

# FITNESS Rx

YOUR ULTIMATE PRESCRIPTION FOR THE PERFECT BODY

National Bestseller

## SKINNY BITCH!

IS IT HIP TO BE A VEGAN?

IS SKINNY HEALTHY?

## HOLLYWOOD'S SHOCKING DIRTY DIET SECRETS

- CIGARETTES
- COCAINE
- CLENBUTEROL
- LAXATIVES
- DIURETICS
- ADDERALL
- GROWTH HORMONE

## WHY SHE'S NO "SKINNY BITCH"

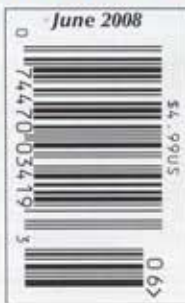
HOW KIM KARDASHIAN TRAINS TO KEEP HER

## CURVES!

## ORGASM

THE SCIENCE BEHIND IT ALL  
THE LATEST BREAKTHROUGHS

## THE ULTIMATE BUTT WORKOUT



## Temple Dance: Celebrating Your Sacred Hips, Sacred Belly and Sacred Thighs



Instead of "rock hard," think "voluptuous." Instead of "abs," think "belly." Instead of "belly dance," think "temple dance." Now you are ready to explore the sensual, sacred world of temple dancers. Their history can be traced back to the Mahari tradition of India from as early as 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, from which evolved the sacred Hindu temple dancers known as devadasis— records of which can be found as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. The devadasis were supposed to manifest in the material body the heavenly dance of "apsaras."

Temple dancers were known in the Near and Middle East by various names, including entu, quadistu, ishtaritu, hierodoulai, horae and har. They were considered priestesses who were afforded much love, respect and wealth and possessed a powerful spiritual focus when they performed dances and administered temple rituals and activities, including fertility rites. There is speculation that they may also have served as midwives. Regarded as embodiments of beauty, love and compassion, they were viewed as "sacred servants."

In 1893, a Syrian dancer nicknamed "Little Egypt" performed as part of a Middle Eastern dance troupe at the Egyptian Theater for the World's Fair in Chicago. She stole the show and popularized this form of dance, which came to be referred to as "belly dance," because of the undulations and shimmies that involved the stomach and hips. It

was assumed by Westerners that these dances were designed for men's titillation and entertainment, which, of course, was not their original purpose at all. In fact, records show that many of the dances were sacred rituals that women performed for each other— no men allowed!

As this dance form has recently become more popular (they now offer "belly" dance in many gyms), many teachers and practitioners are resurrecting the original purpose and value of the temple dance: celebrating the beauty, form and function of the female body as fertile, sensual and capable of bringing forth life. And what we are rediscovering is that these undulating movements promote health and can actually make the process of childbirth easier.

According to an article in the *Wall Street Journal* (August 4, 2007; "New Labor Moves: Belly Dancing Hits Delivery Room"), belly dance is now one of the alternative medical practices offered in some hospital labor rooms. Because some belly dance movements mirror those of labor, it has been found that "the pelvic gyrations help disperse the pain of contractions, orient the fetus and propel the baby into the world."

The article goes on to say that in early labor, when contractions are relatively mild, the expectant mother may find comfort in dancing slowly and hypnotically, using hip circles, crescents and figure eights. As labor gets more intense, the movements may progress to a rapid rocking of the pelvis

from side to side—a technique known as the shimmy—to help position the baby correctly and relax the pelvic floor. In the final phase of pushing, a full-body undulation known as the camel roll can help the baby move into the birth canal. So, along with your doctor and/or midwife, you might want to look into hiring a belly dance instructor to be there when it's time for you to give birth to that bundle of joy.

Las Vegas belly dance instructor/performance artist, Farasha, who teaches her "TempleDanze" class out of the luxurious Aquae Sulis Spa at the J.W. Marriott, claims another benefit of temple dance is that it promotes circulation of the synovial fluid throughout the major joints of your body. FYI, synovial fluid is the slippery fluid that fills most of the body's joints and cushions the ends of the bones, allowing them to glide over each other without friction. This clear, slightly viscous fluid is also important because it delivers nutrients and oxygen to the hyaline cartilage, which, unlike most body tissues, doesn't have its own blood supply. Any joint movement helps circulate the synovial fluid, which feeds the cartilage.

