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LIFE *style*

HALLE Berry is reported to be obsessed with 'nude yoga', the latest fitness craze taking the US by a storm. A-list Hollywood celebrities, like Jennifer Lopez, Naomi Watts and Gwyneth Paltrow are queuing outside yoga studios associated with this yoga form, eager to strip all in their quest for soul searching and getting rid of body consciousness, before they strip for their next make-or-break role.

While, purists can scoff all they like and even shoot it down for being another gimmick, but the fact remains there is a fitness audience that is not so satisfied by just losing a few pounds. They want something new and exciting. While there exist many fitness genres, one craves to combine benefits from various forms and roll it into a capsule form. Like in the B side of town, it's the Afro-Brazilian beat that the young and hip are playing and staying fit to. Capoeira, a martial art form — a synthesis of Brazilian dance and self-defence — was first used by

by Deepti Jakhar

African slaves, but has lately been revived for its wholesome fitness benefits. Wholesome is the key word for fitness fanatics today — people are no longer happy with just a six pack. That's passé, they want a body that's fit inside out. They want a fitness program that is mentally, emotionally and in some cases, spiritually, gratifying.

Lifestyle gets talking to the top fitness experts in town to give you a lowdown of their top picks from other such 'cocktail workouts' that basically combine the benefits of two or more workout genres and aim to give you a wholesome package that's refreshing and heady. Forget running on the treadmill and boring weight-training sessions, or even traditional yoga, and get hooked to these fun, sometimes mad, forms.

OLD-SCHOOL YOGA + NEW-AGE CIRCUIT TRAINING

WHAT IT IS: Yoga guru Bharat Thakur has devised this program keeping the beginners in mind, demystifying yoga down to the very basics and combining it with new age circuit training.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT: According to him, any good workout should have a combination of warm up (to loosen), contractions (to strengthen), stretching (to release stiffness), and breathing (to rejuvenate and stabilise the body after a workout). If you can break down your workout into these four parts and do justice to each of them, you will have given yourself the most complete mind-body workout that will keep you fit and happy all your life.

CREDENTIALS & BENEFITS: The warm-up includes simple neck rotations, foot and fist rotations, swinging of arms up and down and sideways. Some side stretches and forward and supported backward bends. In the contractions section, be sure to include push-ups and pull-ups for the arms and chest, squats and lunges for the legs, crunches (dynamic postures) and holds (static postures for the

abs). Finish off with a few back strengthening exercises by lying down on your stomach and lifting your legs alternatively. All exercises should be done in two to three sets, from six to twenty times, depending on your fitness level and age. The best way to determine how much is right for you is to make sure you do at least the last 2 or 3 repetitions using your will power.

After this comes the stretching section where you can do a few yoga stretches. Finally, you can do *Kapalbhati Kriya* (Fast breathing technique) and *Anulom Vilom Pranayama* (alternate nostril breathing) to bring your body and mind into total balance and rest.

This program is suitable for anyone without any major health problems like high BP, slip disc, and heart problems. The benefits of this program are that it will work on all aspects of your fitness and make you fit internally as well as externally. The idea is to build a strong foundation of flexibility and strength from where you can decide what kind of body you want for yourself.

COCKTAIL WORKOUTS

Fitness experts are stirring up heady concoctions using different work-out genres to nourish your body, mind and soul like never before. Forget weight loss and six pack abs, pick a plan that promises much more



GET MOVING WITH THE MASALA BHANGRA WORKOUT



WHAT IT IS: Bollywood dancing has existed as a form of fitness program for quite a while now, but the latest craze to hit home is Masala Bhangra workout. It basically uses the fun, free-style bhangra dancing that's done non-stop as a form of rigorous cardiovascular exercise and aims at burning 500-600 calories in all of 60 minutes!

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT: UK based fitness expert Sarina Jain has devised and mastered this fun Punjabi style workout and is now responsible for introducing it in Fitness First gyms all over town. Where it's different from Bollywood style dancing is the breaking away from any strict rules or regimen. It works on the principle of losing

all inhibitions and freeing the mind. It's when you dance like that, that you not only lose excess physical baggage but emotional baggage too. While Bollywood style dancing makes you aware of which star you're copying and return be de-motivating for some people, masala bhangra workout aims at making you feel like the star.

