



The Real History of Pole Dancing

Pole dancing has been around for longer than you may think. Here is a short history on how pole dancing has evolved.

It seems that throughout history, many dance forms have had to strive to gain the recognition and respect that they deserve. Dance forms such as ballet, the waltz and the tango came under severe scrutiny, before they were widely accepted. Ballet history reveals that at first, females were not permitted to perform, which is almost unimaginable today. The waltz also came from such a time (17th century) where the only physical contact or self expression that was accepted in public was the occasional handshake or blush. The tango emerged from Argentina, as a form of self expression and rebellion, it also had links to brothels. So as you can see, some of our most celebrated art forms can come from what may seem as dubious beginnings.

Pole dancing originated in the 1920's at the height of the American depression. Travelling fairs would go from town to town entertaining crowds, and as part of the celebrations there were different types of side shows in small tents surrounding the main arena. One particular tent housed the erotic Hoochi Coochi dancers. The word Hoochi Coochi originates from the hip movement performed by the dancers, the equivalent of the bump and grind today. The girls would dance suggestively on a small stage which would have a tent pole situated at the very edge of the stage (this was due to the small confines of the space), the dancer would approach the tent pole and begin to dance with it. The tent pole became known, as the dance pole, which is what pole dancing is based on today.

Pole dancing has also been linked to May pole dancing which was initially a pagan fertility dance dating back to the 12th century, but then practiced again in the Victorian era. Other ancient origins are of Mallakhamb (meaning "man of power" or "gymnasts pole") which is yoga practiced on a wooden pole and on rope (mainly practiced in India), which may date back to as early as the 12th century but the discipline is suspected to be formed as recently as 250 years ago.

Pole dancing gradually began evolving from the original Hoochi Coochi tents to bars, as burlesque became more acceptable in 1950's, nothing much was heard until the 1980's when pole dancing and striptease became popular in Canada, then the USA and of course, the rest of the world. The 1990's saw Ms Fawnia Mondey (Canadian) take the art of pole dancing and begin teaching this to the every day woman. She produced the first instructional pole fitness and dance DVD.

Pole dancing is a form of dance that usually involves dancing sensually with a vertical pole and is often used in strip clubs and gentlemen's clubs, although more recently it has been used in performances as part of Cirque de Soleil and many cabaret and circus acts, which incorporate it into stage performances in a non-erotic environment. Much of the aerial work in circus has crossover, and uses similar techniques to pole dance. These include corde lisse (a descendant of rope Mallakhamb) and Tissu or silks.

The discipline of pole dancing is a cross between, yoga, acrobatics, dance and aerobics, that takes muscular endurance and coordination as well as sensuality. All working towards a healthy body, positive feminine confidence and most of all having a great time while you workout.

At Pole Divas we provide a range of pole dancing experiences, taught by our reputable dance instructors who follow our specifically designed syllabus.

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