



Hot Streak: Advanced Reformer

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Social media might make the Reformer look like the wild west — flashy, fast, and full of tricks. But is that truly advanced? In this workshop, we return to the original Advanced Reformer repertoire as defined by the Pilates Elders: strong, precise, athletic, and purposeful work built on control and mastery. No trends. No circus. Just the real thing. Let's bring "advanced" back to the studio.

Today we're going to step into the advanced Reformer work—not as a collection of difficult exercises, but as a refinement of the system.

What makes a Reformer workout an Advanced Reformer workout?

- The skill level of some of the exercises like, Snake, Overhead, Twist, Control balance, etc.
- Higher skill level versions of exercises mastered in basic and intermediate level
- The rhythm, dynamics and control of the exercises of the basic and intermediate level
- Transitions between the exercises to limit the stop and go. The connections between the exercises is where the flow and intensity of the workout often get lost

You know the order of your Advanced Reformer. If you don't, no worries. There are many different orders of the Advanced Classical Reformer, and most clients will not do the full advanced order. They will do some of the advanced reformer exercises but not all.

We want to take a moment to clarify the difference between rhythm and dynamics. They are often confused.

Rhythm is the tempo, timing and flow of the movement and between the exercises. What is the tempo of the movement, even like the long stretch or is it uneven like the elephant (one count out 3 counts in)? How fast do you move between the exercises for example your transitions.

Dynamics is the speed, quality, intensity, the energy, what part of the exercise you emphasize.

To make a basic or intermediate exercise more advanced, you can use a different version, but the most effective way is the way you teach and your ability to play with your rhythm and dynamics.

We have divided the workshop in 3 parts:

- Versions that make known exercises different - changing versions that they require, more control, more precision
- The workout with focus on rhythm and dynamics - increasing the intensity and challenging control, focus, precision, etc.
- Advanced exercises - we will take our time to explain the execution, spotting, cueing of advanced exercises

Exercises to go over before the workout

We will change some exercises that you will be able to follow during the workout. There are a couple that need a bit of explanation first. In a normal class situation, we would only introduce 2 maybe 3 new versions. Because if you introduce too many new exercises or versions, especially ones that are a bit more complicated, it will stop the flow and dynamics of your session and lower the intensity of your workout. In order to make sure we can do the workout without stopping we will go over some of them now.

Rowing

Into the sternum - Joe

Set up:

Springs: 1

Headpiece: down

Foot bar: down

Goals:

- Deepening of the C-curve
- Strengthening of the shoulder, arm and back musculature
- Stretching of the shoulder, back and back of the leg musculature

Starting position:

Sit facing the back of the Reformer about one hand width away from the edge of the carriage. The legs are straight and together in between the shoulder boxes (if needed cross the ankles). Hold the handles with the knuckles together, bending the arms as much as needed to make the straps tight, but the keep the carriage in.

Execution:

90 degrees - Us

Set up:

- Springs: 1
- Headrest: down
- Foot bar: down

Goals:

- Lengthening of the spine
- Strengthening of the shoulder, arm and back musculature
- Stretching of the shoulder, back and back of the leg musculature

Starting position:

Sit facing the back of the Reformer about one hand width away from the edge of the carriage. The legs are straight and together in between the shoulder boxes (if needed cross the ankles). Hold the handles, lift the arms up to shoulder height and bend the arms to a 90-degree angle.

Execution:

From the chest - Joe

Set up:

- Springs: 1
- Headrest: down
- Foot bar: down

Goals:

- Lengthening of the spine
- Strengthening of the shoulder, arm and back musculature
- Opening of the chest

Starting position:

Sit facing the Foot bar, with the pelvis against the shoulder boxes and the legs straight out, together parallel with flexed feet. Hold the handles, make fists with the hands; bend the arms (elbows in and back) so that the fists are at chest level with the straps under the arms.

Execution:

From the hips - Joe

Set up:

- Springs: 1
- Headrest: down
- Foot bar: down

Goals:

- Lengthening of the spine
- Strengthening of the shoulder, arm and back musculature
- Opening of the chest
- Stretching of the back line of the body (neck, shoulders, back, hips, back of the legs)

Starting position:

Sit facing the Foot bar, with the pelvis against the shoulder boxes and the legs straight out, together parallel with flexed feet. Hold the handles, make fists with the hands and place the hands relaxed on the carriage next to the hips (straps can be slack)

Execution:

Backstroke & teaser combo

Romana

Set up:

- Springs: 1
- Headrest: down
- Foot bar: down
- Long box

Starting position:

Sit in the backstroke position but place your pelvis where you would be for your teaser.

