

“ All I could think of was: ‘This is really dangerous’. Fortunately, I didn’t crash”

RACHEL WEISZ ON THE SKATEBOARD TRAINING SHE UNDERTOOK FOR HER MOVIE THE BROTHERS BLOOM



# Sisters do it for themselves

London's ladies are taking on the most blokey of sports – but they're skipping the testosterone in all-girl classes

Women are muscling in on traditional blokey sports like boxing, BMX and skateboarding, as more female-only fitness classes spring up in London.

Parkour, for example, has long been the preserve of men. But girls make up about 20 per cent of the students in parkour

group Parkour Generations. Its women's beginners classes have attracted 20 girls a week in London since they began two years ago.

Boxing, too, has seen an upswing in its sisterly following. The female version of the sport will grace the Olympics for the first time in 2012, while the Amateur Boxing Association of England saw

entries double for this year's female championships. Boxing coach Naomi Gibson says: "Women-only classes are less intimidating and less competitive than mixed classes."

Here, management consultant Naomi Honey, 28, explains why she's hooked on parkour, while Gabrielle Nathan tries out two female-only classes.



OVER THE EDGE | Naomi Honey (far right) flips out at a parkour session in Vauxhall

## >> parkour

'It's like being six years old'

THE images are mostly of wall-jumping French men on death-defying rooftop chases or flips 'n' tricks teenage boys bounding around the IMAX periphery.

That's certainly not me. I am a young, professional London girl. But I love parkour.

Physically, it's tough. There are blistered hands from gripping concrete walls and more press-ups than you'd ever want to be subjected to.

But it's all for the blissful sense of achievement of balancing on the length of the railing or overcoming your terror of a six-foot drop.

For me, though, the hardest part is fear. Not of pain, but of damage and of being out of action. Some days, I just can't make myself do a jump or walk a rail that would be no problem were it three feet



off the ground. Balancing on a rail six-feet high turns me to jelly. Still, breaking those barriers is an amazing feeling.

It's great to train in a mixed group, but there are benefits to all-girl classes. For one, the camaraderie and support is strong, particularly for newcomers.

Classes are tailored to women too, building the strength and technique for movement. Where guys tend to progress more quickly in muscle and power, girls are better at balance and precision.

Two years in and I'm hooked. It's like being six again and having an excuse to swing on the scaffolding.

**parkourgenerations.com**

NAOMI HONEY

## >> skateboarding

Board-om buster

THE bottom of the half-pipe in Finsbury Park's skate park looks a long way from the top. Fortunately, Jenna Selby, of the all-girl skate team Rogue Skateboards, is on hand.

Trying to stay upright is taking every ounce of core strength I have.

I reluctantly let go of Jenna's arms to try tick-tacking: changing the board's direction by pivoting on the back wheels. I feel like I've won Olympic gold when I nail it the first time.

Spurred on by Jenna's



team, I then try "dropping-in" down a gentle slope. I screamed a bit. But skater boys beware: I'm working on my kickflip.

**rogueskateboards.co.uk**  
GABRIELLE NATHAN

## >> boxing

Packing a punch

WALKING into a Girls-In-Gloves training session, I meet a friendly group of 20 and 30-something office workers in search of a tough workout in a non-threatening space.

"Boxing is the perfect sport for women because it relieves stress, burns fat and boosts self-esteem," says founder and trainer Naomi Gibson.

After a warm-up, we pair up to punch our partners' pads.



Careful aim is a must, and completing each task takes a staggering amount of concentration and muscle power.

The thought of burning up to 600 calories keeps me going and the instructor's energy keeps me smiling.

Best of all, pair-work has introduced an element of camaraderie usually absent in gym classes.

**girls-in-gloves.com**  
GABRIELLE NATHAN

thelondonpromotion

# Win a Sony digital Camera with Drinkaware!



drinkaware.co.uk

To mark the launch of a £100m campaign to encourage young adults to evaluate their drinking habits, alcohol charity Drinkaware has teamed up with thelondonpaper in association with The Sun to offer five lucky readers a chance to win a top of the range Sony digital camera.

The campaign with the strapline, 'why let good times go bad?' is part of a national initiative to tackle binge drinking among 18-24-year-olds. Campaign tips include: start your night with a bite; take it slow,

drink water; keep an eye out for your mates, and make a good time great!

Ensure the best nights stay memorable with a Sony digital camera

### HOW TO ENTER

For your chance to win one of the Sony Digital Cameras, go to **www.thelondonpaper.com/competitions**

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drinkaware.co.uk



thelondonpaper.com

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS:** Open to UK residents aged 18 and over only, except employees and their immediate families of Drinkaware, their agents or anyone professionally connected to the promotion. No purchase required to enter. The winning entry will be drawn at random by an independent person from all correct entries received by the closing date. Only one entry per person. Bulk entries, third party or consumer group entries are not accepted. The Promoter is not liable for non- or late receipt of any entry due to operator or network error, or for any associated cost to entrants. Proof of sending is not accepted as proof of receipt. The winner will be notified in writing within 28 days of the closing date. The winner will be required to confirm acceptance of their prize over the phone or via email. Drinkaware reserves the right to re-draw in the case that the originally selected winner fails to claim their prize after a given period of time. The Promoter accepts no responsibility for technical issues that may result in non-delivery of winning notifications. There is no cash alternative. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, the Promoter reserves the right to replace entire prizes or prize components with prizes of equal or greater value. The consumer data is to be held only for as long as is required to complete the administration of this promotion. The winner's details can only be obtained by thelondonpaper and Drinkaware during the promotion. The Promoter's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. The promotion closes on Wednesday 16 September 2009. For further information about Drinkaware see www.drinkaware.co.uk. For full terms and conditions go to thelondonpaper.com/competitions