

Back to the barre

Want balance, power and stability? Look no further than this hybrid barre workout

More than a fitness fad, barre has been quietly converting fitness fans for over a decade with its sculpting mix of ballet, Pilates and yoga techniques. And it's no wonder, given that it offers a low-impact and controlled way to work the body from top to toe, all the while improving posture, balance and flexibility. As a workout modality that has endured and matured, you'll find a growing number of studios offering hybrid forms of barre - and the best bit is you don't need to be a ballerina, or even have any ballet experience, to enjoy them!

This workout from barre expert Tara Riley is no exception. 'It's inspired by my Barre Empower class, a dynamic fusion of classic barre technique and functional strength training,' she

explains. 'Expect the precision, posture and control of barre, combined with fuller ranges of motion and slightly-heavier-than-your-usual 1-1.5kg barre dumbbells.' The net result is you'll build real strength without it becoming a pure strength class (Tara recommends that you choose weights in the 2-3kg range, not 6-7kg ones).

'Each move flows with purpose, and challenges balance, co-ordination and power, while still feeling elegant as well as intentional,' she adds. 'Taken together, these exercises create a total-body workout that moves beyond small pulses and into empowered, functional strength. You'll improve balance, build power and find stability through transitions that challenge both the body and

mind, leaving you feeling strong, capable and energised.'

Tara describes the method as 'barre, evolved: refined, athletic and designed to support everyday movement', and we at *WF* are sold on the functional-body results. Want to give it a go? Pick up your weights and read on...



Meet the expert
Tara Riley is a barre, Pilates, strength and cardio teacher, and the founder of the Tara Riley Method, which she teaches in her London studio via her on-demand membership platform (tarariley.co). She also runs annual retreats in Ibiza, Greece, Portugal and Norfolk. Follow Tara on Instagram at [@pilatesandtara](https://www.instagram.com/pilatesandtara)

▼ **Curtsey lunge, snatch to oblique knee**
Powerful, dynamic, full-body
Reps: 8-10 (each side)

- Hold a dumbbell in one hand. Step the same-side leg back into a deep curtsy lunge, hinging forward at the hips as you lower the weight towards the floor, keeping the spine long and chest open (A).
- Drive through the front heel to

- stand, powering the weight overhead in one smooth snatch (B).
- Draw the knee up and out to the side as you pull the elbow down, creating a strong oblique crunch (C). Return to curtsy lunge and repeat, then swap sides.



Photography: Shutterstock

► **Sumo squat to single-arm rotating flye**

Combining lower-body power with upper-body mobility
Reps: 8 (each side)

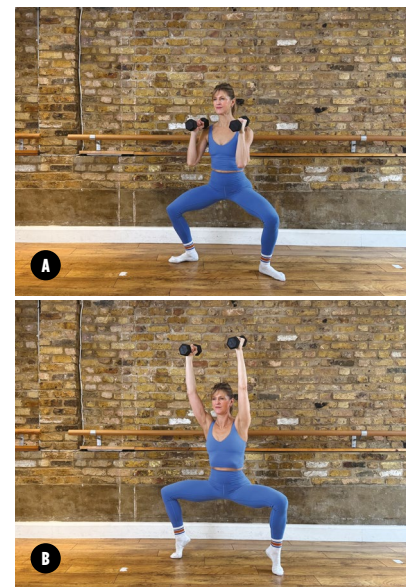
- Stand with feet wider than hip-width apart, toes slightly turned out, holding a dumbbell in each hand.
- Sink into a deep sumo squat by sending the hips back and down, lengthening through the spine and keeping the chest lifted (A).
- Hold the squat as you draw one arm out and back into a flye (B), rotating through the upper body to open the chest. Continue the rotation as the arm arcs overhead, then return to centre and repeat.
- After 8 reps, swap sides.



▼ **Hinge Row to Overhead Balance**

Strength, flowing into balance
Reps: 8-10 (each side)

- Begin standing in a staggered curtsy stance, holding a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing inwards. Hinge forward from the hips with a long spine, bending into the curtsy as you draw the elbows back into a row (A).
- Transfer into a single-leg balance, extending the back leg long behind you as the arms reach overhead (B).
- Keep the body in one long line, then lower with control to return to the start.
- Repeat, then swap sides.



