Logan performed like a Cirque du Soleil master artist). Attempt #1: I got stuck on the pole and couldn't quite make it to the bottom. Attempt #2: I let go of the pole too quickly and slam-landed on my knees. Attempt #12: I achieved a reasonable degree of fluidity and control and managed to complete the move (somewhat) correctly. The head nod of approval and encouraging, "That's it!" I received from Logan put me on Cloud 9.

Pole dancing might not find a permanent place in my exercise repertoire, among the yoga, boot camp, and Cardio Barre classes, but I arrived home that night wishing I had an in-house pole to practice and perfect the jump-twist-swing move. And the aching arms and shoulders I experienced the following day reminded me that I did, in fact, get a serious **workout**. The pole and I will meet again sometime in the near future (embarrassment be damned!). But next time, I'm bringing kneepads.

Have you ever taken a pole-dancing class? Tell us about it.

Dana Robinson is the Lead Producer and Contributor, Health/Fitness Channel for Loop21.com.

Photo Credit: Squidoo



RECENT GALLERIES



IN THE LOOP YET?

Sign up for our newsletter and stay in the Loop!

Sign me up for the Loop21 newsletter!

SIGN UP NOW!

