

# Belly-dance away winter kilos



▲ Keeping fit: Belly-dancing is a fun way to keep winter weight away, according to Clare Godfrey.

## ■ RAYLENE BLISS

THE fun way to shake off winter blues is through belly-dancing.

"Belly dance is the perfect way to keep those winter blues at bay," Clare Godfrey, a registered nurse, said.

"It helps you feel well mentally and physically during the winter months when you're particularly susceptible to putting on weight and feeling down in the dumps."

It is well known that winter is a time when a lot of people put on weight.

This is due to the cold weather — our bodies automatically request more food so as to increase our fat level and keep us warmer.

This biological phenomenon served humans well many thousands of years ago when they had less

sturdy shelter and access to clothing was not as straightforward as it is today.

But for us in modern-day Sydney, that extra layer of fat does nothing but get in the way of our looking our best and feeling our healthiest and fittest.

"The trouble is, our bodies don't realise that it's the year 2000 and that we don't have trouble finding clothes or shelter," Ms Godfrey said.

So they still try to protect us from the cold by asking for more food during the winter months.

The result is we put on unwanted and unneeded weight in winter.

So how can we prevent this?

"Rule number one is not to fight the body," Ms Godfrey said.

"In other words, don't deny your body food by starving yourself.

"Instead, increase your activity: exercise."

Studies have shown that in winter people suffer more from depression than during the warmer months.

the warmer months.

This is thought to be for two reasons: short winter days mean more hours of the day are spent in darkness; and people often reduce their social activity during the winter months, so they are more isolated.

"Belly dance is a winter sport because it is done indoors," Ms Godfrey said.

"This means that wet and cold weather doesn't affect it — you can just keep on dancing all year round.

"And socially, it's a great way to get out among people.

"So, besides increasing your fitness and helping to keep those unwanted kilos away, it is a year-round activity that allows you to meet other like-minded people."

To make this GST winter easier on all of you, Dreaming of Jeannie Bellydance Academy is offering a half-price winter special for the next round of classes starting the week of August 28 at the Randwick-Maroubra PCYC on Bunnerong Road, Kingsford.

Call 9314 7427 to take advantage of this special offer.

