

# SCREAM! (If you wanna be calmer)

**Vicki-Marie Cossar** sees whether a tantrum club can release the emotional pressure

SOMETIMES I just want to scream, throw myself on the ground and have a hissy fit. Not getting my own way is top of the list to prompt this behaviour, closely followed by missing my train home by seconds.

You know the feeling, right? But over the age of four, this just isn't acceptable is it? Not in public, anyway. So imagine my delight at finding a club for women that actively encourages you to do just that.

Held at Ockenden Manor, a West Sussex spa hotel, Tantrum Club is proving popular with stressed-out ladies who need more than a glass of wine to unwind. What started in 2012 as a free pop-up anger management session for women has now helped hundreds of harrassed ladies find peace. And it has just launched as a monthly class.

It's based around catharsis therapy – venting aggression to release emotions – and class instructor Katie Phillips, a 'self-love mentor', says we need to release negative emotions such as grief and anger in order to lead a healthy and happy life. Rather controversially, she believes repressed emotions can cause ailments including back tension, constipation and more serious illnesses such as cancer.

Usually I let off steam through exercise so it'll be interesting to see if this works. The class is held on beanbags inside a fitness studio with around six women per session. We start with a workbook to get to the root of how we're feeling. This is an eye-opener. Katie pops on Bonkers by Dizzee Rascal to help fuel our anger and we're given a purple balloon, told to write on it in marker pen what and who we're angry with, then pop it, thus releasing those negative thoughts into the universe. That guy who pushed past me on the Tube, my husband and my mother-in-law all made it on there.

The 90-minute session continues with kicking and punching (said to ease depression) while Carl Douglas's cheesy chart-topper Kung Fu Fighting



**Letting off steam:** Vicki-Marie, right, at Tantrum Club, which now runs monthly



**Going batty:** Vicki-Marie, left and above, tried several methods of tension-release

is playing on the stereo. I feel silly and can't help breaking out into some Rocky-style fight moves. 'Shaking the body releases shock, fear and anxiety,' says Katie, so we try some of this too. Finally it's the big 'bashing' finale and we're handed a baseball bat, a foam stool and told to 'go for it'.

I watch Katie repeatedly bash the stool, ranting about a particular person she's annoyed with. In this environment

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I find it hard to muster up the anger needed for this exercise, but give the stool a few whacks too. After five minutes everyone else is knackered but grinning, saying they feel better after the beating frenzy.

'When we push down our anger we push down our joy and happiness because you can't selectively switch off emotions,' says Katie.

Personally I feel I need something specific to happen in order for me to vent my frustration – an actual argument, say – so Katie suggests some homework (punching a pillow, popping bubble wrap, singing to loud music). I give the last of these a go on the way home in the car, playing Kasabian at full volume. After a few minutes I feel a weight has been lifted.

If the idea of a hissy fit appeals to you then this might be the perfect place to vent. I on the other hand have found my stress release – I just feel sorry for my neighbours next time I need to express it.

*Tantrum Club, £125 per person (inc 90min tantrum session, 25min aromatherapy massage, lunch and use of spa facilities). Add an overnight stay on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis from £144.50. The next Tantrum Club is on October 13. hshotels.co.uk*



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