Execution:

Kathy/Carola

Set up:

- Springs: 1
- Headrest: down
- Foot bar: down
- Long box

Starting position:

Sit in the backstroke position but place your pelvis where you would be for your teaser.

Execution:

Leg circles into Long spine massage

Set up:

- Springs: 2
- Headrest: up and down
- Foot bar: down
- Extra straps for the feet

Goals:

- Isolation and disassociation of the lower extremities (legs)
- Stabilization of the pelvis
- Strengthen the adductors (inner thighs) and hip extensors
- Articulation of the spine

Starting position:

Lie down supine with the shoulders against the shoulder boxes. Feet in the long straps, legs bent in a Frog position with the heels together and the coccyx down. Press the legs out to a 45-degree angle.

Execution:

Tinker bell

Set up:

Springs: 2

Headpiece: up

Foot bar: up

Goals:

- Strengthening of the abdominals – deepen the C-curve
- Flexion of the spine
- Isolation of the extremities
- Strengthening of the quadriceps, hip extensors and hip flexors
- Shoulder stabilization

Starting position:

Stand in the up stretch position. Place your left foot on the front edge of the carriage, keeping your heel lifted. Bend both knees, curl the pelvis under and round the spine. Keep the weight of the body relatively even on both legs. Bring the right knee in line with the right ankle (shin parallel to the floor). Take as much weight off the left (front foot) as possible, without changing the body position. The front foot is as light as possible “like tinker bell hovering on the windowsill”.

Execution:

Basic Advanced Reformer - workout

We will focus on dynamics and rhythm. For this reason, we will not do a full advanced workout because we don't want to stop for execution or spotting issues. This is about experiencing the flow. We will not stop.

We will do some different version of exercises that you know. Just follow the best you can. We will incorporate the exercises we just went over. When we get to the Backstroke/Teaser choose one of the versions you can do without help. We want to keep it moving. Do NOT help each other. This is advanced so if you can't do it, don't do it. In this workout you should not need a spot.

There are 3 people per Reformer. We have divided the workout in 6 blocks, based on "natural" breaks in the workout to make the switches between groups move as fast as we can. Therefore, it is not exactly even, and we know that.

1

1. Footwork
2. The Hundred
3. Overhead
4. Coordination
5. Rowing series – into the sternum
6. Rowing series – 90 degrees
7. Rowing series – from the chest
8. Rowing series – from the hips
9. Rowing series – shave
10. Rowing series – hug

2

11. Flying eagle
12. Pull straps – 1
13. Pull straps – 2 – T-shape
14. Backstroke/teaser combo - Carola up - Romana arms up/down, circles
15. Horseback - Facing front
16. Short box – round - variations
17. Short box – flat
18. Short box – side to side
19. Short Box – Twist and Reach
20. Short box – Tree
21. Short box – Tree – variations – Turned out Tree

3

22. Long stretch
23. Down stretch
24. Up Stretch
25. Elephant
26. Elephant – arabesque I
27. Elephant – arabesque II
28. Elephant – arabesque III
29. Long backstretch
30. Stomach massage series – round
31. Stomach massage series – hands back
32. Stomach massage series – reach up
33. Stomach massage – twist

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34. Tendon stretch
35. Short spine massage – Romana's advanced version
36. Semicircle with the bar down
37. Chest expansion
38. Thigh stretch
39. Kneeling arm circles
40. Kneeling shave
41. Kneeling hug
42. Kneeling bicep curls

5

43. Corkscrew
44. Tick tock – advanced variation
45. Balance control step off prep only
46. Mermaid
47. Frog
48. Leg circles - into
49. Long spine massage

6

50. Knee stretch series round
51. Knee stretch series – arched
52. Knee stretch series – knees off with foot bar up
53. Knee stretch series - tinker bell
54. Running
55. Pelvic lift
56. Side Splits
57. Front split
58. Russian split

Advanced Reformer Exercises: