

The Pilates Reformer With Karen Grinter

Cast List

Steven Bruce

SB

Karen Grinter

KG

Ana Fodor

AF

SB: Apologies for the discontinuity, but you're joining us today live on location in a very sunny bit of Northamptonshire, where we're going to be talking to Karen Grinter about some of her Pilates equipment. Karen Grinter you might remember has been on our show in the evening before talking about how Pilates can help a variety of patients, back pain patients in particular. But we talked then about the Pilates Reformer, and that's what I'm standing in front of now. A cross between a multi-gym and 50 Shades of Grey, about which I know absolutely nothing, so Karen, thank you for inviting us-

KG: Pleasure.

SB: ... into your studio. I'm looking at this thing and it's got springs and straps and-

KG: Stuff.

SB: Tell us about it, what does it do? What's it for

KG: Okay. What's it for? It was a piece of sort of classical Pilates equipment that Joseph Pilates came up with. So you've got a carriage, shoulder rest, head rest. There's a variety of springs down here underneath.

SB: So we've got, there are five springs you can connect-

KG: Yes, there's five springs. Yeah.

SB: ... but you can disconnect as many as you like.

KG: Yeah, you can disconnect. Yeah. And then footbar Then at the back, this has also got the tower. So the reformer on its own, you can just see, so just this bit, but then I've got the tower bit as well. So that's sort of from the Cadillac, yeah.

SB: I see, so this upright bit is-

KG: It's a separate piece, yeah.

SB: ... a separate piece. Yeah, okay.

KG: So you can use it just as a reformer, you can use it just as the tower, and I'll try and show you that later because I've got a mat to go on it, or you can combine the two. So you can sort of mess around with and do what you will.

SB: Right. Okay. What should we start with then? Shall we-

KG: Well, traditionally, we start with the footwork. So I think we've got a willing-

SB: Let's get Ana, come in.

KG: Just hold there Ana. Lie on your back.

SB: If you know anything at all to do with the Academy-

AF: Head that way.

SB: ... you will know Ana very well. Ana is the heart and soul of the business. She is our head of happiness and she volunteered to be model today. She's a bit nervous I might point out, especially since it says on your wall chart, feet in straps.

KG: Feet in straps, I know.

SB: It sounds a bit obstetric.

KG: Yeah, just a little bit. So the traditional sort of start with reformer stuff is footwork and legwork. So if you have a client that's got dodgy knees, dodgy hips, ankles and stuff like that, this thing is great because ... I'd have to stand at the end normally, but what I'm looking for is the tracking. So if you ... Actually, I will be kind to you and take a spring off-

AF: Thank you.

KG: ... so I don't kill you. So you would start with getting everything lined up, and then again, as I spoke last time, neutral pelvis, neutral spine. So the easiest thing in the world, if you think of traditional gym equipments, like the leg press and you see sort of people, like I ram that back in and then I start sort of pushing up and down with little finesse. So we would be looking for everything to be nicely lined up, and then the cues are usually pelvic floors, and abdominals, because we always need to work those, and then just press out gently Ana and just straighten your legs. So you're just going to go out and in. I know. All the way to fully straight, don't do half a job.

AF: Locked knees.

KG: That's it.

AF: Okay.

KG: And then back in again. Just keep going, just keep doing it. That's it. That's it. Off you go again.

SB: So this is actually something you could do at your local gym, because there are plenty of machines that are very similar.

KG: Yeah, stuff that's kind of similar at the local gym. I suppose it comes back to sort of attention to detail again. So if people have got ... We've all got sort of our normal movement patterns, and sometimes they're not actually that supportive of our bodies. Again, it's something with those sort of 10,000 steps. 10,000 steps are great if your gait is lovely, but if you're nursing a dodgy hip, so one hip is getting trashed 5,000 times a day. So that's what we're kind of looking for in terms of the footwork. You can do it in a variety of positions, so you can do it with the legs parallel, you can go to keeping your toes down onto the bar, bring your heels together, toes apart. That's it. Then press out again, so really push through.

SB: What's the advantage of this?

KG: You're taking it into external rotation. So you're just moving the femur into a little bit of external rotation and then back in, yeah. So you can

get a little bit more work around sort of glutes and medial hamstrings to a certain extent, adductors, so a bit more work through there, because sort of they get quite neglected sometimes, but they're quite important for sort of good, stable knees. Getting them worked...

AF: Do they give you that nice gap as well?

