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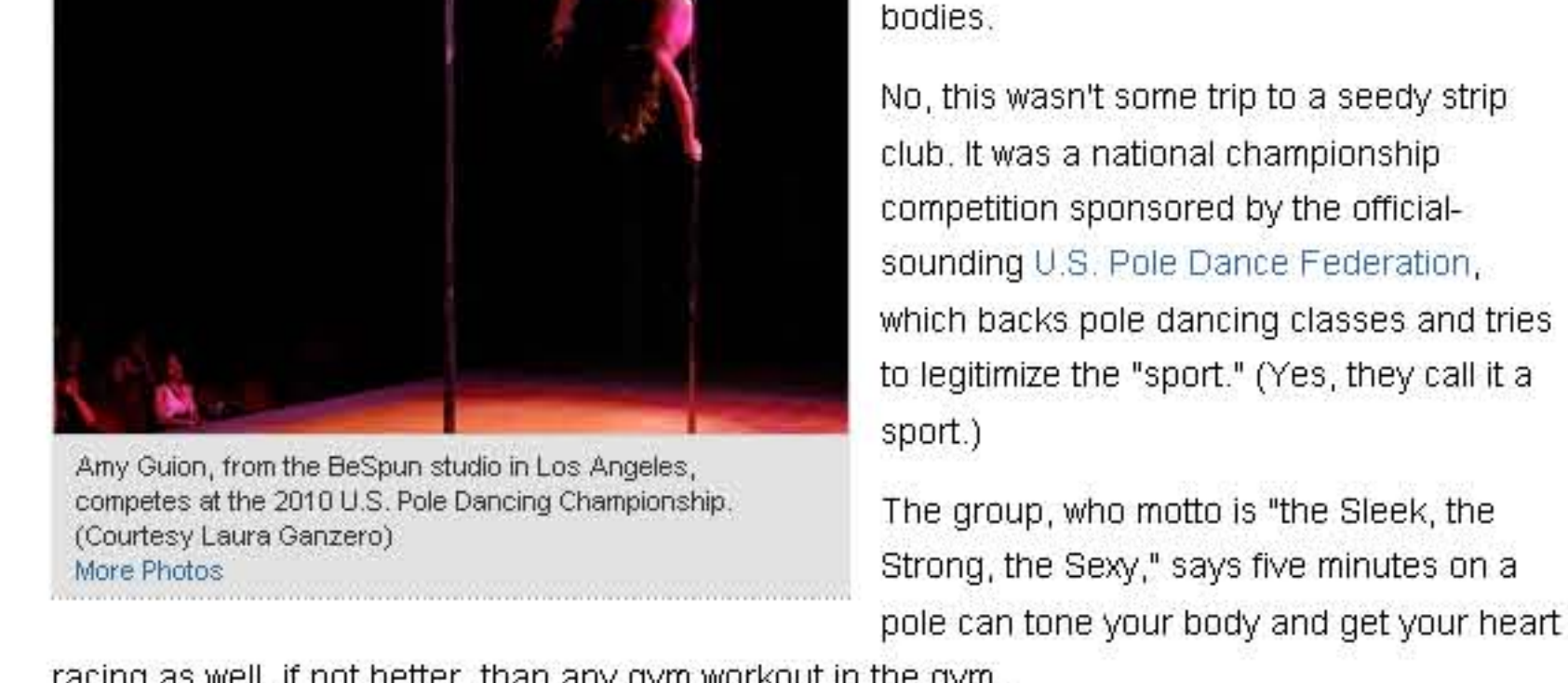
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Pole Dancing: It's Not Just for Strippers Anymore

Women are Finding Pole Dancing to be a Wonderful Workout

By **SCOTT MAYEROWITZ**
March 22, 2010



Amy Gulon, from the BeSpin studio in Los Angeles, competes at the 2010 U.S. Pole Dancing Championship. (Courtesy Laura Ganzer) [More Photos](#)

I've seen my fair share of Broadway shows and rock concerts, even the opera and philharmonic. But the other day I attended for the first time a pole dancing competition.

