

## The Fitness of

## POLE DANCING

By Lady Marmalade



If you've ever dreamed of working out in heels and fake eyelashes, pole dancing might just be the thing for you. But don't kid yourself, this is one hard core workout!

**My initiation** into the world of pole dancing came at the Flirty Girl Fitness studio, located at 462 Wellington Street West in Toronto. While not the only studio on the block (so to speak), sisters and co-owners Krista and Kerry Knee have taken the entire experience to the next level - upscale, that is.

Contrary to my hope (for the sake of the total experience, of course) that the studio would feature neon signage and a dingy crowd hanging around outside, the rather non-descript building was pretty bare - with just a tiny sign directing me inside.

The Zen-like studio is more spa than strip club, with an area to have your makeup done or touched up after a workout, a lingerie/swimsuit boutique and lovely leather couches to lounge on post-workout. I'm greeted by the cheery all-female staff, who look like they've spent their fair share of time perfecting their own moves on the pole. Interestingly, I'm told most of the instructors come from a gymnastics or dance background.

I'm registered for the two-hour "Introduction to Pole Dancing" class. After an introduction to the others in the class, we're told we'll be completing an entire routine to the Pussycat Doll's lively tune "Don't Cha". What doesn't get disclosed at this stage, is that we'll be performing this routine in front of the Coyote Ugly class at the end of the afternoon.

**What to wear:**

Be sure to wear something comfortable. Lululemon seems to be the apparel of choice. Long pants are recommended for first-timers - to avoid that unfortunate condition called "pole-burn".

**What to bring:**

The usual culprits - bottle of water, towel, change of clothes. Doing this with a group of girlfriends is a blast - ask about Flirty Girl's private Bachelorette and Girl's Night Out parties.

**What not to bring:**

Your boyfriend. This joint is strictly reserved for the ladies.

The routine starts out simply enough. A few hip swirls, pouty lips and caressing the brass pole (of which there are 12 in the studio). No problem. Quickly, however, my heart rate starts to go up and beads of sweat are dripping off my forehead. Fifteen minutes in and I'm already working at this!

Then we get to the spins. While our instructor manages to look completely composed and controlled as she gracefully hurtles herself around the pole, I seem to be having a few challenges. This is a lot tougher than it looks - no wonder those girls get paid so well. After about ten minutes I seem to have the hang of it though - and the instructor says I'm a natural.

By the end of the two hour class, I'm exhausted - and bruised! I sheepishly admit that the workout was just that - a workout. I'm convinced. Pole dancing is both a fun and pretty hardcore workout. If you'd like to try it, here are a few things you should know before getting started:

**Classes:**

Flirty Girl offers a vast array of classes, including pole dancing, striptease, lap dancing, Coyote Ugly, belly dancing, cabaret and burlesque. A great way to start is to sign up for one of the two-hour introduction workshops offered most weekends.

**Cost:**

A two-hour workshop will run you about \$40. Six week sessions range from \$150-\$185. There are drop-in rates available as well.

**Try it at:**

Flirty Girl Fitness  
462 Wellington Street West, Toronto  
www.flirtygirlfitness.com  
Tel. 416-920-1400