KG: I suppose they could if you worked that hard.

AF: I'm okay.

KG: I did have a guy who once said to me that he didn't need to work his inner thighs, that was just something that women needed to do, and I said, "You've got sort of the same inner thigh, sort of anatomy as I've got,, they kind of need to work." Okay, so in you come. Bring your legs together, bring your toes there and then lift your heels really high and press out again with your heels high. So give it a bit of welly. So again, just changing the angle at the feet, you're going to work through into the calves a little bit more.

SB: That doesn't look as though it's hard work. It doesn't look as though you're likely to slip off there and then sort of come crashing down...

KG: Because I've been kind to her, spring.

AF: She's taken a spring off.

KG: But that's-

AF: I can feel it in the different areas.

KG: Yes, exactly. As you sort of move thing around. What you can do is, you can take it to the sort of either end of the range. So if you go out and stay out for me, so push all the way out. So if I give the cue that say just bend your knees a little and then straighten, that's it. Bent a little and straighten. So you can work at that end of the range of movements. So you could say ... If you've got somebody that's really unstable around here, maybe sort of vastus medialis or something, you can really sort of action that a little bit more. Then if you come in for me and if you go to the other end, so push out a little and now squeeze it back in. Push out a little bit more, more, more, more, and then squeeze it back in.

Now if you focus down to where your hamstrings meet your bum, that kind of gluteal fold, and think of really wrapping around in there. So it's almost like a Sumo squat, and you can squeeze in, pressing out, squeeze in. So the emphasis is on getting it in. Does that make sense? And you can-

AF: I'm not sure.

KG: You can feel it a little bit more if you go to the turned out wide position. Lovely. Press out again.

SB: Not the most dignified of positions.

KG: No, it's not. It's kind of like gynecology for beginners position. In you come. So squeeze it in. So out, press out, now squeeze it in, in, in, in, in and out and squeeze it in. Lovely. Yeah. So you can really feel it wrapping right around there. Yeah? Perfect. So then you can do stuff on one leg. And then keep that one still. So if you've got someone that's very unstable, you can literally press out.

SB: Do you get many people who actually buy their own reformer or do most of them comes to a studio like yours?

KG: They do, but they're quite expensive.

SB: I was going to ask that.

KG: I think this is about 5,000 pounds, this bit of kit. In you come. So they do. But to be honest, what I tend to say to people is, "Don't spend the money. If you haven't created the exercise habit, don't bother." "Oh, but I love it. I'll be on it every day." I say, "No you won't, you'll keep your ironing on it. Because you only do it when you're here and you've paid me to come and do it, so you're not doing it at home. So if you're not doing it at home, don't spend money on kit." But that's lots of people, isn't it?

SB: Tell us about how often are you getting people on this thing? Because they've got to come to you. I mean, if I went to the gym, I'd be trying to go three times.

KG: Three times a week. Yeah, some people come once a week, some people come twice a week, some people do class once a week and then this. I don't really mind, it's kind of up to them, whatever they choose to do. As with anything, it's as much as you can give people input into their body, give them the stuff that they're kind of cheating on to sort of work on to try and improve stuff and then just hope that they will go away and do something at home, as with all things.

SB: We've got a message from Bob Allen here, you know Bob-

KG: Oh, hello Bob!

SB: Yeah, Bob says, "I've had the pleasure of using the reformer before and happy memories are all flooding back."

KG: Lovely.

SB: Thanks Bob.

KG: Thanks. You can put you leg down now darling.

AF: Okay.

KG: So we go from a little bit of working through the legs. So can I just squeeze past you?

SB: Yeah, sure.

KG: I've got to grab ... Stay where you are. So if you put your hands on the inside loops, and that one. So just hold the loops.

AF: Like that?

KG: Hands up straight.

SB: When does the blindfold come in?

KG: It doesn't. Right. Pull your hands a little bit so you've got a bit of tension. That's it. Now take your legs off. So you're going to hold that leg in the air. So keep them up there. Yeah, you have to use your tummy a little bit. Right. And then now you've gone a little kind of bend with the wrist, so straighten that. So keep the wrist nice and neutral and just pull your hands all the way down to the sides of your hips and bring it back up to the top.

AF: This is very weird.

KG: All the way down to the side of your hips. Good. And back to the top. So now we're sort of doing a little bit of shoulder work and mid back work. Keep going. Yes, you're not here to enjoy yourself. That's it, lovely. So we still have what I call 12:00, and then just take your arms out at sort of 10 to 2:00, there, and now pull down on the diagonal, and then reach back out at 10 to 2:00. Good. Keep going.

