

Slim with us!

Our determined dieter turns to violence with MMA to shift those pounds

UFC is taking over the sporting world, gaining fan after fan with buzz cuts, naff tattoos and shameless masculinity. However, whatever you say about meath-eads, they're in good shape. I've never been a rough and tumble girl – more tea parties than tree climbing – and my fitness levels are poor. Almost elderly, if we're honest. Maybe a short, sharp, UFC-sized shock could help?

MMA (mixed martial arts) classes, run by the Original Fitness Co, follow the training regime of those mean cage fighters, but don't involve contact so, in theory, there's no danger of a bloody nose, bruised ribs or a black eye. You may, however, suffer from the inability to raise your arms above your shoulders for several days, cut a few knuckles and have an overwhelming urge to shout 'ground and pound!' every so often.

In a desperate bid for self-preservation, the first class was, quite frankly, blocked from my memory in order for me to attend the next session. I remember getting out of breath in the warm up, having to do the exercises twice because I was paired with a trainer and

learning the rush of hatred that comes with a shout of 'burpee!' It was a blur of sweat, mud, confusion and boxing gloves. Then the pain hit. Driving hurt. Shampooing was agony. Workmates got sick of the whinging.

Each MMA session is split into a warm-up (jogging, star jumps, knee raises, stretches and whatever the trainer fancies) and cool down with upper body, lower body, combo and core rounds. Push ups, burpees, punching, kicking, sprints, sit ups, planks, crunches, triceps dips, squats, crab walks, lateral jumps, explosive jumps, burpee press ups, ground and pound on rugby pads. I could go on. However, because each round is short you get plenty of recovery time, and instructor Zaid (a ju-jitsu champ) is encouraging, counting down the seconds until you can finish. Although 20 seconds in side plank can feel like a fortnight.

There's something pleasurable about being outside, doing press ups on the grass, before collapsing on the cool ground. Truthfully, one of the best things is the camaraderie of the group – eight strangers counting star jumps together, comparing aches and vowing to see each other next time. But has it helped in the weight loss mission? In addition to the twice-weekly session I've tried to do two laps of Safa Park and one Pilates



Total weight loss: -5.7kg
Total body fat percentage loss: -1.3 per cent
Total muscle mass increase: +1.7 per cent
Total waist measurement: -13cm
Overall BMI: -1.7

class per week, plus keeping up the healthy eating. There were a couple of picnic-related incidents but I managed to dodge the 1,400 calorie Pizza Hut sandwiches that were sent to the office – a small victory.

The first week I lost 2.4kg (cripes), 1.6kg the next and put on 0.3kg at the final weigh-in, but have gained a kilo of muscle, which will help in the long run. Losing 4kg in two weeks was a bit of a surprise and nutritionist Stephanie was a bit concerned, but I think my body just got a bit of a shock.

Next month I'm giving Health Factory a whirl and joining my colleagues who come to work with a little green cooler bag. And continuing MMA. Like a lamb to the slaughter...

MMA, Sun and Tue, 7.30pm, Safa Park, Dubai and Mon and Wed, 7.30pm, Zalamat Park, behind Hilton Hotel, Abu Dhabi, Dhs90 per session or Dhs300 for a month (eight sessions). Tel: (04) 3132081. www.originalfitnessco.com Stephanie Karl, Dubai London Clinic, Festival City, Dubai. Tel: (04) 3446663 nutritiondubailondonclinic@gmail.com



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