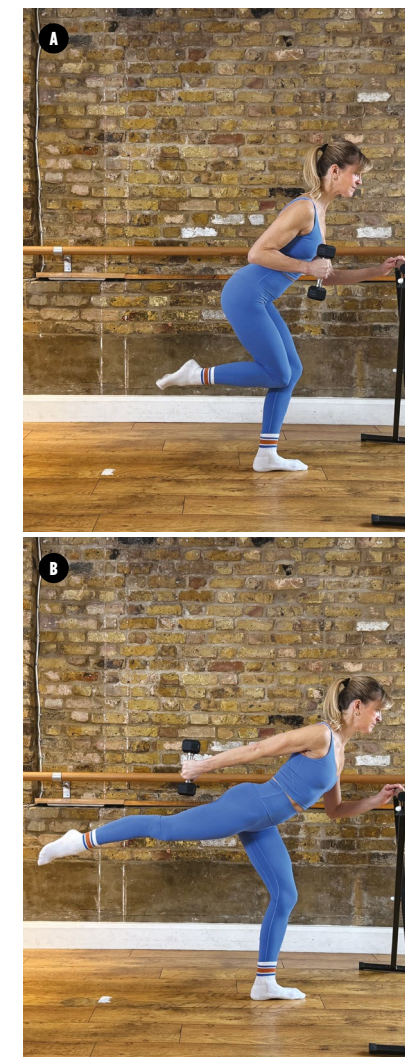
▲ **Plié to overhead press with relevé**
Lifted, elegant and barre-inspired
Reps: 12

- Stand with feet turned out in a wide second-position plié, holding dumbbells at shoulder height, elbows bent, palms facing (A).
- Lower into a deep plié, keeping the torso upright and spine long.
- Lift the heels to rise into relevé as you press the arms overhead, lengthening tall through the body (B).
- Lower the heels and weights with control and repeat.

▼ **Supported single-leg arabesque with triceps kickback**

Controlled, stabilising and back-body focused
Reps: 8-10 (each side)

- Stand facing the barre on one leg, resting the left hand lightly on the barre and holding a dumbbell in the right hand. Hinge forward with the back leg bent, keeping the spine long (A).
- Extend your right arm into a triceps kickback as the right leg lengthens into an arabesque (B), maintaining core engagement without arching the lower back.
- Bend the leg and lower the arm to return. Repeat 8-10 times, then swap sides.



▲ **Plié to side leg lift with lateral reach**
Strength and lengthening through the sideline and outer leg
Reps: 10-12 (each side)

- Stand in a wide 2nd plié position, left hand lightly resting on the barre and a dumbbell held in the right hand, resting on your thigh (A).
- Lower into a deep plié with the torso upright, then shift weight into the left leg as the right leg lifts out to the side. At the same time, tilt the torso into a gentle side bend (B), reaching long through the lifted leg and waist.
- Return to 2nd position plié with control and repeat, then swap sides.

▼ **Side lunge with biceps curl to balance knee lift**

Strong, athletic with a focus on controlled weight transfer

Reps: 8-10 (each side)

- Begin standing with feet wide, holding a dumbbell in each hand, palms facing you. Bend right knee to sink into a deep side lunge, keeping the chest lifted as you curl the weights towards the shoulders (A).
- Push through the right leg to return to upright centre, transferring weight and drawing the right knee up into a controlled balance as the arms lower by your sides (B).
- Step back out wide and repeat, then swap sides.



▲ **Balance to side leg lift with arms open**

Light, open and balance-focused

Reps: 12 (each side)

- Begin standing tall, balancing on one leg with the opposite foot lightly crossed behind and the dumbbells held in front of the chest (A), palms down, elbows lifted wide.
- Open the arms out to the sides as the back leg lifts long to the side (B), creating length through the body from fingertips to toes.
- Return with control to the starting balance, then repeat. ♾

Words: Tara Riley | Photography: tarariley.co