SB: Okay, you've got a fixed pattern for how many repetitions people have to do or?

KG: It depends. It depends what they're there for, what their underlying fitness is. So it can be fives or it can be 10s, but not really more than 10 to be honest.

SB: Is that 10 to the point of failure or is it-

KG: No, it's 10 good ones and stop, move onto the next one. Now if you go down to quarter to three, I might be kind to you and take a spring off, and now pull all the way into your bum, slowly.

AF: Oh sorry, yeah, that was-

KG: That's okay, I did make it lighter. So once you get to this position, so it's like lateral raises if you like in the gym with free weights, it's the same thing, but you can-

SB: It's the opposite.

KG: Well, as in the points of gravity is slightly different, but the range of movement is a similar movement. But you can make it easier or you can make it more difficult. So obviously, the lighter it is, the easier it is. But if you've got somebody rehabbing a shoulder, then you're looking at a nice range of movement. Come up to the top and do a circle.

SB: Oh sorry.

KG: It's okay. Pull down. So go down to the side of your hips and then take it around out to the side and come back up to the top, and then do it again. Pull it all the way down, around and up. And then you can change direction. But you can also add ab curls to it. So if you've got somebody who's a lot fitter, they could add an ab curl. So as they're pulling their arms down, they can ab curl up. You could send the leg away, you could send both legs away. So there's tons of ways that you can layer it. You can stop there now darling.

AF: Okay.

SB: Question for you.

KG: Keep hold of them for me.

SB: I don't know who's asked the question, but they've said, "Are we always after a full comfortable range of movement or could you use isometric holds?" Then they've just turned the volume down in case anyone walks past their office and wonders what sort of establishment they're running.

KG: This is my business. Yes, you can literally do whatever you want with it in a way. If there's something I'm specifically working on with somebody, then yeah, I can play with it. So the move away then from traditional Pilates exercises to something that's going to be functional and helpful to them.

SB: I have to say, I've lost sight of what the benefit of isometric holds is.

KG: I'm not sure either, but maybe that's what they like to do, so yeah.

SB: Maybe it's just their comfortable range, you get benefits from.

KG: Yeah, sometimes it may just be that's helpful to that person. Who knows?

Right. So now we're going to go feet in straps. So push away ... This is not something that blokes are terribly comfortable with. Push away with one leg-

AF: Why wouldn't they?

KG: ... and give me the other leg, and you're going to put that there, and keep the tension on that, and then this ... I know. This one. Yes. Now glue your legs together like you're properly brought up. Press away to straight legs. So push away and lower them down. It's a bit creaky, don't worry about that. There. So now your focus now is not to kind of wiggle around in the middle as if you're on week one of Strictly.

AF: Okay.

KG: So lots of core.

SB: That takes you back, doesn't it Ana?

KG: And now bend your knees just towards you until your thigh bones of vertical. So bend, bend, bend. Lovely. And then press the legs away to straight, so back where you came from. Good. And then do it again. Bend in. Lovely. And then pressed away. Perfect. And this is actually harder than it looks. Keep going.

AF: Oh.

SB: I'm just worried she's going to slip over a strap and I'm going to get slapped in the head by-

KG: She's fine. She'll be fine. So just in and out. And again, you can do it parallel, you can do in external rotation, you can even do it internally rotated. So you've got lots of nice movement going on in the hip so-

SB: And you've got these wonderfully nautical cleats on here-

KG: Yes, I know. To adjust it.

SB: ... to adjust the length, yeah.

KG: So yeah, you can change it really quickly and really easily. So that's kind of bend and stretch. You do lift and lower up. So keep your legs straight for me Ana, and now keep neutral. So press your tail bone into the mat and lift your legs towards you, and then press the legs the way. Away, away, away. Lovely. And again towards you. Good, and away. And again this you can do in-

AF: Oh, I know, it's stretching my hands.

KG: Like really lovely stretch, isn't it?

AF: Hmm.

KG: You can kind of hand of hang out there, and if you go slightly wide. Now, just think of the head of your femur and your hip joint and just turn it out and turn it in. So just rotate from there, and then gently in. Lovely.

SB: You're feeling that? Ana, you're feeling that?

AF: Hmm.

KG: It's kind of nice. Yeah.

AF: Yeah.

