

Welcome to the new world of Pilates

Pilates is famous for its benefits to core strength and flexibility, but there is more to the workout. When the Pilates equipment is incorporated the options increase for benefits to the entire body. The most popular Pilates apparatus is the reformer and it has unlimited options for plyometric work using the footboard. The reformer footboard attaches near the footbar and allows the participant to jump against the resistance of the springs in hundreds of creative combinations.

In a group Pilates class or personal training workout this footboard allows for a broad stable surface to teach proper jumping and running mechanics and to incorporate explosive strength activities. The choreography of the

springs. In this scenario called Integrated Training the slastix or leg springs are attached to the back of the knee to provide a negative resistance during the jump. This resistance encourages contraction of the deep core muscles and muscles that support the knee joint while the participant is air born. For this effect the participant is encouraged to "get more hang time" while in the air above the jumpboard. This effect also enhances the eccentric component of the jump which can be very beneficial for strengthening for older adults.

Jumping on the Pilates jumpboard has additional benefits for older adults by providing impact to assist in increasing bone density. This can be a wonderful addition to an exercise program for women with osteopaenia or osteoporosis. When the jumps are put together in a choreographed sequence they can even help with balance for older adults by providing activities to keep them agile and coordinated in their legs.

For athletes returning to sport the jumpboard allows the client to practice their sport in a low weight environment. Conditions that this may be helpful to with the guidance of the physician include ankle sprains, ACL repairs, patellofemoral syndrome, joint replacements, shin splints, and plantar fasciitis.

When added to a traditional Pilates reformer workout, jumping on the footboard can add variety and a bit of intense cardio work. With

explosive plyometric jumps, the heart rate will increase. If these jumps are intermixed with other reformer exercises in the right combination one could create a very effective cardio workout that would also require more energy. This may be a beneficial factor to those clients who are looking for weight loss.

Now they can continue the strength building benefits of Pilates which will provide long term metabolic

change while adding some intensity that can burn calories.

If jumping is incorporated in the Pilates reformer workout there are a few safety factors to consider. First, the jumping is performed while laying on the reformer so the client's cardiac output will be decreased. For this reason you need to be cautious with anyone that has a heart condition. Always encourage the clients to breath with each jump and as soon as you are finished jumping have the clients get up into a sitting or standing exercise. Be extra careful with older adults as they move from lying to sitting or standing as they may lose their balance. Second, encourage a proper landing. The ball of the foot should break the fall, and then the heel should touch the footboard between each jump. Instruct the client to jump from the ball of the foot, land on the ball of the foot, and then roll onto the heel before jumping again. If you want the plyometric effects, you must encourage them to leave the footboard as soon as they land on their heel. Plyometrics may be difficult for the older clients, but they will be challenging and fun for other clients. Regardless of the type of jump, it will benefit all of the older clients so still ask them to give it a try. ❖

CHRISTINE ROMANI-RUBY

For creative workouts on the Pilates jumpboard and using Integrated Training, visit pkipilates.com and sign up for the Integrated Training one day course or purchase the workout on DVD. Christine Romani-Ruby is a gold certified PMA Pilates Instructor, Physical Therapist, and the owner of Phi Pilates.

IN FACT ———
10 million people in the United States practice Pilates, and those numbers are expected to grow in 2008.

jumps can match any sport to allow specific training or to add interest. For example skiers can imagine going through moguls while a ballerina can do a batterie or changmant. In any scenario the footboard and spring combination allows for the perfect environment to rebound safely while reducing resistance as needed. In rehabilitation or sports conditioning environment the ability to reduce the resistance and to watch and critique the landing is invaluable.

When the reformer has an attached tower the jumping activities can be further enhanced with the use of slastix resistance or leg

