



It's fun *and* you lose weight
You must be kidding

Exercising to Bollywood numbers can result in a total workout, feels Nidhi Banthia. Dance studios are becoming quite popular.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU heard of something enjoyable that was actually good for you? Murphy's Law thingys. So when along comes something like Bollybeatz, you have to do a double weight – that's almost too good to be true.

At the BollyBeatz dance and fitness studio, some 20-odd adults are having a whale of a time and it doesn't sound like a gruelling hour on the treadmill, does it? But ask the exhausted class afterwards and they feel not only much fitter but also happier and relieved of stress.

With its popularity growing, Nidhi Banthia Mehta's Bollybeatz dance and fitness studio has now moved to Katong and Simei. Nidhi also holds special classes at True Yoga. She and her team take on assignments for weddings and music videos as well. Nidhi attributes the success of Bollybeatz to her passion and management background.

A finance major from the S.P.Jain Institute of Management, Mumbai, Nidhi started her career in 1998. Her job took her all over the world and exposed her to new ideas and events. But after she got married, Alop moved to the US. Given the tough economy at that point, getting a job was no walk in the park, what she felt passionately about – and danced all the way to the bank. She opened her first dance studio, Stepz which, in just four years, became a brand name with 12 branches and 300 students in the city. When the company in 2005, it had grown 200 per cent. When the couple decided to move to India in 2006, which she has now been introduced to Singapore as well. The dance classes involve high impact moves to catchy songs and are taught over a period of two to three months. Mehta keeps a few steps of her own. The final mosaic is her own. When does inspiration strike? Anytime, anywhere, she laughs. "Even in the gym."

Nidhi has been dancing ever since she was a child. Growing up in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and learning different dance forms like the various classical dances as well as ghoomar, dandiya and bhangra. She keeps an eye out for major Bollywood hits. Her dance style is a fusion of jazz, hip-hop and Bollywood. "My dance is intuitive as I have not been trained professionally save for the two years in Bombay with Davar." Mehta concedes. "He was a huge influence on me. I learnt so many new techniques... how to describe movements etc."

BollyBeatz is not a dance performance company. "The whole idea," says Nidhi, "is to use it as a venue to release their everyday stress, increase their self-confidence and have fun at the same time. A lot of people come to our classes as a venue of fitness." At the end of ten sessions students of each class host a mini-party for their family. Her students comprise of all age groups. Workout classes have students in their 20s to 40s. Does she work out? "Nope," comes the very categorical reply. "I find the gym really, really boring."