



'YOU PERFORM MOVES THAT ARE GUARANTEED TO GIVE A LUST-WORTHY SET OF SLIM THIGHS AND TARGET THOSE DEEP ABDOMINAL MUSCLES'

Class of the month

Cardio Pilates

Bounce your way to a sculpted new you with the latest workout set to revolutionise the Pilates scene, says **Louise Pyne**

Reformer Pilates was one of the biggest fitness successes of 2010, and it's not hard to see why. The workout, which swaps traditional mat-based moves for a Pilates machine featuring a sliding carriage with sets of hand and foot straps, really can make a huge difference to your body. Yep, it does look like a torture device, but don't be put off! This revolutionary machine helps to tighten and tone your wobbly bits in a mere 60 minutes through a variety of resistance moves.

But what about when you want your cardio and strengthening fix in one hit? Pilates HQ, a new north London studio, has found the answer! By remodelling the regular reformer workout with a jump board (a padded springboard attached to the end of the bed) instead of the usual fixed platform, you get an energetic yet low-impact workout. Genius!

THE CLASS

The workout is carried out in a studio with multiple beds, with the class limited to a maximum of nine. Starting on the machine we warmed up with a series of stretching exercises, moving the sliding carriage back

and forth, powering our legs against the resistance. Next, we continued with sets of stretches and toning moves that included lunges, leg circles and crunches designed to work the core and lower body, all the while trying to maintain focus on our breathing patterns. Taking the workout up a notch, we mixed in a series of heart-racing jumps with our feet placed together, in plié position, hip-width apart and on one leg bouncing away from the spring board as fast as possible, in order to give our thighs and bum a workout.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Any form of Pilates provides a great sculpting workout for the body. But what's good about Cardio Pilates is that you get to raise your heart rate while performing moves that are guaranteed to give a lust-worthy set of slim thighs and target those deep abdominal muscles, which often don't get the attention they need.

THE VERDICT

This is a great workout to tone up your weaker spots and offers superb sculpting benefits for the bum and legs - although sadly there isn't really any focus on the arms. As the class is limited to small numbers you get the individual attention required to ensure proper technique. Although it's 60 minutes long, you are getting a cardio session *and* a strengthening workout, so it's great for people who can't squeeze in many gym sessions a week. ■

ESSENTIAL INFO

■ Classes are from £22 per session, with discounts applicable on a minimum of five sessions. Visit www.pilateshq.co.uk