

Getting Started



Congratulations on starting your Studio Pilates International® express reformer classes and the start of transforming your body. As you read on you'll find valuable information that will help you to maximise the benefits of your first ever Pilates class and continue to help you on your 100th and beyond.

What you will experience is unlike any other class you have done before as we do it differently to anyone else in the world. Our class is delivered through our *Digital Exercise Delivery System™* giving you clear and concise instructions which are simple and easy to follow. Your class instructor is always present to monitor your technique and help you to enjoy your workout experience. If you have any injuries, aches or pains **please advise your instructor before you start your class** as they may vary your program slightly if required in order to ensure a safe and pleasant workout for you.

You must read this document fully before starting and must have watched the basics video either in the studio, on our website, or on YouTube. If you have any further questions before commencing your workouts please ask one of our friendly team. If you feel you would like to be personally taken through these basic principles and given on orientation in person, please book a 'Starter Session' when joining as a Studio Pilates International® member as this is included in your joining fee. If you don't feel you need any further explanation that's fine too, you are free to begin working out.

What you will experience

Pilates is a form of strengthening and toning exercise, so the next day or so after you workout you may feel a little sore in the muscles. This should be welcomed as you being to exercise and move your body in ways it hasn't before and is to be expected as you gain in strength. This muscle soreness should dissipate naturally over the course of the next few days.

As you get stronger this delayed onset muscle soreness will become much less frequent. The pain you must avoid is pain in the neck, back or any of the joints. This is generally considered bad pain, if unsure if your pain is good or bad pain then please ask your instructor.

You are in control

You are in charge of your body and the exercises that you do. If an exercise looks too difficult or may cause or flare up an injury... then simply don't attempt it. You may either rest, waiting for the next exercise to commence or simply raise your hand and your instructor may give you an alternate exercise. If you find your express reformer classes are not suiting your body due to joint pain then please ask about our fully customised platinum studio sessions.

You also have control over the resistance that you apply to each exercise, thus increasing or decreasing the intensity of your workout. The springs are numbered for ease and a recommended spring range will be given for each exercise. This is of course just that - a recommendation - and you may increase or decrease the springs as you see fit.

Recommended frequency

One of the most common questions asked is - how often should I come? The answer is as often as you can, daily is the very best. We want you to get the absolute maximum results from your

workouts so it's simple; the more you come, the better your results will be. The real question is - how bad do you want it?

How to maximise results

'After 10 sessions you will feel better, after 20 sessions you will look better and after 30 sessions you will have a whole new body' Joseph Pilates was once quoted. Do your Pilates workouts as frequently as possible, follow the recommended eating plan and engage in some regular cardio activity to maximise your results. Make a full commitment to the program and totally transform your body; you have nothing to lose except weight!

How to maximise each workout

Each exercise has a name and this is mentioned at the commencement of each one. If you have come many times and you recognise the exercise and the movements then commence the exercise straight away thus maximising your workout. If you are just starting and you would like a full explanation simply wait for a few moments to ensure you are doing it correctly.

Continue to listen to the voice instruct, encourage and inspire you do maximise each exercise and your results.

Your personal instructor

An instructor is always helping to facilitate your class and you should use their expertise and skill to make your Pilates experience a good one. Please introduce yourself to your instructor each time you commence a class so they get to know your name and also please let them know if you have any particular ailments or minor strains. This should be done before your class so if needed they may adapt your program.

Your instructor will be constantly monitoring your technique for safety and to help you get the most out of your workouts. If you have any questions about each exercise please ask at the time by raising your hand, if you have more in-depth questions about your body, health, diet, stretching or wellness please ask before or after your class.

Procedures and bookings

You don't have to pre book a class but it's recommended. If you just drop in there is a good chance there will be a space available, but to avoid disappointment it's wise to call **07 3899 4555** and let one of our friendly team know that you would like to book an express reformer class.

