

OUT & ABOUT

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FUN EXERCISE



The Vizual Group

Instructor Jana Edele (center, in black) will adapt the difficulty of the class to the group's fitness level.

Burlesque Body Sculpt

THE CLASS It started off with some intense stretching to music (Lady Gaga and Justin Timberlake the night I went). Instructor Jana Edele, who's also artistic director of the Velvet Kittens burlesque dance troupe, made stretching look elegant and effortless — me, not so much. Several minutes of crunches, with killer bicycle-crunch and push-up combos at the end, were followed by leg-toning exercises. Then came the fun part, learning some sassy dance moves.

THE FUN FACTOR You get to shake and shimmy in a non-judgmental environment — everyone's working way too hard to think much about how other people are doing. Edele asked us each to pair up with a classmate, our "shimmy sister," whom we danced toward in one part of the number "Land of 1,000 Dances." The collaboration lightened the mood and built camaraderie.

WHO CAN DO THIS Edele adapts the difficulty of the class to the overall fitness level of the crowd (you should probably take it easy at first on the stretching if you haven't been doing something like dancing or yoga, or you'll be sore).

MY TAKE I'm such a bad dancer that the choreographer for my high school musical always hid me in the back row. But I enjoy *trying* to dance, so it was fun to learn some simple combinations. I was surprised by how much I liked the class. That's in spite of the fact that after I demonstrated what I had learned in class to my husband, he compared my method of running onstage at the beginning of the number to "Forrest Gump, but sexier."

GOOD TO KNOW Everyone dances barefoot, and you should wear workout attire, similar to what you'd don for dance or yoga class. I'd recommend bringing some water, because you will work up a sweat.

Ann Pinson

► The Verandah Club, the Hilton Anatole's fitness club, is at 2201 Stemmons Freeway (on the side that faces Wycliff). Classes are Mondays from 7 to 8 p.m. and Saturdays 1 to 2 p.m. \$15 for nonmembers, \$10 for members. Call the front desk for parking info: 214-761-7878. www.verandahclub.com. Find more info on Jana Edele and the Velvet Kittens at www.thevelvetkittens.com.

Bollywood Dance Workout

THE CLASS If you're looking for hip-swinging, bodacious fun while working up a sweat, look no further than Kavitha Victor's BollyArobix classes. The aerobic dance workout sets moves from Bollywood (intricately choreographed song-and-dance sequences are signature elements of films produced by the Mumbai-based film industry in India) to upbeat Hindi music (no, you don't need to know Hindi to keep pace). "The music is fresh and peppy," says Victor, who runs the Dallas-Fort Worth area franchise of Singapore-based BollyBeatz, the dance company behind the BollyArobix program. That should be comforting for those unfamiliar with Bollywood dance, which typically is a masala of traditional Indian dance (classical as well as folk, such as the lively *bhangra* from India's Punjab region), hip-hop (India and hip-hop? Yes, you read right), jazz and other styles.

THE INSTRUCTOR Victor, who grew up in Tiruchirapalli (a.k.a. Trichy) in southern India, came to the United States about 11 years ago and has lived on the East and West coasts. Now a Frisco resident and the mother of a toddler, the former

software programmer views BollyArobix as a way to balance motherhood and her passion for dance.

THE FUN FACTOR Given the pulsating rhythms, shifting tempos and Victor's friendly approach, even the most self-conscious person could probably hoof it without feeling intimidated, and no one should be bored (take that, you lousy boring elliptical machine).

WHO CAN DO THIS Geared toward ages 13 and older, BollyArobix doesn't require prior experience (there are no levels to work through); just bring an open mind and be willing to have fun. Victor offers 10-week sessions at locations in Plano, Lewisville and Coppell. Drop-in trial classes are available if you want to check out a class before committing to something longer-term.

MY TAKE Having grown up in India, I'm quite familiar with Bollywood's cultural import (song-and-dance sequences are so intrinsic to Bollywood movies that choreography and filmmaking are attached at the hip). And though I'm not formally trained in dance, I have participated in folk-dance perfor-

mances at community events in India. So I didn't expect to be surprised at the class. Yet, there I was, surprised: I looked at the dance moves in a fresh light, and the experience was uplifting. I remembered forgotten rhythms, felt my body move instinctively to the music, and I was perspiring — a lot.

GOOD TO KNOW Bring a bottle of water. Wear workout apparel or dance wear and dance shoes or tennis shoes. Note to self: Next time, throw on some face glitter and glam it up Bollywood-style.

Bindu Varghese

► Kavitha Victor teaches 10-week sessions in Plano, Lewisville and Coppell (session start times vary). \$150 per 10-week session featuring weekly classes; drop-in trial classes are \$20. 972-849-5402. www.bollybeatz.com/classscheduleusa.htm.

Plano: Sundays from 11 a.m. to noon, Tuesdays 8 to 9 p.m. at the Hathaway Academy of Ballet, 2865 McDermott. Next sessions begin Feb. 21 and Feb. 23.

Lewisville: Mondays from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Dancers Workshop, 190 W. Main St. Next session begins Feb. 22.

Coppell: Sundays 4 to 5 p.m. at Ballet Academy of Texas, 145 Fitness Court. Next session begins Feb. 21.



MATT NAGER/ Special Contributor

Kavitha Victor (front) teaches a Bollywood dance class at the Hathaway Academy of Ballet in Plano.