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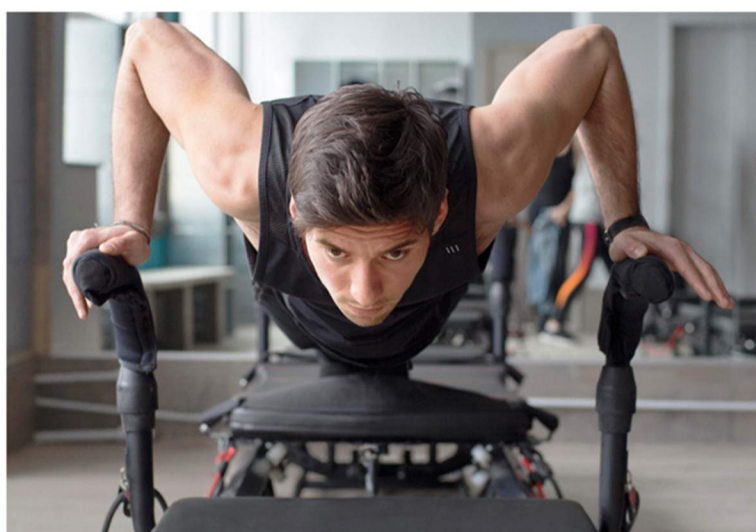
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Gear

The Hottest and Hardest New Workout: Can You Handle the Megaformer?

This new exercise machine will leave your muscles quivering and your body leaner, stronger, and fitter than ever.

BY CRISTINA GOYANES



He had just finished the Insanity DVD regimen for the second time and was in the best shape of his life, so Jesse Coleman, a 35-year-old editor in New York City, was far from intimidated when an actor friend from Los Angeles recommended he try a Megaformer class. But he started shaking within the first minutes of a 50-minute session at SLT in Manhattan, he says, and was sore for two days afterward. Following a regimen of three to four weekly sessions for the next 18 months, Coleman saw his waist shrink by two inches and his arms and shoulders develop serious definition, and for the first time in his life he can see his abs. And although he's much more muscular, Coleman feels trim: "Thankfully, I don't have giant trapezoids or a barrel chest."

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Put simply, the 10-foot-long, 250-pound Megaformer is a Pilates machine on steroids. You're rarely ever working just one muscle group—for example, you may do biceps curls with resistance straps while doing a lunge. "It allows you to target muscles from so many different angles, which you can't really do on just one machine," says Sebastien Lagree, a 39-year-old French former bodybuilder who invented the Megaformer with the aim of turning the classic Pilates reformer, which he calls "the old horse and carriage," into a Lamborghini (he's currently working on an upgrade, the Supraformer, due out later this year).



ON THE BENCH: A Megaformer class at Brooklyn Bodyburn in Williamsburg. "The reverse kneeling inner thigh is a killer thigh and glute workout," says owner Tracy Carlinsky.

"The Megaformer workout is designed to develop core strength and muscular endurance, which means you will burn calories and work your muscles to fatigue with high repetitions," says Michele Olson, Ph.D., an exercise physiologist and Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, cautioning that a decent level of baseline fitness is necessary for anyone thinking about tackling it. "Its pace and challenge are not for Pilates neophytes," she says. "It attracts people who prefer the amped-up pace and high-energy atmosphere."

And people who want to burn a serious number of calories—Lagree estimates a session can burn up to 800 of them. Classes focus on time, not reps, with each movement lasting about 60 seconds and working up to 600 muscles at once. Right when you feel like you're about to collapse, the instructor will ask you to "pulse it." "Your brain will scream, 'Oh, my God—please stop!' but that's what you have to do," Lagree says. "The reward is that your body will continue to burn fat long after the torture is over."

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The Best Places to Try It

There are 135 fitness studios (mostly in California) that offer the Megaformer (or its predecessor, the Proformer), with another 100 across the U.S. scheduled to be on board within the next 12 months. Here is where you can embrace the Mega-trend.

Chicago
BODY R+D
bodyrmd.com/chicago

Dallas
THE PILATESBARRE
thepilatesbarre.com

Las Vegas
THE PILATES STUDIO
thepilatesstudiolasvegas.com

Los Angeles
PILATES PLUS WEST HOLLYWOOD
pilatespluswesthollywood.com

Miami Beach
JETSET PILATES
jetsetpilates.com

New York City
SLT
sltnyc.com

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brooklynbodyburn.com

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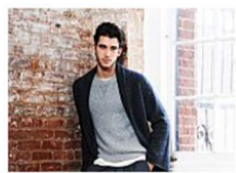
Photographs, from top: courtesy of SLT; courtesy of Brooklyn Bodyburn.



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