Payments

Payments and re bookings for casual sessions should be done *before* your workout. This allows you to then enjoy your workout and the get on with your day after you finish. Processing your payments may take a few minutes if there is a line up so this is another good reason to arrive for your session approx 5 min early. Payment types accepted include cash, MasterCard, Visa, AMEX, eftpos, HICAPS. If you have a membership card all you need to do is swipe your card and move through to the waiting area

Payments for memberships are by direct debit only.

Cancellation fees

If you have booked a session and you wish to reschedule or cancel it there is no fee if you call or leave a voice message prior to 12 hours before you are due to commence your workout. If you don't show, or cancel in less than 12 hours, a \$10 fee will be charged to your credit card.

\$1 from every cancellation fee charge is donated to charity.

How to book or reschedule

You may call 07 3899 4555 to book a class or you can book a class when you are in the studio. You may book a week or two in advance but please advise us of changes in your schedule with as much notice as possible to avoid and cancelation fees.

How early should I get to my class?

You should aim to get to your class at least 5 minutes before your class is due to start. Our class times are pre scheduled to automatically commence at the scheduled times and cannot be changed, paused or restarted and so you must be ready to commence right on time.

What do I do with my belongings?

Take your gear with you into the reformer studio when doing a class and place it into the baskets provided in between each machine. The lockers in the waiting area are for the use of clients doing the Platinum studio sessions.

What to do when I arrive at the studio?

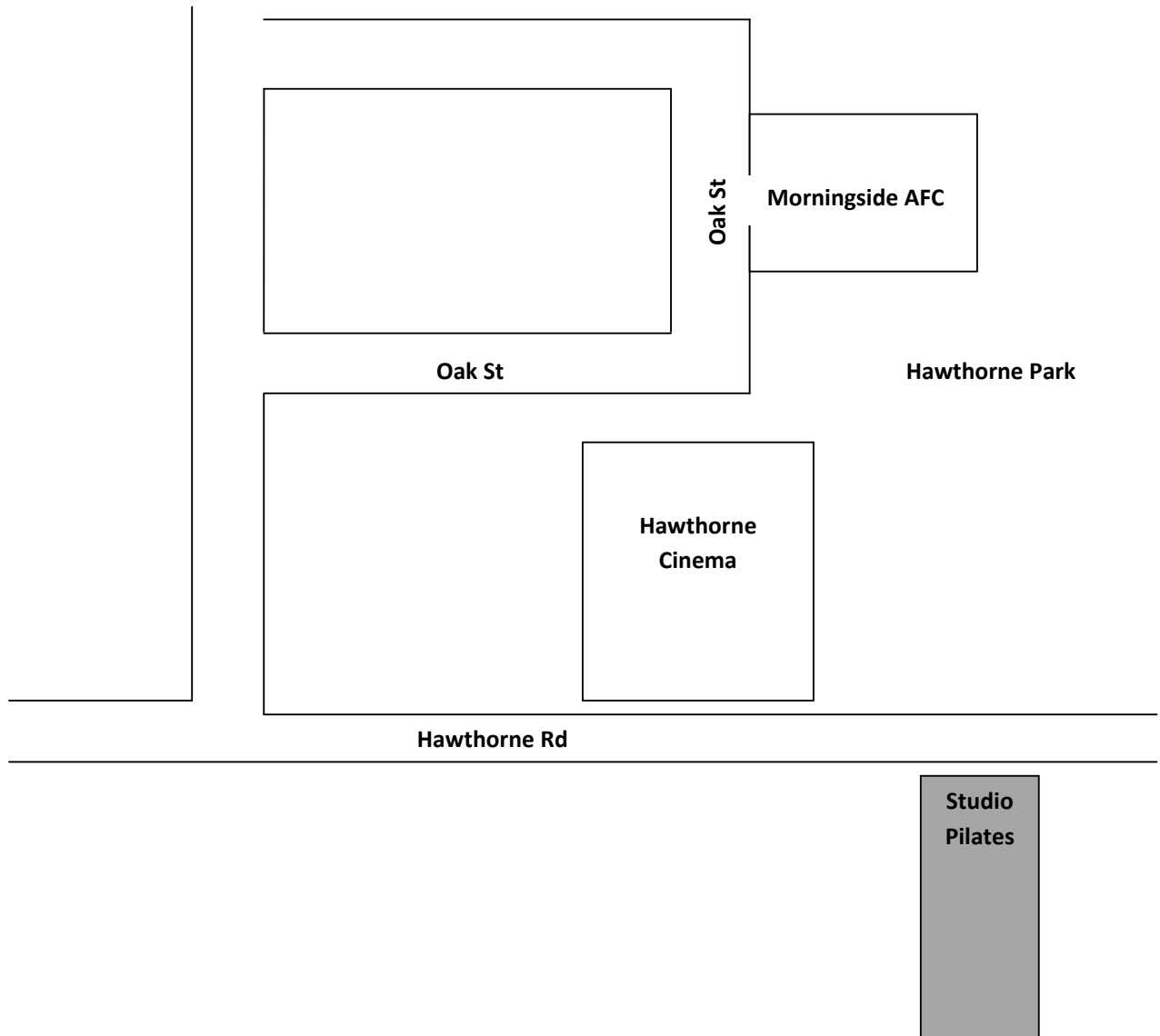
Please enter through the white French doors and proceed to swipe you membership card or tell one of our reception team you are here. Then wait in the waiting room for either the prompt on the TV or for your instructor to invite you into the studio to commence your class by opening the door. Then proceed into the studio and place your gear in the baskets provided. Prepare for your session. Male and female bathrooms are available at the rear of the studio near the stretch zone.

