



go ahead, jump!

transform classic reformer moves into
a cardio workout with the added bonus
of improving bone density

BY CHANTAL DEEBLE

I've always loved the way Reformer workouts leave me feeling strong, long, connected and energized. I'm also crazy about the way a brisk run makes me feel cleansed and wrung out—in a good way. So in typical New York fashion (i.e., where time is of the essence), I started to ponder how I might combine the two.

When I was a professional dancer, my forte was with athletic and gymnastics-based work. I worked with choreographers who liked to push physical limits because I've always enjoyed the mental and physical push of a challenging workout. As a STOTT PILATES®-certified instructor and a Gyrotonic® and Gyrokinesis® master trainer, I appreciate those disciplines' core-strengthening and muscle-lengthening advantages, but I also know they don't deliver the same fat-burning and cardiovascular training that aerobic activities do. Though all strength-training activities provide some benefits in warding off bone loss, a research review in the July/August 2009 issue of *Sports Health* found that exercises that involve higher levels of strain (such as jumping) are most effective in enhancing bone health and preventing osteoporosis.

My *a-ha!* moment in combining my passions came when I realized that the Jumpboard—an attachment that replaces the footbar on the Reformer and provides a substantial surface for jumping—can give a sweat-inducing workout with the same attention to form, precision and detail as a traditional Pilates workout. The fact that you are not leaping in the air before landing means that you are alleviating the compression on the body's

"shock-absorbers" (the hips, knees, ankles and arches), yet you're still getting the benefits of strenuous weight-bearing activity. Because of the Reformer's spring resistance, you also experience a prolonged suspension in the air, which allows a little more time for attention to form.

In putting together this workout, I also drew on two techniques I've learned as an ACE-certified personal trainer: interval training, which alternates between high energy bouts and rest/recovery intervals; and supersetting, in which you perform two or three exercises that target the same muscle group without stopping in between.

This workout takes about 30 to 45 minutes. I recommend that you initially practice it as it's written. But once you become comfortable with it, I invite you to create your own supersets. For example, for an advanced lateral flexion superset, you can do Mermaid and Side-ups on the Short Box, then take the Box off and perform Star. You could even insert a side-lying jumping set, where you jump with your top foot.

The beauty of this Jumpboard Reformer workout is that you don't have to be an advanced student to reap the benefits: You can put beginner or intermediate Pilates exercises together to make the superset clusters. (Obviously this is not something you should do until you are familiar with the moves.) Do this routine once or twice a week for a fun and challenging change of pace. David Lee Roth was on to something when they told the world to go ahead and jump!



warm-up 3-4 springs

purpose: warms the body; mobilizes the joints of the lower body; increases blood and oxygen flow

setup: Lie on your back on the carriage with your arms long at your sides and shoulders back and down. Place your feet toward the top of the Jumpboard surface in Pilates stance (heels together, toes apart), legs slightly turned out, knees bent in a diamond shape and aligned over your first and second toes. Press your heels down

firmly and extend your legs.

1. Bend your legs as far as you can without lifting your heels, and then extend fully through your legs while lengthening your spine in opposition.
2. Lift your heels so you are on the balls of your feet (this is called "relever"). Return to the start position by lowering your heels back down. Do 8-12 repetitions.
3. Repeat sequence with feet in parallel.

Supine Flexion 2 springs

the hundred

purpose: increases core strength and endurance; warms the body; stimulates circulation

setup: Lie on your back on the carriage with your head resting on the headrest, shoulders back and down and slightly away from the shoulder rests, legs in Tabletop (knees directly over your hips and bent at 90 degrees). Extend your arms up toward the ceiling.

1. Nod your chin gently toward your chest, lengthening the back of your neck as you engage your abdominals and curl your head, neck and shoulders off the mat, simultaneously pressing your arms down by your sides and extending your legs out to a 45-degree angle.
2. Maintain this position as you vigorously pump your arms up and down a few inches, keeping them snug by your sides.
3. Continue pumping; inhaling through your nose for 5



counts and then exhaling through your mouth for 5 counts. Repeat sequence 9 times, for a total of 100 breaths.

tip: Focus on moving your arms from the core and keeping your body as stable as possible.

modification: Extend your legs to a higher angle or back to Tabletop.

short-spine stretch



purpose: increases mobility in the spine

setup: Lie on your back on the carriage with your head resting on the headrest, shoulders back and down and slightly away from the shoulder rests, legs extended at a 45-degree angle with your feet in the straps. Arms are extended long at your sides, fingertips reaching toward the Jumpboard.

