

Budokon

Emma Morris tries this dynamic fusion of yoga and martial arts



'I loved the variety and fun involved in this class'

'You can't get bored as there are so many elements to Budokon, and it feels so good for you – invigorating for the body and calming for the mind.' **Emma Morris**

'You can burn 600–800 calories an hour'

'It's a fantastic all-round workout for body and mind. It improves flexibility, helps heal your body, builds on strength and power without the harshness of many martial arts, and brings you peace and calm.' **Ryan Carldon**



Asked if I wanted to try a workout with a name I'd never heard of, I Googled 'Budokon' find out more. The term comes from the Japanese words 'Bu', 'do' and 'kon', and means 'Spiritual way of the warrior'. Intriguing.

I read on and discovered that it was the Brainchild of American martial arts expert, Cameron Shayne, and draws on ancient and modern yogic and martial arts styles, plus meditation. It has picked up quite a following in the US, and Courtney Cox is apparently so advanced, she can break boards with her bare hands! Armed with this knowledge, and having done a little yoga but no martial arts, I was dying to try it.

I met my instructor, Ryan Carldon, director of Budokon UK, at the smart

Reebok Sports Club in London's Canary Wharf.

He came to Budokon through martial arts, and loves Budokon's more rounded, holistic workout. 'Martial arts can be very hard on the body, but Budokon builds strength, power, agility, flexibility and cardio. It also incorporates zen meditation to bring you peace and calm, and make you more aware of yourself,' he says.

The session began with five minutes of meditation, then moved on to yoga moves, including asanas such as downward dog, to stretch and warm up the body. I soon felt my body struggling to hold some poses, and knew this class would be physically demanding.

'After a few minutes, we moved on to martial arts moves. We began by

punching explosively from the waist, then moved on to standing- and ground-based kicks (where we kept our bodies just off the floor). It's all non-contact at this level. When Carldon demonstrated the more advanced moves, it looked very fluid and dance-like – a little like Brazilian martial art/dance Capoeira.

'As the class drew to a close, we wound down with some fun moves, pretending to be animals, such as gorillas, dolphins and lions, then spent the final five minutes with a calming meditation.

'I'd expected a demanding class, and it was – my hip flexors and shoulders ached the next day, and my whole body felt like it had had a fantastic workout. You couldn't get bored in this fun, varied session.'

NOW YOU TRY

CARLDON TEACHES TWICE A WEEK AT THE MEMBERS-ONLY REEBOK SPORTS CLUB LONDON, 020 7970 0900; WWW.REEBOKCLUB.CO.UK. FOR PRIVATE LESSONS, CONTACT HIM AT RYAN.CARLDON@BUDOKON.COM. FOR MORE INFORMATION ON BUDOKON, SEE WWW.BUDOKON.COM.