Stretch zone

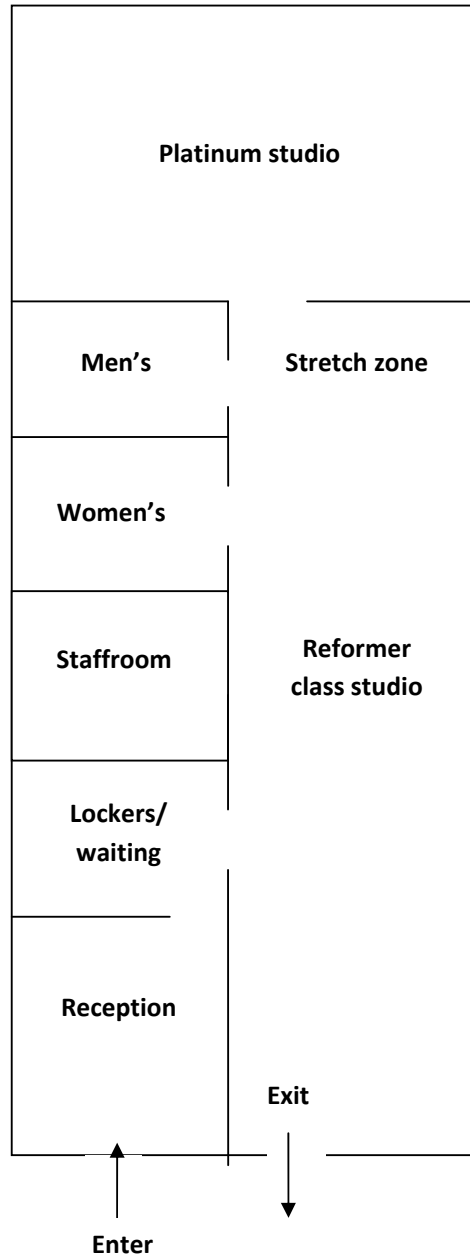
If you feel like taking your time and doing a few more stretches after your class then please utilise the stretch zone located at the back of the reformer studio near the platinum studio. Please ensure you remove your gear from your basket first to make way for the next class and keep noise to a minimum as others will be doing their class then. The stretch zone may also be used for those waiting to enter the platinum studio.

Where to park

Parking is available in front of our studio, on Hawthorne Rd, or Oak St bordering the park. Oak St is a good option as you can enjoy a leisurely walk across the park before your workout. Once you have found a park simply stroll across the park and cross the road carefully or use the crossing in front of the cinema.



