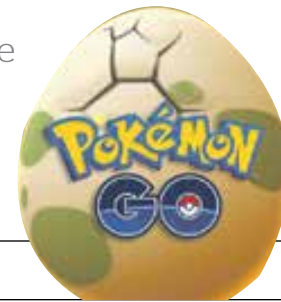




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THE GREAT S'PORE WORKOUT

A SLEW OF NEW AND NICHE WORKOUT REGIMES IS GETTING FITNESS FANATICS UP AND GOING

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Move over, pole-dancing and Zumba. An increasing number of unusual workouts and fitness classes is popping up on the local fitness scene, alongside the explosion of small-scale fitness studios in both the city centre and suburbs. From boutique yoga studios to niche gyms offering specialised workouts such as indoor cycling, interval training and, yes, indoor surfing, the current fitness trend seems to be veering towards more unusual workouts conducted in intimate group settings.

Such workouts have even found a way to incorporate unconventional elements. Take SaberFit. Set up in July by two Star Wars fans, Ryan Ho and Natasha Toh, it combines — you guessed it — wielding light sabers with high-energy exercises that promise to burn up to 600 calories an hour. And trampoline park Bounce will be introducing BounceFit classes from Aug 30 where, yes, you jump on a trampoline while performing high-intensity, low-impact cardio workouts.

“There has been an increase in interest towards fitness and wellness,

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(Clockwise from left) Hanging loose is harder than it looks; You don't need to have the Force to qualify for these classes by SaberFit; Upside Motion uses silk hammocks for users to stretch and strengthen their bodies to help relieve tension in the spine and joints; Boot camp fitness regimes have been popular the past few years.



The giant attraction is the first of four major theme parks to open in the emirates this year. PHOTO: THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

UPSIZED FUN

Dubai opens world's largest theme park

The theme park hopes to keep Dubai residents entertained instead of fleeing during the summer months

DUBAI – The world's largest indoor theme park is set to open in Dubai this month to lure back some of the tourists and residents who often flee abroad during the scorching desert summer.

In a sandy suburb beyond Dubai's concrete jungle and pockets of artificially green spaces, IMG Worlds of Adventure's boxy exterior belies a 140,000-sqm (1.5 million-sqft)

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THE GREAT S'PORE WORKOUT

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evident from the number of enquiries we receive on a daily basis ... there is (also) an increased interest for boutique fitness studios focusing on specialised fitness programmes,” said Beh Hwee Sze, founder of Upside Motion, a boutique studio offering aerial yoga and ballet-inspired barre workouts at its two locations at Orchard Shopping Centre and Armenian Street. The number of classes across both studios increased from 70 a week last year to 100 per week this year.

In line with other major urban centres such as New York, Hong Kong and London, the burgeoning demand for these new fitness trends is increasingly being met by independent fitness operators. “We think Singaporeans are always ready to dive into fitness trends! People here are adventurous and love trying new things to keep their workouts fresh,” concurred Yu Shuyi, co-founder of Surfset Singapore. She and her business partner, Melissa Goh, had brought in the surfset workout from the United States to their Joo Chiat studio two years ago, and have seen a steady increase in the number of members. They are looking to expand in the near future.

“We find that Singaporeans are quite savvy when it comes to wheth-



Give your workouts a new stretch with Surfset, a fitness programme inspired by surfing. PHOTO: SURFSET

er a new fitness trend is a compelling, long-term programme, or just a quick fad, so for a new fitness regime to have staying power, it has to be relevant and effective. We've had clients admitting they came for their first class just to get a taste of our new “fitness fad”, but were totally unprepared for the full-body workout they got, and were not expecting to see results in so few sessions,” elaborated Yu.

Class 95FM DJ Simone Heng is a regular at Surfset Singapore, attending a session once to twice a week despite the studio being a half-hour car ride away from her home. “I absolutely hate doing strength training, so I needed something to keep my workouts stimulating and fun. I also like small, private environments to work out in as I am probably the single most uncoordinated person I know and am easily distracted,” she said.

Singapore-born Australian Heng also observes that more Singaporeans are health conscious now compared with when she last lived here in 2005 to 2009, which could have led to the gradual diversification of fitness options here. “We are lucky to have such cool options in Singapore. My friends in Australia and Dubai all saw the Surfset Instagram posts I made and want a similar workout. I also think (fitness pass apps) such as Guavapass make exercising more varied and I am all behind anything that gets people to love working out and have fun.”

