

Spinning + yoga= spynga

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Yogis looking for a better cardio workout and spinning addicts looking for some zen might want to check out Spynga, a new studio at St. Clair and Bathurst that combines the two. The signature class begins on bikes with a routine set to blaring tunes by the Killers and the Goo Goo Dolls and then, halfway through, moves down to the mat where the body is already warmed up and ready for deep, twisting yoga poses.

Created by best friends Sari Nisker and Casey Schacter, who both grew up in Thornhill and reconnected in New York a few years ago, the workout strikes an unlikely balance between the calorie-busting intensity of one activity and the calming, meditative quality of the other.

There are still a few kinks to iron out -- incorporating Ujjayi breath into a cycling routine is easier said than done and the prayer positions feel a little silly when you're bouncing and sweating. And while it feels great to collapse on the mat after all that pedalling, it can get a little slippery, too (thankfully, they supply towels). But for the most part, spynga succeeds.

The studio doesn't just do spynga, however. Those who simply want straight-up spinning or 90 minutes of pure yoga can look to the schedule for these classes, too. "We also offer massage therapy, reiki, lymphatic drainage, kids yoga and even therapeutic yoga," says Nisker.

The third-floor space that houses the Spynga studio took almost a year for Nisker and Schacter to acquire, but they say it was worth it. One of the best features is a deck at the back, which they intend to use for outdoor yoga when the weather is nice. It overlooks some residential backyards, so hopefully the neighbours won't mind barbecuing their hot dogs alongside some downward dogs.

"This area is so nice," says Nisker, "Our studio is easy to access, Forest Hill, Hillcrest and even the Annex are all really close by; it's right next to the subway station."

The Spynga girls are banking on this accessibility, along with their innovative approach to exercise, to get a solid client base. "So far, we've had everyone from twenty-somethings to men in their 50s walk through our door, so it's a good sign," says Nisker. - Spynga is located at 1415 Bathurst St., on the third floor. First class is \$12, regular is \$17. Go to spynga.com for more information.