Studio Floor Plan



Please continue to read and learn about the basic principles of your Studio Pilates International® workouts.

Basic Pilates Principles

Pelvic and spinal position

For each and every exercise, a specific spinal position will be described. We talk about 2 spinal positions in Pilates: neutral and imprint.

Neutral spine

A neutral spine means that the normal curve of the lower back is present, with the tailbone down on the floor. This should not be too large or forced, or too small and flattened out. Every person's neutral spine may look a little different due to different body shapes and sizes. A general rule to determine a neutral pelvis is that when lying on the back, if you draw an imaginary triangle between the pubic bone and the hip bones on both sides, the triangle should be parallel to the floor. That is, the pubic bone should not be higher or lower than the hip bones when lying down. When in the neutral spine position, no tension should be felt in the lower back muscles.



Imprinted spine

An imprinted spine refers to using the abdominals to draw the lower back slightly towards the floor, bringing the pubic bone will sit slightly higher than the hipbones. This does not mean tucking the bottom under so far that the tailbone or bottom lifts off the floor – the tailbone must always maintain contact with the floor; otherwise the t-zone will not work properly. Every person's imprinted spine will look different to the next, the distance between the lumbar spine and the floor will be different for each person – the spine does not have to be touching the floor.



General guidelines for imprint and neutral spine for exercises

In all exercises performed when one or both feet are placed either on the reformer, a neutral spine will be used.

In all exercises performed whereby both feet are elevated off the reformer and unsupported (eg during abdominal exercises) an imprinted position should be used to help stabilise the spine.

Ribcage position

The ribcage position is very important in abdominal activation. Often the ribcage will want to “pop out” – move forwards and open out and upwards, making it very difficult for the obliques to activate to stabilise the spine. Gentle abdominal muscle activation is required to maintain correct ribcage position.



Good ribcage position



Ribcage popping out/lifting up

Neck position

In the neutral position, the head is back in line with the rest of the body with the chin tucked in. Think of lengthening through the crown of the head and lengthening the back of the neck.

If you have an increased curve of the neck or a forward head position, you may require a head cushion under your neck to prevent it from overextending.



Correct neck position

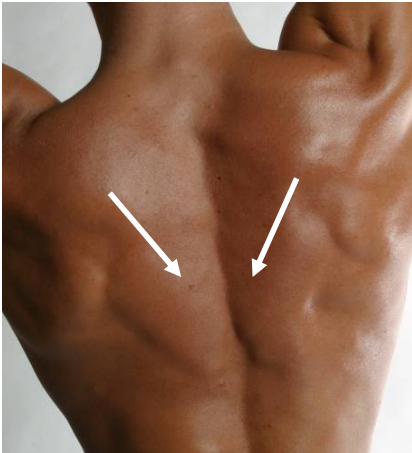
Incorrect neck position



Shoulder blade position

Think of the shoulder blades drawing down and back and in towards the spine in “V” shape. It also helps to concentrate on keeping the shoulders down away from the ears.

Correct



Good scapula position

Incorrect



Squeezing too hard and high

(Note – do not squeeze the shoulder blades together as hard as possible at the back either - it should be a gentle movement)

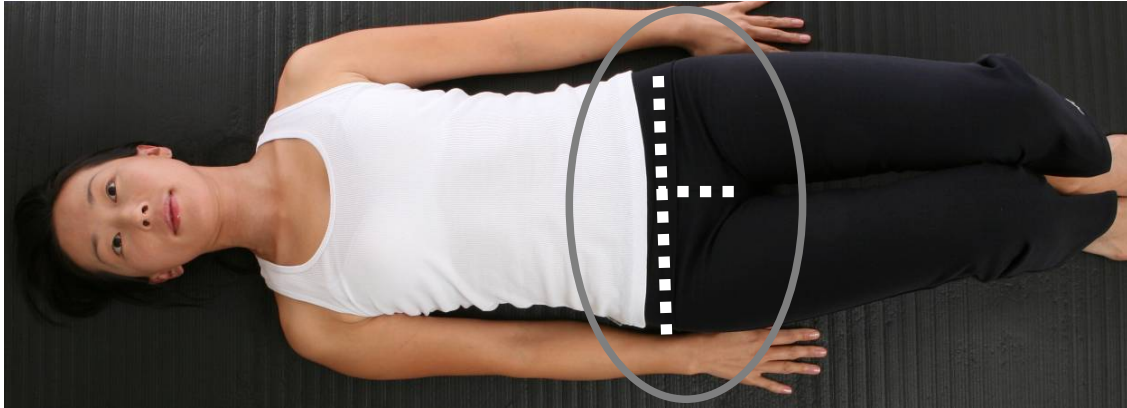
Even when the arms are lifting there should be a sense of the shoulder blades drawing down and in.

At the start of each exercise, we remind you to place the shoulder blades in the correct position. If this is not done, then throughout the exercise tension in the neck area may be felt, causing neck strain. A lot of people have this bad postural habit of tensing their upper shoulder/neck muscles and can cause headaches and general neck tension. The first step to changing this is concentration on the correct posture when working out and in everyday life.

T-zone

In Pilates, we call the 2 major stabilising muscles of the pelvis and spine (the transversus abdominus and pelvic floor muscles) collectively the “T-zone”. We do this because it is quicker and easier than saying transversus abdominus and pelvic floor.

If you draw an imaginary horizontal line between the hipbones, this is a visualisation for the transversus abdominus. If you then draw a line from the centre of this line down to the pubic bone, this is a visualisation for the pelvic floor muscle. These 2 imaginary lines form a T shape on the front of the pelvis, hence the name T-zone.



The T-zone

T-zone activation exercise

To activate the T-zone, start lying on the back with the knees bent and a neutral spine. Think firstly of the pelvic floor. Gently draw up the pelvic floor along the imaginary vertical line as if you were trying to stop from going to the toilet. You should feel the muscles deep in the pelvic floor tighten and draw upwards.

For men, you can think of drawing the testicles up towards the stomach. For women, you can try to tighten the muscles in the vagina and draw them up and in as if to stop the flow of urine.

Once the pelvic floor is tight, think of flattening the imaginary horizontal line in towards the spine, and drawing the hipbones across towards each other along the imaginary line.

If you place your fingers just inside the hipbones you should feel the muscles tighten ever so slightly underneath the fingers. You should feel like the muscles are drawing upwards, across towards the centre and in towards the spine. Think of the t-zone as a corset for stabilising the torso, when it tightens it pulls the area in slightly.

The rest of the abdominals should remain relaxed. There should be no holding of the breath. The spine should remain neutral. The t-zone does not move or imprint the spine, so if the spine moves or flattens then the other abdominals are activating also.

Before we perform any movement in Pilates it is vital that the t-zone is activated. The T-zone is the **basis of every exercise**, you must concentrate on keeping it engaged, flat and scooped whilst performing each movement in your class.

Breathing Technique

Each exercise has a breathing pattern and will be included in your instructions. Focus on the breathing as this maximises the results of your workout and works the abs harder.



Correct inhalation pattern – expanding the upper chest

INHALE through the nose, directing the breath into the upper chest.



Incorrect inhalation pattern – abdominal breathing



Correct exhalation pattern

EXHALE through the mouth and concentrate on drawing the ribcage down towards the hipbones and activating the abdominal muscles whilst keeping the t-zone tight.

General Breathing Pattern:

INHALE to prepare and tighten the t-zone

EXHALE as the movement is performed, exertion is needed and the abdominals are required to work their hardest.

The Reformer

The reformer is such a versatile piece of equipment – there are so many exercises that can be done on the reformer giving you a fantastic all over body workout with great variety so you never get bored! Lets' go over some reformer terminology.

The **carriage** is the padded sliding platform that you usually will stand, sit or lie on to perform most exercises. It contains a **head rest** and also some **shoulder pads**. At rest, the carriage sits in against the **stoppers**, and will usually be moved out and in to perform most of the exercises. The stoppers can be pulled up to stop the carriage returning in so far – it is used in some exercises if you have long legs.

