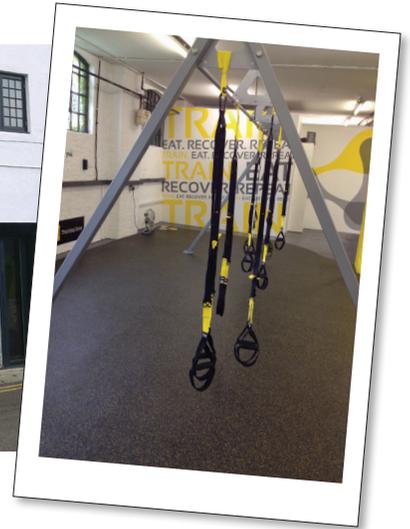


HEALTH & FITNESS

Sports news to get the blood pumping

The TRANSFORMER



Tom Hagues is put through his paces in an exercise routine created by a Navy Seal

You will be smack-in-the-face surprised if you charge into a TRX Suspension Training session at Transition Zone with the idea that it'll be a breeze because you sometimes go for a jog. That attitude is the exercise equivalent of thinking that you could run a Michelin-starred kitchen because you can cook two omelettes at the same time. For those who don't know, TRX combines straps and body weights to give a full-on workout. Muscles previously – and happily – dormant will suddenly be shaken awake during a session, before retiring again the next day and rendering any small movement completely agonising.

It was early on a Thursday morning as I gripped the handles of the straps that were fastened tightly to a metal frame, unaware of what was about to happen to me. I leaned forward, pressing down on the straps and supporting all of my weight on my arms. The studio was filled with

the sound of pumping music, and eventually the beat was interspersed with grunting and frantic blowing-out of air from my puce, grimacing face. 'This is so tough!' I exclaimed to gym owner Claire Finlay, whose stamina and strength implied that she is secretly superhuman. 'That's just the warm-up,' she smiled.

“ I staggered to Parsons Green tube station with loose limbs ”

After my arms, chest, back and stomach muscles had been tied to a chair, slapped around, covered in freezing water and forced to give everything up, the workout moved onto the interrogation of my legs. 'Put your foot into the handle of the strap,' Super Claire instructed. I fumbled around for a while, attempting not to embarrass myself any more than I already had. Claire

had to come over and help me and, as she did so, I tried to work out whether I felt like a very elderly person or a young child who couldn't tie up his laces. A little bit of both, I decided.

The leg workout was spectacularly thorough and, with a mixture of hopping, jumping and stretching, Claire made sure that I wouldn't be

able to walk properly for a while. Indeed, as I left the studio I was immediately accepted into Monty Python's *Ministry of Silly Walks* as I staggered to Parsons Green tube station with loose limbs.

The TRX session was painful, but also, surprisingly, an enjoyable way to exercise my entire body. The mixture of different routines kept monotony at bay and Claire's encouragement ensured that I didn't give up. After all, as they say, no pain, no gain. ■

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