KG: So somebody with a bit of a sticky hip, arthritic, you've got a bit of support here and a nice neutral position here and you can kind of get that moving. You can do circles. So down circles. Let's go down together. You open, just shoulder width apart, come around, and up, and do it again.

AF: Okay.

KG: Yeah? So down, open out around it. Oh, that was a little-

AF: Yeah, it was a wiggle, wasn't it?

KG: It was. Stop it.

AF: I can't.

KG: Get a grip woman.

AF: I need more sessions with Karen is what I need.

KG: Clearly?

AF: Yeah, absolutely.

KG: You need to get that core. Now reverse it, up together, and around and down. Yeah. It's harder than it looks.

SB: There's plenty of opportunity here for the weak leg to be neglected and all the work to be done by sort of the dominant or healthy leg or limb.

KG: Exactly. So if then you take these off, bend your knees for me, take one foot out, put that there, take the other foot out, put that there. So now this is where this machine has its benefits, because you can do exactly the same movement. Push away again for me darling, I'm putting this-

AF: Do you want my feet in again?

KG: Yeah, but this time push.

AF: Right, what am I doing?

KG: Give me your other leg.

AF: Oh, give you the other leg. Okay.

KG: Now press away hard. There. Okay. So do the same movement, bend in and press away. Now it's a lot harder for her-

AF: That is.

KG: ... but normally, I would do this not with a beginner and on the fixed mat so that this stops moving. But now the springs are independent, so she will notice if there's one-

AF: Which one.

KG: ... that's dominant.

AF: Yeah.

KG: Exactly. And you can do exactly the same movements again. It's quite hard, isn't it?

AF: Yes.

KG: I know.

SB: I get the impression that people don't take this CPD seriously. I've got one question here that says, "Has Steven been making Ana paint the studio white?" No. We're on location. I said that.

AF: Are you not liking my outfit.

SB: The other one says, "I want to say well done Ana for volunteering, (being volunteered to do this). You're a brave woman. And a serious question, "Karen, how do you explain to clients to engage their core? I worry about the number of practitioners who ask clients to suck their belly button into the floor. Is that the standard way of doing it?"

KG: I think there's lots of navel to spine. I tend to get really sick of hearing navel to spine. I work with a women's health physio and a pelvic floor specialist, and she spent quite a lot of time with all of us explaining what to do and how to sort of do it. So I tend to use her cues, which is, close your back passage, close your front passage, pull in the lower abdominal wall slightly, and then sort of pull the upper abdominal wall ribs in slightly. And it's not kind of ... because it's not like you're constipated or whatever. So it's just getting used to that sort of small amount of contractures. So my dog's arriving now.

SB: We're being joined by a small dog called Millie.

KG: So that's how we cue it, and clients get used to it and it's the way to strengthen pelvic floors, and as Michelle will say, it's something we should be doing every single day, all of us.

SB: I'm sure I mentioned to you last time when you came into the studio, Adam K., the former obstetrician who wrote the book 'this is going to hurt' he used to have a line about engaging-

KG: Oh yes, sitting in the bath.

SB: Sitting in a bath full of eels-

KG: Of eels.

SB: ... and imagine you're trying not to let them get in.

KG: It was quite ... Yeah. I mean, yeah, it is, it's whatever it takes, I guess, whatever imagery works for anybody. If it gels and it makes them think, "Oh, that's okay, now I understand."

SB: Predictably, we've been asked about contraindications to using this.

KG: Yeah, all the usual ones basically. I guess it's-

KG: There's not really-

SB: It can be very gentle

KG: Yeah, it can be. I mean, if I've got somebody who's pregnant, they're not going to be in this position, but I can keep them working and I can sit them up. So they're sitting up and they're doing kind of legwork and things like that. The springs can be really light, and actually, when the springs are lighter Ana, if I show you.

AF: Oh my God.

SB: So they're color coded, are they, those springs?

KG: So yeah, you've got, there's 200% springs, a 50% spring, this is a 25% spring and then there's 125% spring. So now Ana's moving it up, so this is really easy on her legs, but if she really whacks it out, she's going to probably ... her feet will leave. But it's more than about your core being in control of it. So sometimes the lighter it is, the harder it is, and sometimes it's obviously easier on another area of the body. So at the moment, it's more about this bit than it is about ... So it's about the control, and then your legs aren't really getting much of a workout either, they're just hanging out there. So that's the sort of some of the laying down stuff. There's lots more. Do you want to jump off?

AF: Yes.

KG: We'll do a slightly different position.

SB: Whole you're doing that, somebody said, "Do you use this for stretching as well as for strengthening?"

KG: You can. Yeah yeah.

SB: You did do a hamstring stretch a little while ago.

KG: We did a hamstring stretch. There's a great hip flexor stretch, which is there and there, so staying nice and upright, and if I drop that back there, that is bliss, and then if I move it there, that's a nice hamstring stretch. If I lean forward, it'll switch this off. But it's a really nice way of opening up through the hips, along with lots of other things. So let's do a little bit of upper bodywork. So what I want you to do, kneel on here for me with your hands on here. So have your feet against the shoulder rest.

SB: Like that?

KG: Yeah. So take your hands wider and thumbs over the top. Perfect. Now drop your hips forward, lean forward, straighten your arms, lift your head up. Just chin down, back of the neck long. Okay, so just little bit of a squeeze here, pull in your tummy, pull in your waist for all your worth.

AF: Oh, thanks.

KG: Now push backwards. So just push away, give it a bit of welly. Lovely. And then bring it in. Keep going. So yeah, don't collapse. Don't go into hyperextension there. So yeah, that is going to protect your lower back. And then again. Good. So at the moment, with two red springs, it's a little bit of work for her shoulders, and if I was really mean, she'd be in a plank position.

SB: Red springs are the strong ones?

KG: So she's on two reds, so if I-

SB: Is that strong or is that strong?

KG: Yeah, it's fairly strong. Fairly strong for Ana. Now come in, bring it in. So if I take it down, pull in your tummy, lift up, push away. Now it's less work for her shoulders, but much more work for-

AF: Oh, it is. It is.

KG: ... her core. Yeah, exactly.

AF: It's like trying to-

KG: And then if you really annoy me, no springs at all. I won't do that today, it's okay.

AF: Thank you. You're very kind.

KG: That's all right. And again you can make it sort of ... You can stop there darling.

AF: Okay.

KG: You can make it easier by making it heavier. So you focus on a little bit of sort of shoulder mobility and strength. You could add a little press up into it. There's tons and tons of things that you can do.

SB: I can see why you need somebody to teach you what to do with it though, because if you just buy one of these things, you'd not know half of this stuff.

KG: No, there are so many variations, it's ridiculous.

SB: I didn't actually reintroduce you at the start of this, did I? But I mean you work very closely with east-midlands spines, you're getting lots of referred patients from osteos, from physios-

KG: Physios.

SB: ... from Nick, the orthopedic consultant as well. So presumably, they're sending them to you either post-surgery or post-injury for this sort of training?

KG: Sometimes, yeah, and sometimes just to avoid it, just to avoid surgery, more than that I guess now than surgery.

SB: Well, Nick's very much about-

KG: Nick's always been.

SB: ... avoiding surgery, hasn't he? Yeah.

KG: Always. The first time I ever met him, it was, there's stuff we can do and let's go down that path.

SB: If you're wondering which Nick we're talking about, t's Nick Birch. We've had a number of evening broadcasts with Nick, you can look them up on the library. Fantastic broadcast, really informative. He's very generous with sharing all his knowledge.

KG: Yes, very. So let's be nice to you, let's sit you on a box. So jump off there and then we add a long box. So if you sit facing that way Ana-

SB: Okay.

AF: ... and let's be kind and not-

SB: Don't feel you have to be kind.

KG: I don't want to so that she can't work for you tomorrow because she's in so much pain.

AF: Yeah, I need a day off just to recover.

KG: Okay, so this is-

SB: Take Saturday.

KG: ... classic rotator calf exercise. So elbow into the side. Sit nice and tall. Thank you Ana. You're too young to be slumping. Pull that hand in front of you and then reach away again. She's still have got a hand down her neck. Sorry.

AF: No, it's okay.

KG: In you go, and slowly out.

SB: That looks quite hard.

KG: So keep that elbow tucked into your side. There you go, in. So this is a classic rotator calf strengthening exercise that physios give everybody all the time. So this is the nice version, sitting on a box.

SB: To be honest, before you go on, this looks to me, if you've got one of these things, it's easier to do, but it looks to me like a nicer exercise than having a TheraBand trapped on a door knob and using a TheraBand.

KG: I guess, yeah. So again, you could adjust the weight. If you swap it into your other hand, so swap into that hand to now pull it away from you darling. So elbow into your side, thumb up, so again, sit tall.

AF: Oh, terrible.