It was an afternoon watching a group of women spinning around brass poles and performing incredible tricks with their bodies.

No, this wasn't some trip to a seedy strip club. It was a national championship competition sponsored by the official-sounding U.S. Pole Dance Federation, which backs pole dancing classes and tries to legitimize the "sport." (Yes, they call it a sport.)

The group, who motto is "the Sleek, the Strong, the Sexy," says five minutes on a pole can tone your body and get your heart racing as well, if not better, than any gym workout in the gym.

"You really want to get up that pole. You're lifting a lot more than 5-pound dumbbells at the gym," explained Wendy Traskos, who co-founded the group along with Anna Grundstrom.

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Hundreds of people packed into a New York event space that normally hosts comedy shows, lectures, jazz, opera and other musical acts, it was a pretty large turnout for a midday event.

"Because it's pole dancing," Traskos said. "It's athletic women doing mind-blowing moves."

The moves would have impressed anybody on the dance floor, except these women were dancing 10 feet off the ground hanging onto a pole -- clad in 6-inch heels.

Mina Mortezaie, a 26-year-old marketing professional from Los Angeles who won the amateur division, hung upside down, supporting the weight of her body with just one leg wrapped around the pole. And the other leg? It was bent back behind her head.

It's sort of like Cirque du Soleil... just with less clothes.

"It can be addictive," Traskos said. Some people spend up to four hours a day training.

But unlike the strip clubs, she said, "We keep it PG rated."

Grundstrom added: "No nudity. No excessive booty shaking."

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We are true Athletes. It takes so much to train, practice, and compete. All the pole fitness dancers are amazing! Way to go GIRLS!!!
KaraREDROOM 4/22/10

I've been a spectator at two pole dancing competitions and the to watch the performances is just amazing!! At competition level, pole dancing is more than just a dance - the name doesn't do it justice. It is like Cirque du Soleil - beautiful, mesmerising and really creative. I have no doubt that the people competing in these competitions are as fit as athletes. As a guy, I must say that yes, the women competing are beautiful, but it's their performance and contortion that is amazing. So to any "\$1 bill" comments, come out of the past - the world has moved on from being so judgemental. Check out a few clips on youtube and if that doesn't convince you, perhaps the real sleaze is in the mirror. Hats off to these amazing performers!!
davek0384 3/24/10

I am an instructor of Fitness Pole Dancing, and yes I consider this a sport, but I disagree with those who say it is not for everybody, yes not everybody will excel in competition in this sport but so it is for hockey, football, ballet and many more, but everybody can try it, if you have a good instructor she will teach you the basics first and help you increase your strenght so eventually you are avle to carry your own body weight, it dosent matter if you are short, over weight, tall, uncoordinated, young or old, my student range in all sizes and weights as well as age, I have students as young as 18 and as old as 62, is not necessary to wear heels, most of us practice bare foot, yes clothing has to be short since you need your skin to grip the pole but for the first few levels you can wear youga pants and long sleeves if you wish, is a sport that bids confidence and is so much fun to practice, risk of injury? yes but so is to walk on the street, you need to pick the right instructor and studio make sure they are certified to teach you a class, not only in pole dancing but in fitness as well. This sport is like gymnastics, but you dont need to be 12 years old and weight 90 pounds. I am so glad that you are giving this sport the respect it deserves, I did not started to practice pole dancing until I was 39 years old, I been in the fitness industry for the las 18 years, I am 42 year old mother of 2 and I love pole dancing, my body streight, my flexibility have improved tremendously and my fat % has dropped more with pole dancing than I ever did in the weight room, so if you are thinking about it please try it you will be surprise!!! And for the person that ask if lifting weights is a sport yes it is weight lifting has been in the Olimpcs preaty much since they started, and running on a tredmill helps many olimpic runners to train in those months when the weather dont allow them to be out side.)
fitnesspolefanatics 3/23/10

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