



# JOIN *the* CIRCUS

*Aerialist Hester Montgomery Campbell brings family-friendly circus fitness to Deptford*

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Circus performer and mother-of-two Hester Montgomery Campbell is no stranger to scaling new heights. Now, she's setting the bar higher, opening her own dedicated CircusFit studio at Deptford Market Yard, a vibrant development putting Lewisham into the limelight.

As the founder of CircusFit, Campbell has already helped to bring aerial strength and fitness out of the ring and into the gym. The concepts are now available at highly-regarded London gyms such as GymBox.

So, how did it all begin? Street dance had always been a much-loved pastime, but when Campbell enrolled in a dance course at Lewisham College, she realised her heart was in performance. She went on to attain both a Master of Arts and a Master of Science in dance at Laban, and to star in shows such as *La Traviata* at The Royal Opera House and *The Pearl Fishers* at The London Coliseum.

Now, she's excited to be bringing her

serious skills to her own community in south east London. 'It's the realisation of a vision I've had for a long time,' she says. There's two rooms, the tallest of which will house the trapezes, the ropes, the silks and the hoops. The other has a dance studio vibe, and will be used for mat work and ballet barre.

The classes are set to cater to residents nearby with young families, as well as adults who want to fit a dynamic, different workout into their schedules. 'I've got a seven-year-old and a one-year-old myself now, and I want to provide activities for children, and people who are looking for fun things to do with the kids.

'We've got antenatal for pregnant women, and then post-natal where mums can come along with the baby in a sling. There'll be parent and toddler sessions as well as classes for children from 4+.

'Those without kids can come first thing in the morning, at lunchtime or in the evening for yoga and Pilates-focussed activities geared more towards adults.'

The benefits of aerial exercises are significant. 'In yoga, having a hammock to support you decompresses the joints. Everything is low-impact. I'm 37 now and from jumping up and down a lot, I can't go for long distance runs any more. My joints can't take it. But I've not had injuries for about three years, and I put that down to aerial training. You also have to balance upper body strength with lower body strength.'

Physical benefits aside, it also has the fun factor. 'You don't realise you're working out. You just feel like you're a carefree happy, little kid,' Campbell smiles. 'It's hard, but you don't think about calories.

Suddenly, you develop a lean, strong body, and you might just think "That's a nice side effect!"' When it comes to juggling it all, Campbell says that

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it's no solo performance. 'It's hard, but it's a joint effort.' I have no doubt that this super strong entrepreneur will succeed; CircusFit is set to be a welcome addition for budding aerialists, as well as fans of yoga and Pilates. Best get stretching, acrobats-to-be...

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