KG: Yes. I think I'll pull it away. Keep your elbow in. Yeah, squash my fingers. There you go. There. So what you're looking for now-

AF: That's harder.

KG: ... because it's a lot harder to pull something away from you than it is towards you, and then what they'll do is they'll kind of throw their body around. So this-

SB: I mean, She's cheating.

KG: And she's cheating.

AF: What am I doing? Oh God.

KG: So this is the sort of easy version, but you can make it more difficult and have people kneeling. So once you're kneeling, then you've got to be a lot more stable with that movement. And again, you can add stuff to it. Now, there's lots of dragons in Rushden, so we have to go practice our drawing of sword exercise. So you're going to pull like, if I come around here.

AF: Yeah, show me.

KG: You're going to pull your arm up to there, and then reach it away and then bring it back in. So it's kind of like drawing a sword. Game of Thrones. So in and up. I know. Let's not- and allow-

SB: Come on Ana, it's one blue spring, put some effort in.

AF: Would you like to show me how it's done Mr. Bruce?

KG: Keep going. Off you go again, just do one more.

AF: I think I need to-

KG: Trying to not look like you're doing Pilates for the terrified.

AF: Thank you.

KG: So again, masses and masses and masses of things. We could sort of do arms hugging up overhead. Let's call a nice one where you're kneeling, you can go off to the side and you've got your arm over there and your head's down there and you'll straighten that arm up. So you're doing a nice side stretch and working into triceps quite nicely, and two for one.

SB: I feel like the fact that a lot of it is whole body, we can be whole body.

KG: Yeah, completely.

SB: So it's not like a multi-gym at the gym where you're only using a tiny proportionate. But I want to see Ana on this trapeze thing, because that looks huge fun.

KG: Jump off there then Ana. So let me just move this out the way.

SB: Ana, do you want to come around this side?

AF: Okay.

KG: Then I need to unhook this. So we have to do a bit of jiggery-pokery here.

SB: Can I help?

KG: I just need that flat ... Yeah. So take that off, take this off. That's there, that goes there, out the way. Okay. Okay, so now you've got the tower. Sit in the bottom on there facing the bar.

AF: Okay. Where do you want my legs?

KG: So you're going to have your feet against the uprights, just here, and you're going to hold on to the outside of that. Lovely. So you're going to do a roll back. So you're going to sit nice and tall and then try and just draw your shoulder blades just slightly down and together, so you keep the collar bones nice and open. Now starting with your pelvis, I want you to tuck your tailbone under, roll back and Just kind of keep going until you're laying flat. Perfect. Then breathe in, lift your head up. Yeah, let it take you.

AF: Oh, okay.

KG: Yeah, don't pull it, just let it take you.

AF: Let it roll.

KG: Yeah.

AF: Okay.

KG: Then go again. So this is great for kind of just some nice segmental spinal movements. If you've got someone that can't do a roller, which lots of people with tight backs can't, it's not that ... I think that they haven't got any abs, so it's not its because that doesn't move. So there's no way that you're going to lie flat and then roll up through. But this way, with the springs helping you, tilt your chin forward a bit.

KG: Yeah, try not to kind of, Hang out around. So this is kind of the sort of nice version, but we could be mean.

SB: We've got a couple of related questions, which had been in for a while. One person said, how often do you get people on this? And we talked about it earlier on. Somewhere also said, "It looks great, is it enough for patients to do it just once or twice a week?

KG: No, I don't think anything is once or twice a week if people want to see improvement.

SB: Which is asking a lot, isn't it?

KG: Yeah.

SB: They can see you every day of the week.

KG: Oh God, yeah, unless, they've won the lottery. But no, I think what we try and do is give them that information, give them that feedback. When I'm teaching them, I'm giving them feedback constantly, so

they're getting to know where their body cheats, and then you try and give them simple exercises. I mean, you could literally do this with a stretchy band at home. It's not impossible. You don't have to have masses of flashy equipment. And then just taking the time to sort of work through all of those sticky bits and it's just layering, isn't it? It's just, each week, the more they do at home, the more they can do here, and the more they get from it. And I think the more they do at home and the better they see that improvement, the more they want to do, and then hopefully that just feeds in and they're bouncing around.

SB: Somebody sent an answer to the question about isometric exercises.

KG: Oh, did they? That's good.

