

So you keep hearing the word “Barre”. All of your friends are going to the Barre is it the Bar? You ask about it but no one can explain it properly. You’ve come up with a few things it isn’t. It’s not a place to have a pint. It’s not a big exam hopeful lawyers take. You can’t “raise it” or “limbo under it”. It’s not even spelled right so what in the world is it?!

The word “Barre” comes from the ballet barre. However, there are no toe shoes or tutus involved. We use the ballet barre as a prop to increase our range of motion, aid in balance, lengthen and increase flexibility and challenge stability in every muscle of the body.

There are many approaches to Barre, as you will see throughout this article. Some studios offer a mind/body method. The teachers may focus more on flow and breath in this type of environment. Other studios come from a classical ballet background where form and precision are the main ingredients to a class. Still others may come from a Pilates background where alignment and an individual’s muscular range are the focus of the movements.

Whichever type of Barre you end up choosing you will find they have many elements in common. The class will flow and feel a lot more like a great party with your girlfriends rather than a grunt filled sweat session at the gym.

That is not to say you won’t be working. You will, harder than you have, in almost any other type of workout. This is because of the types of muscles that are targeted in a class, and the need for endurance in these exercises. Unlike a traditional weight lifting regimen Barre classes use smaller weights. These smaller weights allow us to target muscles in your body that don’t get enough attention. By using smaller weights with higher repetitions, we allow the muscles to “burn out” creating the long lean lengthened look of a dancer. Thus as you continue to take class you will find that your muscles are increased in flexibility, strength and duration.... oh, and your cute toned thighs aren’t bad either!

Ok, so now you know why we Barre and how we Barre, but what exactly do we do in Barre? That’s actually the best part.... It’s always something a little different. Most classes will have a standing series at the barre. These

moves are a combination of standing Pilates, ballet and calisthenics. Let's just say that your lower body will be feeling the love. From there you will see a mix of strength training with weights, thera-bands, and/or different sized and weighted balls. You may also find a cardio sequence meant to get your heart pumping. There is also a mat portion. Here you will be reminded of old school aerobics, intense core work and Pilates mat exercises. Classes may have some yoga and stretch sequences designed to keep the blood flowing and release any built up lactic acid.

But the best part, besides the amazing full body workout, is the music! The entire class is set to up-tempo, fun and energetic tunes that will get you moving, sweating and keep you motivated until the very last minute. No matter your level, age, experience or injury issues all are welcome and encouraged to try it out. Some studios may even offer classes based on levels so as you begin your Barre adventure you will feel confident in a class designed to help you grow. In all classes the teacher is there to guide you and help you find modifications specific to your needs and ability. So whether you are an ex-ballerina, a cardio junkie, a yoga guru, a core crazed Pilates fanatic, or just a lover of great tunes this class has something for every BODY!

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