



PRIMAL PERKS

Greater flexibility

Moving stretches help ease out tight muscles, ligaments and tendons at the hips, shoulders and back, increasing your range of movement and ability to function in daily life.

Boost strength

Ground-based moves in which you take your own bodyweight on your hands and/or feet help strengthen the muscles you use in everyday life in a way no amount of lifting weights can do.

Heart and circulation

Explosive movements like jumping, and others like rolling and climbing trees help raise the heart rate, while going through a sequence of joined up moves is surprisingly aerobic.

Improve core stability

Animal movements help stabilise and strengthen your core – the cylinder of muscles from your diaphragm to pelvic floor – and improve posture.

Stay youthful

Movement helps stave off the loss of muscle, bone density, balance and coordination that can come with the passing years, helping you to stay agile.

through movement and, unlike other types of exercise which can tire you out, it never leaves you drained. I have two young children and it gives me so much energy to cope with my day,” says London-based Animal Flow instructor Edita Tarvydaite.

“We spend a lot of time these days bending forwards in one way or another, sitting hunched over our mobiles or tablets, which stiffens our shoulders, tightens our hips and stresses our backs. Animal Flow includes lots of moves that open the hip and chest helping to counteract the effects of 21st century life,” she adds.

Jill Ladd, who holds sessions on Zoom, in her studio at her London home, local parks and other outdoor spaces, says: “Once you’ve mastered the basic moves there’s no end to what you can do with them. And the great thing is it’s adaptable.

“Exercises can be made more challenging for different people and ability levels. I’ve taught people aged 12 to 70-plus and have people with multiple sclerosis, Parkinson’s

and other health issues in my classes.”

IT specialist Jason Grimshaw, a former junior badminton champion, took up Animal Flow when Covid confined him to his home. “I was looking for something new that I could do on Zoom. All those years of hitting a shuttlecock had taken their toll and I was very stiff, especially in my hips, shoulders and lower back. Today I am so much more flexible. Although I’m competitive by nature, one of the things I like best is its uncompetitiveness. It’s basically just you and your body.”

But it’s not just about physical benefits says Jill: “It’s amazing for mental health too. When you’re doing a flow your brain switches off daily worries. You don’t have time to think about things like the latest Covid variant or the fact that you are late with your tax return. It’s almost like mindfulness.”

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