Where to go for the hottest and most unusual workouts that are taking the island by storm

Wall Rope Yoga

This new yoga practice utilises a wall rope system with ropes, bars and pelvic swings to create traction and help in opening up the body and exercising muscle groups that are harder to engage in other yoga practices.

Price: Currently available exclusively to Pure Yoga members, although wall yoga public workshops are available this weekend. Go to www.pure-yoga.com for more details.

Where: Pure Yoga outlets at #06-02 Asia Square Tower 2, 12 Marina View, Level 18, Ngee Ann City, Tower A, 391A Orchard Road

Surfset Singapore

Imagine all the workouts that you love – Pilates, yoga or HIIT (High Intensity Interval Training) – but done on top of a wobbly surfboard-type apparatus customised for the Surfset Fitness sessions. Inspired by the physical demands of surfing, the Surfset workout concept “is really great for sculpting your body into that surfer bod so many people admire and envy,” said Yu, co-founder of Surfset Singapore. Each 45-minute workout intensively engages the core muscles, thanks to the instability of the surfboard surface. “(It) is a great natural fit to the Singapore culture – refreshing, exciting, challenging and totally in tune with Singapore’s



Clubbing and exercising = Clubbercise at Virgin Active. PHOTO: VIRGIN ACTIVE

status as a sunny tropical island with lots of beaches,” enthused Yu, a surfing enthusiast herself.

Price: \$35 per session, a la carte.

Where: 454B Joo Chiat Road, third storey; www.surfset.sg

Xtend Barre

Inspired by and designed to help achieve the strength and poise of a ballerina, the Xtend Barre programme “is a vigorous, fast-paced workout that combines the body-sculpting benefits of dance with the core training properties of Pilates,” said Beh, founder of Upside Motion, which was one of the pioneers of the barre workout concept.

Price: \$40 per session, a la carte.

Where: Upside Motion studios, including 36 Armenian Street #02-03; and 321 Orchard Road, #04-05 Orchard Shopping Centre; www.upsidemotion.com

Pulse powered by Clubbercise

Conducted in the dark while holding glowsticks, this dance workout mimics a night out at Zouk, but minus the alcohol and heels. Perfect for those who are shy about being uncoordinated and lovers of 1990s and current pop hits.

Price: Virgin Active membership prices apply.

Where: At the Virgin Active Club at Level 6, Tower 2, One Raffles Place

Aerial

Combining yoga, aerial acrobatics and dance poses and techniques, this unique workout features the use of a silk hammock to help stretch and suspend your body to relieve stress on the spine and joints, as well as engage the core muscles.

Price: \$40 per session, a la carte.

Where: Upside Motion studios at 36 Armenian Street #02-03; and 321 Orchard Road, #04-05 Orchard Shopping Centre; www.upsidemotion.com

Outdoors Bootcamp

People looking to work up a sweat in the great outdoors instead of an air-conditioned space are flocking to outdoor bootcamps. Not only is each session different from the last, it is a fast-paced whole-body workout and comes with challenges – great for those with a competitive streak. “The uniqueness of the bootcamp depends on the personality of the instructor. I think my positivity is what keeps people coming back,” said Simon Pink, founder of Simon Pink Fitness. “I like to do

challenges within the bootcamp using props such as the battle ropes or kettle bells. I tend to mix it up quite a lot, but I think people like that.”

Price: \$100 per month for unlimited bootcamp sessions

Where: Simon Pink Fitness; bootcamp sessions are conducted at the Evans Road athletics track and Fort Canning throughout the week; www.simonpinkfitness.com

BounceFit

Set to launch next week on Aug 30, this new fitness class at trampoline park and activity centre Bounce is a 45-minute, low-impact cardio workout-on-a-trampoline that promises to burn more calories than running without impacting the joints; and stimulates the body’s detoxification process, too.

Price: \$24 per session, a la carte.

Where: Bounce Singapore, #09-01 Cathay Cineleisure Orchard, 8 Grange Road, #09-01; www.bounceinc.com.sg

Saberfit

You do not need to have the Force to qualify for these classes. SaberFit wants your workouts to be fun, and each 45-minute session combines saber striking techniques with a full-body workout with cardio, plyometrics, and core and abdominal exercises.

Price: \$25 per person per session for early birds

Where: The Meeting Point, opposite One North MRT and beside Timbre+; www.saber.fit