

ADVANCED TRAINING

Kick your practice up a notch—or two—with this killer Reformer/Tower workout that delivers results quicker than ever.

Workout by Ariel Hernandez
Edited by Amanda Altman

These days, we're all as busy as ever, working long hours, managing businesses and caring for our families. It's not always easy fitting in a workout. Even for Pilates teachers.

"As a formerly very overweight person—I once weighed 250 pounds and had a 42-inch waist—my personal fitness routine is extremely important. But as a busy studio owner, it's hard for me to find time to exercise," Ariel says. "I developed this routine to give me the biggest bang for my buck in the shortest amount of time. Every exercise is a compound movement with multi-joint function, not only great for flexibility and strength training, but also for helping to keep my alignment and posture the very best they can be."

This 30-minute Reformer and Tower workout incorporates lots of variations to help maximize your efforts and hone your Pilates skills and execution. "All of the exercises are advanced—they require proper muscle recruitment and precision," Ariel adds. "Make sure to keep the Pilates principles in mind as you go."

Stay on top of your game by performing these moves three to four times a week. **PS**



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROD FOSTER; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY AMELIA C & CO.; MPG SHIRT AND SHORTS; HOODIE BY ICEBREAKER QUATTRO

STANDING ROLL-DOWN AT TOWER

PROP: none

SPRING SETTING: 2 light at the back of the Tower, second setting from the top

PURPOSE: strengthens the shoulder girdle, lats and triceps; increases flexibility of the spine and hamstrings; develops body and spacial awareness

SETUP: Stand tall, with your feet parallel and hip-distance apart behind the tower, about 2 feet away. Place your palms shoulder-width apart on the roll-down bar, arms straight. Your spine and pelvis are in neutral.

1. While maintaining neutral pelvis and spine, inhale as you engage your lats to pull the bar toward your hips.

TIP: As you begin your initial rolling-down articulation, make sure to contract your abdominals.

2. Exhale, rolling down one vertebra at a time as you press the bar toward the floor.

MODIFICATION: Stop the articulation halfway down.

3. Inhale, articulating your spine back to the standing position. Do 5 reps.

ADVANCED: Perform the rolling down and up with your heels lifted.



SETUP & STEP 1



STEP 2

GEAR GUIDE

Balanced Body Allegro 2 Tower of Power® (\$4,395; www.pilates.com)

Merrithew Health & Fitness™ Mini Stability Ball, 12 inch (orange) (\$10.99; www.merrithew.com)



ADVANCED

LUNGE/SPLIT

PROP: none

SPRING SETTING: 1–3 light or medium

PURPOSE: increases total-body strength and flexibility; stretches the hip flexors and hamstrings; strengthens the quads; stabilizes the erector spine; engages the lats

SETUP: Facing the footbar, kneel on the carriage with your left foot against the left shoulder rest. Place your right foot on the footbar into a lunge, bringing your hands to the bar for support. Keep your abdominals engaged, shoulders stabilized and neck relaxed.

1. Lift your back knee and tighten your quad. Hold for 15 seconds.

2. Inhale, straightening your front leg into a split.

3. Exhale as you return to the starting position. Do 5 reps. Repeat on your other side.

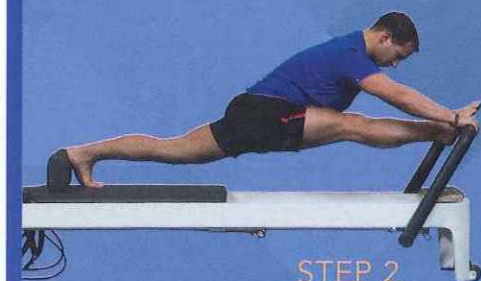
TIPS: Make sure to keep your rib cage wrapped, lats engaged and back leg strong and stable.

MODIFICATION: Keep your back knee on the carriage throughout.

ADVANCED: Take 1 arm off the footbar.



STEP 1



STEP 2

TENDON STRETCH

PROP: none
SPRING SETTING: 2–3 medium
PURPOSE: strengthens the upper body and core; enhances spinal flexibility and stability; promotes body awareness
SETUP: Stand in front of the Reformer facing the footbar, and place the ball of your right foot on the edge of the carriage. Place your hands on the footbar around your right leg. Engage your lats without your shoulders rounding forward.

1. Inhale, pressing the carriage away with your right leg as you engage your lats and lift your back leg slightly off the floor.
2. While keeping the carriage away, kick your left leg out to your side at hip height.
3. While keeping your left leg at your side, return the carriage home and

your pelvis toward the ceiling. Do 5 reps. Repeat on your other side.

TIP: It's essential to engage your lats and core throughout.

MODIFICATION: Keep both feet on the carriage.

ADVANCED: Hold step 3 for 3 seconds.



SETUP & STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3

SIDE SPLIT WITH TWIST

PROP: none
SPRING SETTING: 2 medium
PURPOSE: develops strength and flexibility of the upper and lower extremities while enhancing core strength; increases body awareness and concentration
SETUP: Stand facing the side of the Reformer with the footbar on your left side. Place your left foot on

the platform and your right foot against the shoulder rest closest to you. Place your hands on the far edge of the carriage shoulder-width apart, with your fingertips on the outside. Keep your abdominals scooped in, ribs wrapped and shoulders and neck relaxed.