The resistance on the reformer comes in the form of **springs**. There are 5 springs attaching to the carriage; 3 of them are normal spring strength (1 spring), one of the springs is 0.5 weighted and is called a half spring, and the last spring is 1.5 strength. So if all the springs were on, we would say that there was the equivalent of 5 springs on. If we were using 1 ½ springs, we could use either the 1 and the ½ spring, or the 1 ½ spring. The springs can be hooked on or off the hooks at the foot end of the reformer to change the resistance.

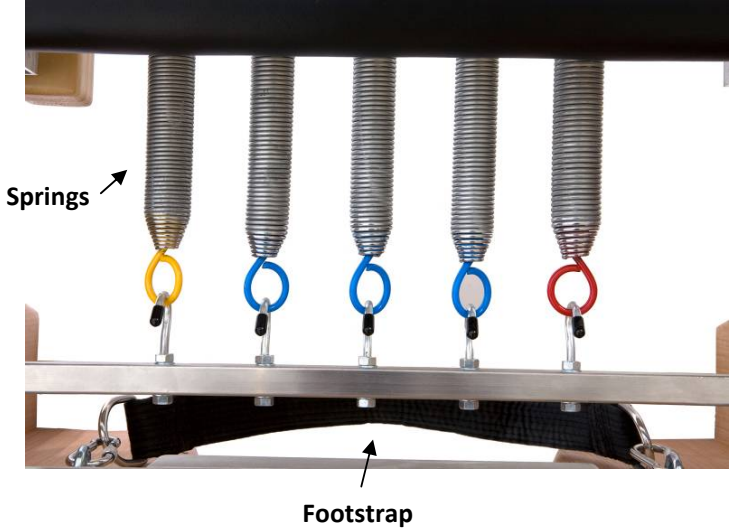
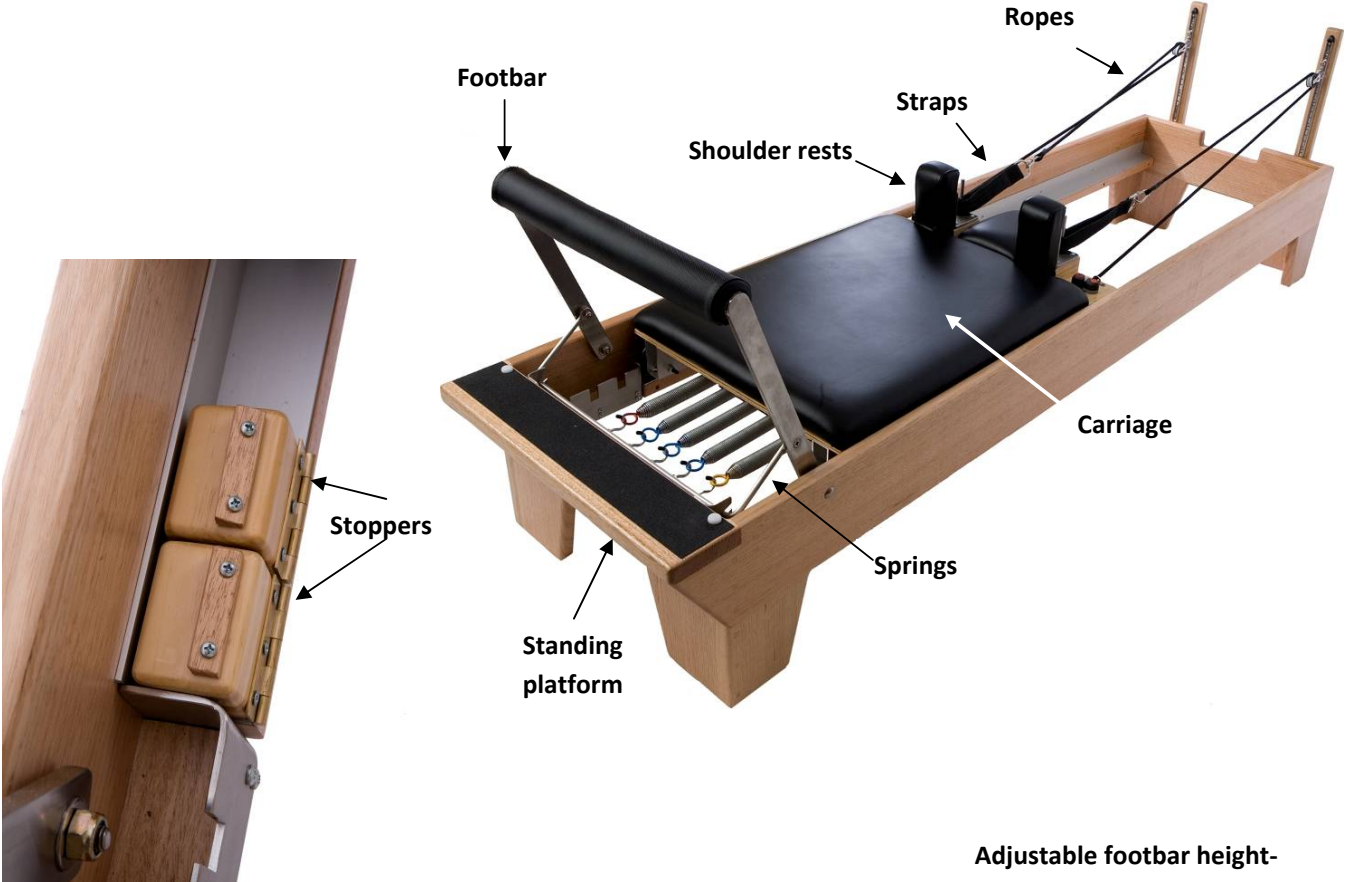
For some exercises where the focus is drawing the carriage out, the heavier the springs, the more difficult the exercise. For other exercises, the lighter the spring, the harder the exercise. We have suggested an average spring tension for each exercise - this a guide only as every person will be so different! You will get to know how many springs you do each exercise on, and there is always an instructor there to help you with the springs. Only make the springs as heavy as you can control.

