

Spa spy We can work it out

Let Keira Thorley put you through your paces with an online Beautiful Torture class

The treatment

A 45 minute Beautiful Torture Callanetics class, £14 for drop-in (£7 for your first class, £30 unlimited classes for a week, other packages available) with Keira Thorley, director of Walk the Talk Studios, Edinburgh. Their studio at 1 Abercromby Place has temporarily closed, and classes have been taken online. See www.bookwhen.com/walkthetalkstudios for the programme.

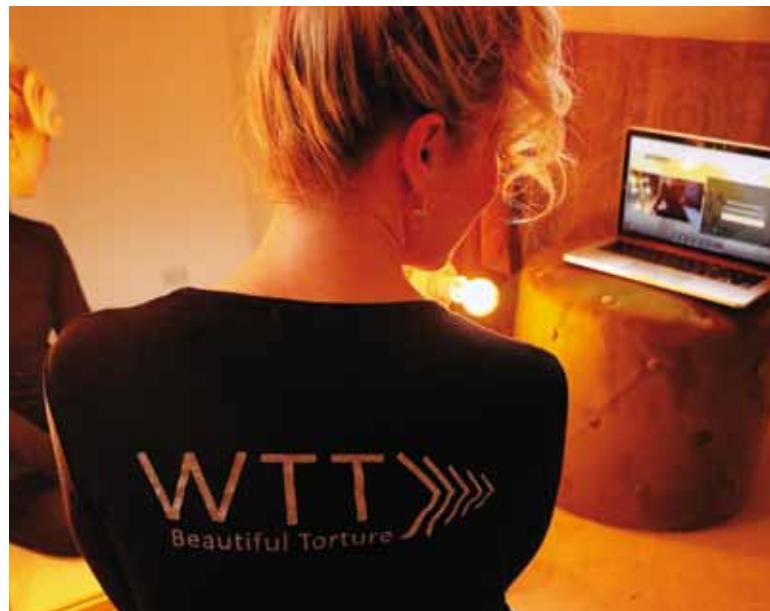
Why go?

To vary your indoor routine. Callanetics is an exercise programme that is designed to tone muscles, mainly using tiny repetitive movements. Keira sometimes chuckles a bit of HIIT and yoga in the mix too. She was prescient and launched these online classes way before we'd even heard of coronavirus.

Our spy says

If nothing else, lockdown has been an opportunity to get to grips with technology we haven't used before. For this one, we download video meeting app Whereby, then "knock on the door" at class time, so Keira can let us in.

I turn my laptop's camera off, since I'd scrambled to get ready and nobody wants to see me, looking like a mole rat. Everyone else has their camera on, and it's nice to see friendly faces. Also, leaving yours on means that Keira can help if you need any adjustments.



The others – a crew of all ages – seem to be regulars, and Keira greets all of her "ladies" and instructs us to turn off our microphones, so there's no peripheral sound. It's just me who's the anonymous interloper.

Keira is taking this class from a light room, with her black cat, Buddy, mooching about in the background.

We begin with stretching each arm up and then over to the side, gently bouncing, to engage the obliques. It's so effective that when we release and fold forward, I can feel the burn in my side, like gallstones, but beneficial.

Other moves include squatting, then lifting a leg to the front, squatting again and side kick, then a kick back. (You'll need a bit of room, if you don't want to boot the coffee table). There's a genius move involving sticking arms out to the sides, rotating them forward, like you're a misassembled Barbie, then pulsing, which targets bingo wings.

The hardest bit is probably the kneeling press up, with nose touching the floor, legs bent and feet crossed, which makes a minute stretch out into eternity. I'm glad that nobody can see me face planting onto the carpet.

Once we're sitting down, with legs to one side, as if riding side saddle, we lift the back one and gently pulse, then take it higher and repeat. Tough on the glutes, and I really notice that my left leg, henceforth known as the withered one, is much weaker than my right.

The results

It didn't feel too onerous, but I'm stiff for the next two days. I'm sure if you kept this class up, you'd eventually emerge from lockdown like a chiselled butterfly. Next time, I might even put my camera on. ■

Walk the Talk Studios (07415 206 975, www.walkthetalkstudios.com)

WHAT'S NEW

Distraction techniques

If you're tuning into Twitter and turning on the news every 10 minutes, invest in the new eBook version of *Distract Yourself: 101 Activities*, which is suitable for Kindle and other devices. It contains positive things to learn, including quizzes, anagrams, poems, riddles, jokes, word games, facts and other ideas to save you from rumination and boredom.

Sphere, eBook, 99p



Nuts about Boundless

Switch up your snack habit with Boundless. They offer nuts and seeds that are "activated" (ie the germination process has started) and are, thus, supposed to be easier to digest and richer in nutrients. However, it's the crispy texture and choice of flavours, from Cayenne & Rosemary to Tamari & Aleppo, that got us excited about this brand, who have been sending freebies to hospitals during the coronavirus crisis. Currently, they're offering gratis delivery on 12 packs, £12 before discount, and readers will also get 20 per cent off if they enter SCOT20 at the online checkout.

www.weareboundless.co.uk

Treat in store

We don't know about you, but we really fancy a post lockdown massage. Plan yours in advance with Glasgow's Ocho Spa, who also offer facials, tanning, waxing and other beauty treatments. While they're closed, they're offering a £50 voucher for £38, valid until 30 April 2022.

10 Speirs Wharf, www.ochospa.com

THREE OF THE BEST



Face the future

Psychologists say that dressing up can boost your mood, so we're doing up our faces courtesy of NARS. The Cool Crush collection includes this palette of a dozen shades, including matte neutrals, but also a beautiful mermaid sparkly blue, a dark teal and a rust that's flattering for blue eyes.

Cool Crush Eyeshadow Palette, £56, NARS at John Lewis, www.johnlewis.com

Scent of Sweden

We've skinny dipped right into this new perfume, whose name means mountain lake in Swedish. It's a comforting, evocative and fresh scent that they describe as "cold water and soapy skin with notes of clean cotton and deep musk". This concept is realised with the help of spring magnolia, waterlily and freesia, among other gorgeous things. Swimming costume optional. **Fjällsjö, £85, Björk & Berries, www.bjorkandberries.com**



Ethics girl

This ethical brand offers products made from sustainable, cruelty-free and vegan ingredients. They're also plastic-free. Thus, this two-in-one hand cream and body butter is served in a paper-wrapped block, preferably to be smoothed onto damp skin (though it works on dry too). Ingredients include cocoa butter, babassu and coconut oil, which makes it ideal as a post shave balm, and the billed essential oils provide a sensual and lingering fragrance.



Jasmine & Ylang Ylang Butter Block, £11, Ethique, www.ethique.co.uk