

sunday

WHY DON'T YOU?

When Klaudyna Morawski braved life and limb for a carveboarding assignment, the last thing she expected was to be any good at it

During the office lunch hour, while fellow *sunday* staffers are at the gym or out eating, you can find me at my desk flicking through a celebrity gossip mag. I'm not a fan of activities that require breaking into a sweat, so when I was assigned to try carveboarding, I thought it was a joke. It wasn't – apparently I was the right person for the job because I'm such a couch potato. The assignment: a one-on-one "carving" session at Kman Skate School.

A fairly new trend in the skating world, carveboarding uses a special type of skateboard that enables quicker turns and simulates the experience of snowboarding and surfing. Australian surf and skate coaches incorporate the carveboard into training programs because it uses the same movements and muscle groups.

It's 9am and I try to look enthusiastic. My instructor is Karim, the "Kman". He looks the part in his three-quarter shorts and surf sunnies. He kits me up in a set of knee, elbow and wrist pads and a yellow helmet, which scream "accident-prone".

For anyone who has ridden a skateboard, there are similarities: you have to stay low to the ground and use your feet to steer. However, you have better control because the board has coil springs.

Karim starts me on a "long board" and shows me how to place my feet. I wobble as I push off but stay on. Karim then swaps my long board for a shorter "twinstuk" carveboard, which feels unsteady in comparison. Predictably, I fall.

Karim patiently waits as I dust myself off. He's seen this all before and assures me I'm doing well. He says the trick to feeling comfortable on the board is to get your balance right, then concentrate on looking straight ahead and not at the ground.

Halfway through the session, having improved my balance, I feel confident and gather speed. In no time, I'm breezing down a small slope with a smile on my face. When Karim suggests I take a steeper slope, I say, "Why not?" It's at this point I take a tumble – narrowly avoiding a curb – but thanks to the daggly protection gear, I manage to avoid injury.

As we finish up, a few eight-year-olds arrive for school-holiday lessons and I hang around to watch. I feel dejected when I see how good they are, but I go away with a newfound appreciation for skate/snow/surfboarders. The only thing I regret is not having more bruises to show for my efforts

LEARN TO "CARVE"



NEED TO KNOW

High point: enjoying it more than I thought I would and falling only a couple of times. *What they don't tell you:* you'll be carving in public, so be prepared to make a fool of yourself. *Don't forget to bring:* water, sneakers and comfy gear you don't mind getting dirty. *Cost:* an hour-long one-on-one carveboard lesson is \$65. For two people, it's \$100. *If you want to know more:* go to www.kman.com.au or call (02) 9300 9174. *In Victoria:* one-hour carveboarding lessons with Ring of Fire at Braybrook cost \$30 per person. Call 0406 865 484.