

Featured exercise – “Bridging on the Reformer”

Bridging is a fantastic exercise to improve core strength and spine mobility.

Bridging on the reformer

Bridging on the reformer is a beginners exercise to teach the body to articulate the spine into flexion – ie move one vertebra at a time.

As a result to pain, stiffness or poor posture, the body can lose its ability to move at each level (or vertebra) in the spine. Pilates exercises like the bridge can improve this “intersegmental” mobility which will ensure a healthy spine by allowing even distribution of forces through the spine.

What are the benefits of Bridging?

- Encourages and improves deep abdominal core strength.
- Stretches the back muscles.
- Mobilises the spine into flexion.
- Stretches the hip flexor muscles (front hip muscles)
- Strengthens gluteal (buttock) muscles



How do I do this exercise?

Set up:

3 springs attached, foot bar is up high, head rest down.

Lying on your back, arms reaching long at the sides of your body, heels on foot bar hip width apart.

Hips and knees bent to 90°

Movement:

Inhale to prepare, as you exhale start to “bridge” by rolling up from your tail bone, lifting bottom off the carriage.

Imagine you are peeling one vertebra at a time off the carriage.



Use your lower abdominal muscles to lift up the pelvis rather than using your leg muscles, and keep the carriage as still as possible.

Do not let your knees flare out.

Breathe in at the top, then, as you breathe out, slowly roll the spine back down, thinking of lowering one vertebra at a time. *(like a strand of pearls – lowering one pearl at a time)*

Too easy?

You can make “bridging” more challenging by:

Leg extension

From Bridge position exhale to extend hips and knees, pushing carriage back. Keep tail bone directed up to knees. Breathe in to return to starting position, bringing the carriage in. Breathe out to slowly roll back down.

Single Leg Bridge

The leg extension can also be done on one leg.



Can anyone do this exercise?

If you are suffering from an acute lumbar disc injury, have osteoporosis or knee injuries, miss this one out. Likewise if you are in mid to late stage of pregnancy.

Always consult your physiotherapist before attempting a new exercise.