SB: Whoever it is says that, "From Google, one of the best parts about isometric exercises, they help to improve muscle strength and muscle size, and part of the reason why they're vital for strengthening muscles is because of the increased tension your muscles experience during ..." The person says that whoever it is finds it good for activating patients with compromised strength through chronic loss, not so good for neuro. Oh, it's Robin. Thanks Robin. Also seems to help stabilizing at mid range and those movements of the course and for promoting control in an unstable system. There we go.

KG: Thank you. I've learned something. Okay, so let's add a little bit of rotation to it.

AF: Okay.

KG: So let's put your hand in the middle, bring your other arm out there. Then what I want you to tuck your tailbone under and as you roll back, rotate that arm and turn and look out the windows, roll back. Reach it back more. That's it. And then come back up to the top. Up you come. So it's a little bit of oblique. So you're adding a little bit more work and then you can do it again. So just roll back, reach the arm, turn your head, look up at Millie in the sun.

SB: This is sound of music stuff.

KG: Honestly, I'm coming back as a dog. One more time that side, off you go again. She's coming because she's too hot. Now swap your hand over and then do the same on the other side. Try not to smack Steven on your way down. So there, and they roll back, so off you go sway. Lovely. And back up to the top. Brilliant. So really pulling the waist, abs on, shoulders relaxing down, which actually you're really good at.

AF: Am I?

KG: Relaxing your shoulders around there. Yeah. Which is not bad.

AF: Okay.

KG: I spent my life going, "Shoulders." I should've called the dog shoulders.

SB: What she hasn't told you is she spends her weekend renovating a house and she's been breaking up concrete and loading a skip for the last few months so-

KG: You can let go of that.

AF: Yeah.

KG: Well done. So the roll down bar, again, there's tons you can do with it. We can ... I quite liked some of the wrist work, and actually I could do it here. Kneel on there for me darling. Oh sorry, she says, smacking her.. Put your hands on there. So bring your elbows into the side and then press your hands down quick firmly, come back up and reach it forward, and go again. Press down, come back, come forward. So that's a simple one.

AF: Yeah.

KG: So in and down again. So elbows are-

SB: Who are you using this on?

KG: Lots of people. Keep your elbows into the side. Cricketers particularly, I've used it with cricketers.

AF: Oh, I see.

KG: They're up and down. So yeah, can put and do it again? So we can start kind of quite neatly working into wrist flexes and wrist extensors. I know. Now if we want to be really horrible to you, arms up.

AF: Yeah.

KG: So into the sides again, and then think of your knuckles going down and go, yeah. So you can do that, and you can even just hold it and do little wrist curls in both directions. Like that. But that would be great for somebody slightly osteoporotic or getting on a bit. Because here's a big risk of fragility fractures. Well done. You can stop there. So just another way that you can add little movements in. You can do, if you sit on your bottom facing out there, then scoot slightly this way a bit

it. Now put your right hand on this bar for me, bring your left hand behind your head and then lift up, look up, all the usual stuff, pull in your tummy, breath in, and as you breathe out, press down quite firmly Ana, and then do a little side bend at the same time. There.

AF: I like that one.

KG: And come back up to the top. Yeah, do it again. So arm first, and back to the top. Perfect. You go again. Lovely. So again, kind of two for one.

SB: Someone's asked Ana whether she's feeling the oblique exercise is actually working, the obliques. But looking at her face, I think she's feeling-

AF: I'm feeling everything.

KG: So perfect. Right. Now, let's ... Actually, if Ana stands up, will we chop her head off?

AF: Oh, you can do that.

SB: We can alter the angle of the camera, so we can-

AF: I'm obviously short enough.

KG: I was going to get you to stand on here.

AF: Oh, okay, on here?

KG: So stand on there for me.

SB: I'm sure Kara will cope.

KG: Right. Grab hold of these. Some grab hold of that one. So step back there for me. Close though. All right. Bring your heels together, toes apart. All the ones we should do is stand up nice and tall. Again, just slightly with the shoulder blades. Don't kind of do military posture. Now pull your arms back. Rise up onto your toes at the same time. And then relax the arms down the pull. So pull and rise.

AF: It's going to take me forward, fantastic.

KG: Say switch on this. What's that? It's that center that's unique,

AF: That I don't have, yeah.

KG: That's it. Good. And again, pull it really pull hard down. Keep the arms in twist neutral. Good. And then you can add a little rotation. So keep

your heels down this time. So just press one arm. I'm turn your head, come back to the center, press the other arm and turn your head. Keep your hips still. Go again. I know, so much to think about.