1. Keeping your legs straight, hinge them up into a 90-degree angle, and then engage your abdominals to peel your spine off the carriage from your tail to your shoulder blades (never onto your neck) to arrive in your shoulder stand with your toes in line over your eyes.
2. Bend your knees, allowing them to open toward your shoulders into a diamond shape.
3. Round your spine down until you can anchor your pelvis onto the carriage. Legs bend into a second diamond shape, then lengthen out to the 45-degree angle starting position. Do 3-4 repetitions.

coordination

purpose: strengthens the core; challenges coordination

setup: Same as for the Hundred.

1. Round up into the Hundred's working position. Press your legs open to about the width of the Reformer frame.

2. Zipping your legs together, bend your knees toward your forehead. Keep your spine rounded up as you then bend your elbows to 90 degrees. Do not round down to flat; continue directly into next repetition. Do 3-4 repetitions.

Supine Jumping Set 2 – 3 springs

purpose: strengthens lower body; elevates heart rate

setup: Same as for warm-up, but prepare to jump.

1. Do 8–12 repetitions of the warm-up exercise. On your last rep, propel strongly through your legs so that you take flight off the Jumpboard for a moment. Do 32 repetitions of the jumping.

2. Repeat all of the above in parallel. Now gradually decrease the repetitions: Jump 16 times in turnout, 16 times in parallel, 8 times in turnout, 8 times in parallel, 4



times in turnout, 4 times in parallel, then 2 times in turnout, 2 times in parallel, 2 times in turnout (option: 8 singles, alternating).

Seated Core Challenge 1 spring

back rowing (round back)

purpose: strengthens core and back, mobilizes spine

setup: Sit tall on the carriage, back to Jumpboard, legs together and long through the shoulder rests, feet flexed. (Make sure there is enough space behind you on the carriage for you to be able to round back.) Holding the straps, place your arms in a circle in front of your body (in Hug position) at shoulder height, palms facing in.

1. Engage the abdominals to curl your spine and round halfway down.



2. Keeping your abs engaged and the carriage steady, open your arms straight out to the sides, palms facing away from your body and fingers pointing up. Press your palms into the straps as you circle your arms back toward your lower back and simultaneously dive your rounded spine up and over your legs. Keeping your body still, circle your arms to the side and then reach forward over your legs. Peel your spine up one bone at a time, to return to the upright seated position. Do 3–4 repetitions.

front rowing (round forward)

purpose: strengthens core, mobilizes spine and shoulder girdle

setup: Sit tall on the carriage facing the Jumpboard, legs together and extended long in front of you, feet flexed. Hands are in straps with elbows bent at a 90-degree angle and hugging your ribs, fingertips aiming forward.

1. Round your spine forward as you press into the straps, extending your arms forward over your legs (parallel to the floor). Peel your spine up one bone at a time to sit up tall again, leaving your arms at shoulder height and parallel to the floor. Keeping your body steady, lift your arms toward the ceiling as far up as your shoulder mobility allows, then circle your arms wide to the side and down, bending your elbows to return to the start position. Do 3–4 repetitions.



stomach massage 2 springs

purpose: stabilizes core, improves mobility and coordination of hip and knee joints

setup: Sit near the front edge of the carriage, facing the Jumpboard, with your spine rounded in a C curve, shoulders over hips and feet in Pilates stance in the middle of the Jumpboard. Drape your hands over the front edge of the carriage. Note



that leg and foot coordination is different with the Jumpboard than with a footbar.

1. Extend legs out straight: Heels lift you onto the balls of your feet ("relever"), then lower back down, and legs bend into plié. Keep heels connected to the Jumpboard as you plié. Do 8 repetitions, then repeat with legs in parallel.

Seated Jumping Set 1 spring

setup: same as for Stomach Massage

1. To jump, propel strongly through your legs and take flight off the Jumpboard. But be forewarned: It is a challenge to maintain your core connection while jumping in the seated Stomach Massage position. Do 16 turned out, 16 parallel, 8 turned out, 8 parallel, 4 turned out, 4 parallel, 2 turned out, 2 parallel. Again, pay attention to the heels staying connected to the Jumpboard on the landing. This jump set lasts 3–5 minutes.