The **footbar** has 3 height adjustments – high, middle and low. In most cases, the footbar will be in the highest position unless otherwise stated. For some exercises, the footbar will be unhooked and completely down. This is always the case with any exercises where you are standing on top of the reformer on the **standing platform**.

There are **ropes** attaching to the head end of the carriage, and there are **hand or foot straps** at the ends of the ropes, which sit over the small metal poles above the shoulder rests of the carriage. You can place either your hands or feet in the straps to move the carriage.

At the foot of the reformer, there is a single strap attached to the wood. This is called a **footstrap**, and is used to hook the feet under in some exercises to hook the feet under.

The Reformer





Studio Rules

Consider others in the studio by keeping noise to a minimum. If you are walking through the reformer studio whilst a class is in progress please do so quietly and quickly.

Close all doors behind you, this reduces noise between rooms and makes for a more pleasant experience for all.

Socks must be worn when working out at all times except when directed by your instructor – if you forget your socks we have special Pilates socks for sale at reception.

Wipe down your equipment or mat after you use it in preparation for the next class as they will do the same for you. Place paper towels in the bins provided after use.

Be punctual. If you have a scheduled class your instructor won't wait for you; the class will commence as scheduled without you.

Treat the equipment with care. It's made from wood and can be damaged easily. We ask that you refrain from knocking it with the boxes etc.

Lockers are for use when doing a platinum studio workout and the baskets are for use when participating in a reformer class.

Advise your instructor before your class of any injuries or ailments so they can best enhance your workout.

If you purchase a water bottle from the fridge please pay for it either before your session or on your way out.

Please keep the bathroom facilities in a clean and tidy manner after use to ensure a nice environment for all.

Please take all of your personal belongings with you when you leave. Any property left will be retained for 48 hours before being discarded. Water bottles and socks will not be retained and will be immediately discarded for hygiene reasons.