

## Wham, bam, thank you pram



**I like the way you work that thang:** fit with baby in tow

Pushing your kid around the park is the latest unlikely fitness craze, discovers our nanny-in-the-know Lily Heaton

Let's be honest, I can't be the only one who's moved to Amsterdam only to be lured into a vicious cycle of *pofterties*, pie and pilsner. While I might not be a mum just yet, I do look after a lively brood of four children under the age of seven. So, when I heard about Buggyfit, I was interested to see what this new exercise group, geared towards mums with tots in tow, had to offer.

Scottish expat and personal trainer Lorna Wilson brought a franchise of this postnatal workout course to Amsterdam over the summer. Asked what makes Buggyfit different from just hitting the gym or cutting back on your pie intake, she explains, 'The class is specific to postnatal women and therefore helps address the physiological changes to the body during pregnancy and child birth.' Originally founded in 2002 by British mum and personal trainer Emma Redding, Buggyfit is touted as an enjoyable way to kick-start shaping up after pregnancy. All you need, apparently, is a comfortable pair of sneakers and a baby in a buggy.

The morning of my Buggyfit initiation, I discover that dismantling a Bugabo stroller is a surprisingly punishing physical activity. Finally fitting it into a pink *backfields*, I add some snacks for my

workout buddy Robert, the boy from the aforementioned litter of kids for whom I serve as nanny. At three years old, he's a bit bigger than the average infant in attendance but I figure the extra weight will make up for the fact that I don't have pregnancy weight to shed.

As requested, we arrive at the Kinderkookkafé, within Vondelpark, ten minutes prior to the advertised start time, on a balmy Thursday morning. I find a spot at a wooden picnic table outside and chat with the other two mums as they

feed their infant sons. Aside from the fresh air and exercise, socialising is an important aspect of the group: 'Buggyfit is good for a number of reasons,' says Scottish mother Jane McGuire.

'It helps the new mum to get out of the house and meet new people, and our babies make new friends.'

After confessing that I've borrowed a child and am not exactly a new mum, just the proud owner of a little beer belly, Lorna asks a few questions related to my physical history. I express my interest in yoga and occasional jogging but admit that most of my daily cardio is derived

from peddling my bright yellow bike or a wagon, full of kids and groceries, around town. With my generally good health approved, Lorna says, 'The workout can be tailored for all fitness levels,' and she advises me to work hard while having fun.

Asics laced and stroller in hand I head into the Vondelpark with Lorna and the two mums. While the baby boys nap, we begin walking, shoulders pulled back and abs tucked in, as Lorna leads us around a loop for a speedy warm-up.

Then our trio increases the pace with jogging, lunges and even a relay race. We run along, single file, until, as the last stroller in line, I push faster past the other two mums to take the lead. As we zoom past dog walkers and loved-up couples, I keep Robert entertained with a buggy-turned-spaceship scenario. I'm pretty used to prioritising the kids' entertainment over my own dignity but it strikes me that we must look pretty bizarre nonetheless. There's strength in numbers, though. It's fun. I enjoy the brief running sections to start with, to brush off the cobwebs,' says one of my

committed Buggyfit partners, Andrea Baggaley, who joined at the group's inaugural session in June, and hasn't looked back.

Soon after this exchange, I start to get a little winded and have to work a delicate balance between the conversation and my rapidly rising heart rate. We continue this routine halfway around the park and then move on to simple but effective push-ups and dips against the edge of a park bench. Or, in the case of my limp spaghetti arms, modified against a tree at Lorna's urging.

'The posture of mums can be affected by the extra weight during pregnancy and later due to the lifting and carrying of the baby,' Lorna explains, 'I therefore find that rowing exercises can help strengthen the upper back.' After a few sets of rowing, along with some core- and glute-strengthening bridge poses, we're ready to finish our hour-long workout with a nice stretch.

My face glowing, I tag along for a post-workout treat at Vondelpark's kid-friendly Groot Melkhuis. Feeling healthy, inspired by increased endorphins and kept in check by my inner yummy mummy, I opt for a cup of *verse munthee* instead of that slice of pie I had my mind on the entire time. **Buggyfit Westerpark, Mon 10.30; Vondelpark, Thursdays 10.30 (06 4603 7774/wilsonsworkouts.nl); €10 per session/€70 for 8 sessions over 12 weeks.**