Long Box Prone 1 spring pulling straps

purpose: strengthens the core, back and arms

setup: Facing away from the Jumpboard, lie on the long box on your stomach with your shoulder girdle and head supported off the end. Bend your knees to 90 degrees, with knees slightly apart and toes pointing toward one another. Hold on to the straps and reach your arms down on the outside of the Reformer frame.

Pulling Straps Down Keeping your arms straight, pull the straps back until your arms are reaching back toward the Jumpboard, parallel to the floor, as you simultaneously reach through your upper back to extend up off the box. Do 4 repetitions.

Pulling Straps Side Return to setup position,



but place your arms in a T position. Repeat step 1. Do 4 repetitions.

Triceps Targeter Return to setup position, but bend your elbows to a 90-degree angle, hugging your elbows to your ribs. Straighten your arms until they are reaching back toward the Jumpboard, and then return to bend. Do 8 repetitions.

Prone Jumping Set 1 spring

setup: Lie facedown on the box, with your body closer to the Jumpboard so that your legs and pelvis are comfortably off the edge. Hold on to the top corners of the box for stability and place your feet in Pilates stance close to the bottom edge of the Jumpboard.

1. Do 16 repetitions in turn out, then 16 in parallel. Gradually decrease the repetitions on each side: 8-8, 4-4, 2-2, 1-1. This segment should last about 3 minutes.



Supine Core Challenge 2 springs

teaser

purpose: strengthens core, improves endurance, challenges balance

setup: Take the straps in your hands and sit at the front edge of the long box. Hold the box as you engage your low abdominals to roll slightly back on your sitz bones, and then raise your legs into a Teaser V position.

1. Release your hands, palms facing forward. Scoop the arms forward to eye level and then back down to your sides. Do 4 repetitions.



2. On the 4th repetition, keep your arms and legs stretching on the diagonal, then roll your spine down onto the box and lower your arms and legs.

3. Round back up to the Teaser V and hold it as you circle your arms in one direction 4 times, roll down, round up once more and circle arms in the other direction 4 times. Round down and breathe.

modification: Do the exercise with legs in Tabletop.

swan

purpose: counter stretch for the core challenge, back strengthening

setup: Lie facedown on the box and place your hands on the top corners of the Jumpboard. Your forehead is hovering over the top edge of the Jumpboard, legs are slightly turned out and about hip-width apart.

1. Extend your arms and push the carriage out, body long and parallel to the floor. Lift your chest off the box, arching the spine as the springs guide the carriage in toward the Jumpboard (you can wiggle forward or



back on the box to increase or decrease the degree of extension). Lower and lengthen the body back down to parallel to the floor. Do 3-4 repetitions.

Supine Finale Jump Set 2 springs

setup: no box

1. Repeat the parallel-two-leg jumping as in the 1st jumping set ('Supine Jump Set'), 8-6 times, and then continue with only 1 leg (the other leg stays in Tabletop). Do 8 on each leg, then 6-6, 4-4, 2-2, 1-1. When you get

to 1-1, you may continue for 32 reps. This is like Running in Place, but with a little air.

2. Repeat the same jumping sequence as above in Pilates first stance. The foot of the gesture leg should stay near the ankle of the jumping leg.

Grand Finale 2 springs



long spine stretch

purpose: builds core strength, gives spine and hip mobility

setup: Lie on your back, headrest down, legs raised to a 45-degree angle, with feet in straps. Arms are framing the torso and reaching long through the fingers toward the Jumpboard.

- 1.** Hinge legs up to a 90-degree angle, and then peel your spine off carriage from tail to shoulder blades up into a shoulder stand.
- 2.** Widen legs to shoulder-width distance and then roll spine back down onto carriage, legs pressing into strap resistance.
- 3.** Keeping pelvis down and stable, circle legs circle around in a generous range of motion, according to what is available and feels good. Do 6-8 in each direction.

single thigh stretch

purpose: opens hips; promotes flexibility

setup: Place right knee on carriage with right heel against the shoulder rest. Left foot is on floor near front edge of apparatus, knee bent and aligned over toes. Hands are resting comfortably on top of the Jumpboard.

- 1.** Press the carriage back by pushing through your right heel, reaching the front knee in opposition. Do a total of 4 repetitions and then switch sides.
- 2.** Step off the Reformer. Finish by standing tall, and then roll forward one bone at a time through the spine. Hang for a moment, abdominals still engaged, then sequence back up into upright: tall, connected, strong. 🍎

