

## Health & Beauty

Edited by Natasha Hong

Shopping



**Surf's up** Surfset Singapore's founder Melissa Goh (below) demonstrates some techniques on the RipSurfer X.



## Hang ten

**Natasha Hong** tries her hand (and balance) at dry land surfing at Surfset Fitness's new studio

**S**urfing in Singapore? Yes, it's possible – though not necessarily on the waves off the East Coast's sheltered shores (which, at best, can perhaps whoosh you slightly towards the sand), but a little further inland in Joo Chiat at Asia's first Surfset Fitness studio.

First launched in Boston and New York in late 2011 by former professional hockey player Mike Hartwick – who then took the Surfset training programme on the road around the US and can now boast over 140 studios around the world – Surfset Fitness specialises in dry land surfing, a workout routine developed to mimic the physical benefits and body conditioning offered by wave riding. Now it's here in Singapore courtesy of local franchise owner Melissa Goh, who chanced upon the exercise while searching for a unique concept to fill her cosy shophouse attic space.

Classes taught here centre on the use of a RipSurferX contraction – developed by Hartwick – which is shaped like a shorter surfboard with a base that elevates it off the ground to allow the board to sink and rise laterally, just like what your board tends to do when you're out at sea. There are ten RipSurfer X boards at Goh's studio, ensuring smaller classes.

Once you're on (the) board, it's harder than it looks to stay on – particularly when you're trying to execute a plank pose, standing kick or even just a surf-specific pop-up (basically, getting to a standing position on the board). Keeping the board from wobbling too much is definitely a lot of work

for your core muscles. You're also conditioned to avoid locking your knees and keep your movements fluid – anything less than perfect form and the board will threaten to throw you off. Fortunately, if you do ever fall off, you won't find yourself soaking wet – and of course, there's zero threat of a shark attack.

Surfset Singapore offers three classes for different fitness levels,

starting with a Balance class we tried that implements yoga-like flexibility and core strength moves on the RipSurfer X boards. It sounds serene, but trust us when we say you'll still get a good workout over 45 minutes – expect to do moves like plank push ups, yoga boats and surfer carving

(pumping arms like you're paddling out to sea) with Pilates-trained Goh in the lead. Just three sets into the warm up, we found ourselves wiping sweat off our eyelids even in an air-conditioned studio. The day after, we could really feel the work done on our

abs, sides and arms.

A more intermediate Core class throws in Pilates poses and body weight exercises at a faster pace. There's also the intense Sweat sessions, which incorporates high intensity interval training aimed at improving participants' overall fitness and fat loss. Whichever level you pick up Surfset at, the exercise guarantees that the multi-plane and core and stabiliser muscle-focussed moves done on the unstable board will help you develop a body that's lean and athletic – just like a surfer (but minus the tan).

As an added perk, Goh says the surf-specific moves and balance picked up at Surfset can go towards your surfing seaworthiness, should you decide to go chase waves overseas. To a seasoned wave-riding enthusiast, Surfset and its exercises might be a far cry from the exhilaration of eyeing and riding a riptide. But for Singapore and our tepid shores, it'll do just fine for now.

**Surfset Fitness** Level 3, 454B Joo Chiat Rd (9751 0793, [www.surfset.sg](http://www.surfset.sg)). Take a taxi. See website for class schedule. From \$31 per class for a pack of ten classes; \$35 for a single class.

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