

## Core Barre

While the ballet-inspired fitness trend has quickly taken over, it isn't without reason that many people are heading to the barre for their workout. With small, isometric movements and a focus on the core, the many barre class benefits go to show that this popular fitness option isn't just a meaningless fad. And with so many fitness boutiques like Pure Barre, Pop Physique, Physique 57, Bar Method, and many others, it's easy to jump on this craze.

Although barre takes some positions and movements from ballet (as well as the signature ballet barre), a barre class is totally different from a dance class. You won't typically find cardio in this workout, but rather a series of strengthening exercises targeting your core, arms, legs, and, of course, your butt. Pair that with a solid playlist, an enthusiastic instructor, and you've got a workout that — after you get over the soreness of your first class — becomes incredibly addictive. A few classes (and a few indulgent purchases of those super-cute barre socks) later, and you'll be hooked.

Using a couple tools like a ball, light weights, and a strap, barre proves to be an effective workout, so if you're looking for a way to rev up your exercise routine, you might consider adding some barre-inspired moves to your gym routine or heading over to a boutique class. Here's exactly what makes barre so beneficial.

### **1. It's The Best Core Workout**

You read that right: barre is the best core workout. With each isometric movement, you target the tiny muscles that may get ignored if you're sticking to crunches. Plus, by repeating these small movements over and over again, you build up endurance. That means that the more you go to class, the better you get and the longer you can hold tough positions (looking at you, plank).

### **2. It Improves Your Posture**

Barre improves your posture because keeping a straight spine is crucial to so many of the movements in class. As Pure Barre notes, "it's more important to achieve proper alignment of your hips, spine, shoulders and head than to lift your leg an inch higher." By maintaining an awareness of your posture in class, you'll find yourself aware of each time your shoulders slump forward at your desk or while lounging. A stronger core also helps you to keep your back straight, so with every barre class, you'll be standing a little taller.

### **3. It Helps Your Muscles Work Correctly**

Stretching prevents muscles from remaining tight, which could cause other muscle groups to not work correctly. So, not only does stretching in barre increase your flexibility, it also helps your muscles to work correctly.

### **4. It Increases Your Flexibility**

You don't need a dancer's flexibility to be able to take a barre class, but the stretching interludes between strengthening exercises will certainly help to increase your flexibility. Classes focus on being both flexible and strong, rather than just pumping iron.

## **5. It Targets Every Muscle Group**

Because barre classes use your own body to tackle different areas, you end up working multiple muscle groups at the same time. Plus, those isometric movements help you to tackle smaller muscles that often get ignored. The result is a full-body workout that will leave you sore in the best way.

## **6. It's Low-Impact**

A good barre class will leave you in a sweat, but you won't be struggling to catch your breath. That's because barre is low-impact, meaning that it's gentler on your joints. Compared to high-impact workouts, like running, barre is easy to stick with, without requiring breaks for muscle and joint rehabilitation. A long-term commitment means better results over time.

## **7. It Has Low Injury Risk**

Because barre is low-impact, that also means that it's low-injury. Less pressure on your joints means fewer chances of hurting yourself. Plus, you can even do barre while pregnant, as long as you listen to your body and notify your instructor, so that she can provide you with move adjustments, depending how far along you are.

## **8. It's Fun!**

Barre may not have the high intensity of a Zumba class or the spiritual mantras of SoulCycle, but cheerful instructors, pumping playlists, and endorphin-pumping movements make this workout a pleasure — no leotard necessary.