([http://www.yogajournal.com/for\\_teachers/2280](http://www.yogajournal.com/for_teachers/2280))

I have to tell you that as Farasha took us through various arm movements and lower and upper body isolations and

undulations, I realized I'm not nearly as flexible as I thought. I take yoga every week and can place my palms on the floor as I bend over to touch my toes, but these spinal movements were really hard! I felt like Arnold Schwarzenegger at a ballet lesson. I realized that movements that were once natural for the female body are now seemingly foreign to most of us, perhaps because we have been exercising more like men than like women. Guess it's time to get my synovial fluid moving in a new direction!

Farasha incorporates some yoga moves as well, and says that she believes yoga and belly dance come from similar, if not the same, tradition. (She also teaches Hawaiian "Hula" dancing and says it, too, is a form of temple dance.) I found that as in yoga, belly dance helps you attain more "mindfulness" of your body. When I was doing "snake arms," for example, I discovered that my right arm was more fluid than my left. As I watched in the mirror, I was able to allow the one arm to teach the other how to loosen up.

"It's all about the sensual—and yes, sexual—movements of the body," Farasha explains. "I want my students to feel free to explore and discover their inner goddess, the divine feminine that is in every woman. I tell my students to look at their bodies in the mirror, no matter what size and shape, touch their bellies and thighs, and love them just the way they are."

I also attended Jada Fire's Tribal Trance Dance class over at "It's Yoga" studio on the other side of town, and you best believe Ms. "Fire" lives up to her name. A belly dance instructor/performance artist who incorporates many forms of ethnic dance into her class, which she studied all over the world (one of her specialties is Polynesian Fire Dancing, which she studied in New Zealand), she keeps the class moving for a solid hour to the rhythms of live drummers. Very cool. I felt transported back in time to my own primal roots as I moved through the various sequences she created, which included belly dance and many of its related dance moves from all over the world. Jada encourages you to let your body freely express your mood and/or moods as they fluctuate and change with the rhythm of the drums. At times, I was able to let my body speak to me and speak for me, which was very self-affirming and celebratory.

"These are movements that are natural to us, many of which came from activities and experiences in the daily lives of ancient people," says Jada. "It is a way of connecting to your true spirit, to your body, forming social bonds and celebrating the human spirit. You cannot help but be uplifted when you dance this way."

With so many forms of temple dance classes springing up everywhere, many of which are a fusion of several disciplines including yoga, it is a great opportunity to explore your inner goddess. Go ahead and celebrate your feminine curves. And when you let your body move freely, you are telling it and yourself that you are beautiful, just the way you are. →



Photo by Aldez

# Yoga World

## **FARASHA'S "TEMPLEDANZE"**

Farasha says that when you come to her class, you enter the sacred temple of belly dance. There is definitely a spiritual component to every movement and an honoring of your body that promotes self-love, self-acceptance and body awareness. Farasha incorporates yoga and includes moon salutations and free-flowing, sensual movements...grounding and connecting to life and sustaining breath, which helps unite the mind, body and spirit. She takes you through the following sequence:

1. **Serpentine undulations**, which were used in ancient fertility rites as a way to stimulate blood flow to the womb, massage internal organs as well as aid women in childbirth.
2. **Shimmies and vibrations** reveal the sacred connection to a woman's body temple and the trembling of the earth.
3. **Priestess snake arms**, the fluid and elegant opposing arm movements, help to paint a beautiful picture framing the dancer while toning arms and shoulders.
4. **Sacred hips**...drawing hip circles and spirals and pelvic contractions while isolating the torso releases the powerful feminine forces within.
5. **Heart-opening chest circles** isolate the rib cage in a circular manner, helping to induce freedom of the spine.
6. **Floor work**...the dancer descends to the earth and performs pelvic accents and languid undulations with strength and grace.

For more information and a description of TempleDanze, go to [www.FarashaVegas.com](http://www.FarashaVegas.com).