AF: That's why you're here though, to tell me what-

KG: To remind you.

AF: Yeah.

KG: That's okay. And again. Lovely. A little less movement in your neck. Never mind. Turn around to face that way. Keep hold of these, they swap is over. That would be good. Swap.

AF: Oh, just swap.

KG: Just swap. Okay. Come forward a little bit more. Okay. So now imagine you're in ski boots Ana, because you're going to lean slightly forward.

AF: Oh, okay.

KG: Yeah. Bring your hands up to there, so both of them ... So yeah, so get a bit of tension on. That's it. Now press one arm forward, and then the other arm.

AF: Okay. I have nothing.

KG: You have nothing, I know.

AF: Okay. Right.

KG: Don't try this at home.

SB: This is great entertainment Ana, I think it was.

AF: No, no, never going to leave this down.

KG: Okay.

AF: Oh, that one's horrendous.

KG: There's tons and tons of stuff that you can do.

SB: What about that last bit there-

KG: This one?

SB: ... that little trapeze?

KG: Do you want the metal thing, this?

SB: Yeah.

KG: Right, let me show you.

AF: Okay.

SB: This one, it's really hard.

KG: Take this off.

AF: It's a great piece of kit.

SB: You have two minutes.

KG: Two minutes, is that all I have? Okay.

SB: I know, I said two minutes.

AF: Two minutes.

KG: Right. So sit on your bottom again. That way. Actually no, lay down on your back looking up at the ceiling. Let me stick on other spring off. So you're going to bend your knees for me, grab hold of the bar, take it there. Right. So the springs are going to help you. So you're going to breathe in, lift your head up, breathe out, push the Springs up and push the bar up to the ceiling. Breathe in, tilt your pelvis, roll back, roll all the way down. Keep your arms straight, don't bend. That's it. And roll up again. So this has got, we've got two Springs, so that's really helping her go up and down.

SB: Ana, this would be so much easier if you ate more cake and were a bit heavier.

KG: Now stay there. Bend your elbows and bring the bar down behind your head and push up, and bend, and push up. One more bend, one more push up, and roll all the way down.

So what we could do if I was being mean, instead of the springs coming from above, we put the springs from below and then it's a lot more work for the-

SB: Let's do that. No, let's not.

KG: But again, there's-

AF: Something to work towards I feel.

KG: Something to work toward. Come and kneel in front of it for me. So hands and knees, put your hands on the bar. So breathe in, bring the bar down and forward. Keep your legs still.

AF: Like that.

KG: Now, nod your head. Yeah, nod your head. Roll down on forward. So think of almost like a cat stretch. So push that ball forward. Keep going forward, keep going forward, keep going forward, keep going, keep going. Stick your bum out. Now stay there, use your tummy, pull your pelvis up and back. Stack the spine. Come up, keep coming. Keep coming. And up. You did the illegal move there.

AF: Oh God.

KG: It was illegal to move her bottom back to her thighs.

SB: But we get the idea.

KG: But nevermind.

SB: We're going to stop.

KG: That's fine.

SB: Just the last little bit from me. I don't think we've got any more questions. I'm going to ignore this one, it says they want to see me on the machine. We're not having that. I've heard that it's gone very well from people who are watching. The point is that most osteos and chiropractors and physios don't have one of these.

KG: No.

SB: So when they are advising a patient on exercise to help prevent injury, to recover from injury, should they specifically say, "Go find somebody who's got a reformer"? It looks brilliant in the hands of the right person.

KG: It was fantastic. I guess it depends on your client base and how much money they've got. So really they're all group reformer classes. So if they're not too damaged and they can find a good group reformer class, then that obviously brings the price down, because some students do run group reformer classes.

SB: But as always, personal instruction is great.

KG: Yeah, kind of one to ones to start with. I think they just need to find good teachers really, don't they? For whatever it is they're referring for and...

SB: Can you make an assumption that a Pilates instructor who's got one of these things will be a good teacher or they just got lots of money?

KG: I think research them. All good teachers should have a list of courses that they've attended if you like. I mean, anyone can buy one of these machines and set themselves up, but there's all the level four exercise qualification. So I've got the low back pain level four low back pain, and I've also got the osteoporosis one. So it's research your teacher, find out what courses they've done. It should be on their website and they should be happy to tell you, and if they've only got basic mat work qualification and they haven't done a decent equipment qualification run a mile, I guess.

SB: Thank you Karen.

KG: Pleasure.