1. Inhale as you press the carriage away, "walking" your

hands out as you go. Pause, maintaining a straight spine.

2. Exhale, twisting your spine to your right side as you reach your right hand—and your gaze—toward the ceiling.

3. Inhale, returning to center and bringing your hand back to the Reformer.

4. Do 5 reps. Repeat on your other side.

TIPS: Only bring the carriage out as far out as you can maintain stability in your hips. Focus on keeping your spine straight as you twist.

MODIFICATION: Omit the spine twist.

ADVANCED: After completing step 1, place both hands on your hips while maintaining a straight spine. Hold for 5 seconds.

SETUP & STEP 1



STEP 2



REVERSE PUSH-UP AT TOWER

PROP: none
SPRING SETTING: 2 light at the back of the Tower, second setting from the top
PURPOSE: develops spinal stability, core strength, balance and coordination; enhances shoulder and hip girdle stabilization
SETUP: Stand tall, with your feet parallel and hip-distance apart, about 1 foot behind the Tower facing away from it. Bring the roll-down bar in front of your chest and hold onto it in an overhand grip, elbows bent.

1. Inhale as you press the bar away from you, maintaining proper posture as you straighten your arms at chest height.

2. Exhale as you return the bar back to the starting position. Do 10 reps.

TIP: Avoid arching your back as you press the bar away from you.

MODIFICATION: As you press the bar, lean slightly forward for balance.

ADVANCED: Perform the exercise with your heels lifted and your calves engaged.



SETUP & STEP 1

BALL PRESS

PROP: ball
SPRING SETTING: 1–2 light or medium
PURPOSE: develops the muscles of the core and lower body; promotes balance, coordination and flexibility; reinforces neutral pelvis and neutral spine
SETUP: Lie on your back on the carriage, with your feet on the ball in the center of the footbar, pelvis and spine in neutral. Keep your arms at your sides, pinkies pressing into the carriage. Reach the back of your neck long against the headrest, engage your lats and broaden your collarbones. "Wrap" your rib cage and draw your navel in toward your spine.

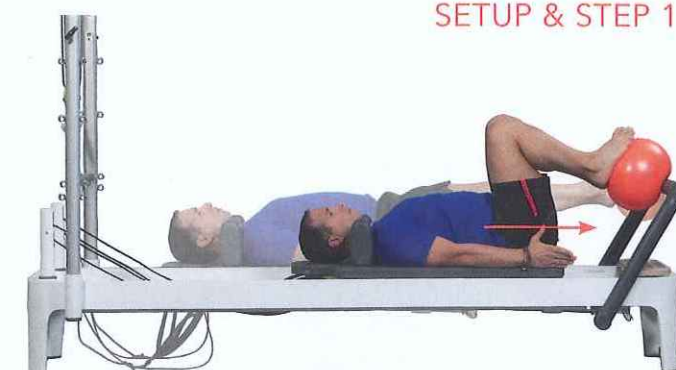
1. Inhale as you slowly press away.

2. Exhale, returning the carriage home. Do 10 reps.

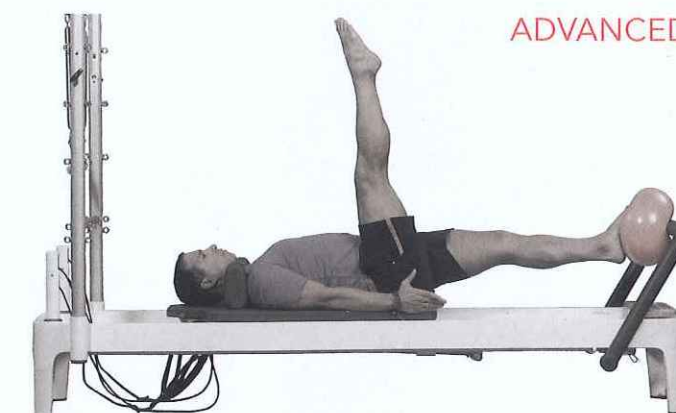
TIP: This is a core exercise—make sure to engage your abdominals as you press the carriage away.

MODIFICATION: Stop the carriage halfway out.

ADVANCED: Perform with just 1 leg on the ball; the other is extended toward the ceiling, foot pointed.



SETUP & STEP 1



ADVANCED

Ariel Hernandez, PMA®-CPT, is the owner and director of Fusion Fitness USA Pilates. Born in South Miami Beach, Ariel has been in the fitness industry for more than 25 years. As soon as he was old enough, Ariel became a personal trainer and within two years, was running the personal training and aerobic dance programs of several gyms in Miami. With experience in dance and gymnastics and more than 10 years tenure as a PHI master Pilates teacher, Ariel has expanded his certifications and training methods to include numerous forms of corrective modalities. As both a well-rounded student and ambassador of fitness, Ariel's biggest passion is Pilates and the change it makes in peoples' lives.