CREDENTIALS & BENEFITS: The program was recently coined as "the Oscar Winning Workout" by The NY Daily News, in the wake of the whole *Shumdog* euphoria. The basic premise of this workout form is fun. Yes, fitness follows fun, rather than the other way around. It's crazy, free and full of mad energy. What's more is that it's

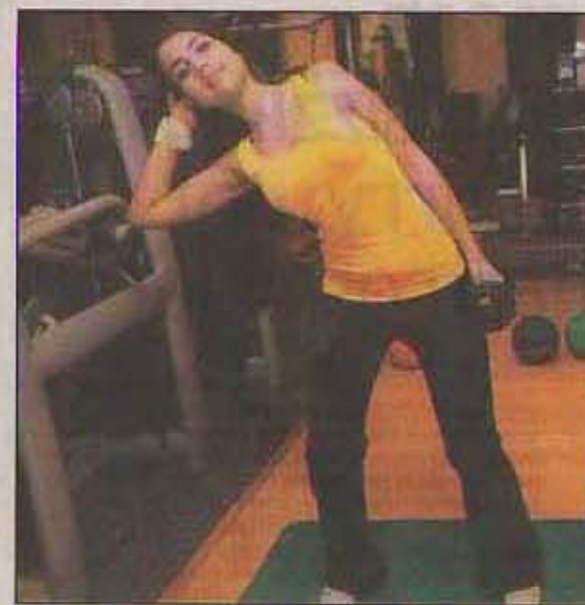
truly universal in appeal. It's designed for people of all ages and fitness levels who love to stay physically active through fun and free moves. Specifically, it introduces high energy Bhangra dance movements in an easy-to-follow fitness format. It can also be done in the comfort zone of your home or at a friend's house. The idea is to enjoy your self and do it non-stop. It's these two features that make it a complete cardio plan which is rigorous without seeming so. However, people with blood pressure and heart conditions should not attempt without supervision. Also, make sure you have taken a fruit or an energy drink before going into this session.

JAZZ + TRADITIONAL AEROBIC EXERCISE = JAZZERCISE

WHAT IT IS: In laymen terms Jazzercise is literally Jazz meets Exercise (aerobic). Fitness expert Kiran Sawhney is a big promoter and follower of Jazzercise that's a combination of jazz dance and aerobic exercises. It's a feel-good workout that targets mostly the 35-50 age group. Though, it can be undertaken by people of any age group and is also a huge hit with kids.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT: Jazzercise is usually a 60-minute group fitness class combining cardio sessions, strengthening, and stretching aiming at an all-encompassing, total body workout. It has taken moves from hip-hop, yoga, pilates, jazz dance, kick-boxing, and resistance training and bundled their benefits into a one hour fitness plan that shows great results.

CREDENTIALS & BENEFITS: Focussing more on cardiovascular exercises, Jazzercise aims at getting the body in a sort of internal rhythm that makes one feel light, artistic and young. It increases the metabolism surely and slowly, continuing to pay off even after the session is over. Every Jazzercise class combines cardio moves to enhance endurance and burn mega calories (It burns anywhere between 300-500 calories per session), strength training to define muscles and strengthening your core, and stretching exercises to increase flexibility. It also includes using props to take you to the next level. Through the use of hand-held weights, resistance tubes and balls, one gets a total body workout while blasting fat and having fun! The moves are simple enough for everyone to follow, so one doesn't have to worry about any dance experience or missing a step or two. In fact, it's a great way to let go of your inhibitions and come out feeling relaxed,



rejuvenated, energised, and confident — all in one. Thus, also a great fitness options for young kids, who don't feel like they are doing this for their body but see it more as a fun activity. It's, however, not advisable for people with chronic heart conditions or blood pressure problems. Also, people with back and knee pain should first consult the instructor.

TAEKWONDO + KICK BOXING = TAEKWONAQUA

WHAT IT IS: Taking a leaf from aqua aerobics, Taekwonaqua aims at combining the benefits of kick boxing, basic martial arts and aqua aerobics; making it a rather strenuous work out plan, specially designed keeping high-maintenance fitness freaks in mind. This one is not for the faint-hearted or the weak-kneed at all and one needs to have a certain level of fitness as prerequisite before attempting this strong cocktail.

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT: Sure, it's modelled after aqua aerobics, but this fitness plan uses the features and benefits of kick boxing and taekwondo as well, which makes it different, while taking it to another level of intensity. So, what you can expect is an highly energetic and invigorating class that combines aqua aerobics, strength training, kick boxing and martial arts for a complete, overall body workout. It's usually done wearing Hydro Leg-Kickers & Hydro Arm-Boxers for additional support and one also has to be in a leotard or swim suit before getting into the water. This total body workout provides mental and physical conditioning without physical contact, based on the 2,000-year-old Korean martial art system. This means you hit out at an intangible opponent and in the process work through the resistance posed by the water, making it a mind and body work out. This one sure is a fun high-impact way to kick up your fitness levels instantly by a notch or two and add variety to your fitness program. No wonder then, that it is usually alternated and not attempted on a daily basis. Taekwonaqua also adds dynamic balance to your body, by virtue of challenging your every movement in the water.

CREDENTIALS & BENEFITS: This extraordinary fitness regime will challenge your cardiovascular endurance levels and take them to a whole new level while placing extra emphasis on muscular as well as mental conditioning. The ultimate challenge, this plan alternates between high intensity work with brief recovery periods. It's not advisable for beginners or those suffering from sore muscles or tender tissue condition of any kind.

