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Balancing act

Get ready to fire up those stability muscles with Surfset, a workout inspired by surfing. **BY ESTELLE LOW**



Estelle nails the surfing stance after many tries – and a whole lot of core power.



Instructor Gillian Tay demonstrates paddling.



Estelle was so pleased when she conquered the Tree pose on the board.



Holding the plank in good form is no mean feat!

If you're looking to perfect your wave-riding skills or pick up the sport, think of Surfset as the primer. Created by American surfer Mike Hartwik to maintain his form and physique when he wasn't out at sea, this new workout will hone your balancing skills as you crank out moves on a surfboard mounted on three rubber balls. This makes it tilt precariously with every move or slight shift in weight.

Conducted in a cosy air-conditioned studio along Joo Chiat Road, the 45-minute class will take you through a series of moves from surfing, yoga and pilates. Granted, you'd stay drier than if you were in the open water, but the workout is anything but easy. Strong abdominal, back and gluteal muscles – plus the stability of a mountain – will certainly help.

To put things in perspective, I barely survived the entry-level Balance class despite doing yoga twice or thrice a week. If you're game for a choppy ride and serious body perks, here's what to expect.



Imagine fending off ferocious sharks by kicking at them.

FUN FACTOR 6/10

Variety seekers will love the range of exercises and fast pace. The moves are organised into four categories: Proprioception (warm-ups that raise body awareness on the board), Core Strength, Body Control as well as Cool Down. No more than a minute is spent on each one.

True to its name, Surfset takes you through classic surfing moves, such as paddling, double knee paddle and pop-up (when a surfer goes from lying belly down to standing on the board). Surfer noobs, rejoice in the glory of the moment: You're one step closer to riding the rolling waves through the salty sea breeze... at your next vacay.

FIT FACTOR 9/10

Even if you're the type to hardly break a sweat, this class will have you perspiring in no time – and your core aching the next day. To stay rooted to the quaking board, you'll need to double the effort from just doing the warm-up exercises like sit-ups and hip rolls. Remember to conserve some energy to conquer tougher, core-centric moves like kayak twist (doing paddling strokes with arms while seated upright

with legs bent and feet off ground), lateral crunches and planks.

To stay perched on the board, more muscles are activated, explains Gillian Tay, freelance instructor at Surfset. No surprises as to how she stays so lean and toned.

FEAR FACTOR 4/10

Don't worry too much about falling. The surfboards are custom-made with anti-slip treads to improve grip. Black foam mats are also laid out beside every board to cushion your fall if you topple over.

WHERE TO LEARN

Classes are held at Surfset Singapore, 454B Joo Chiat Road, Level 3, tel: 9751-0793. A 45-minute class costs \$35. For more details, visit www.surfset.sg.

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