

# Space-saving FIT KIT

Desperate to work out at home, but not enough room to swing a cat? Fear not! Here's our pick of the most compact fitness equipment around so you can exercise in the smallest of spaces

WORDS: Jo Ebsworth

**A**s fitness studios and gyms are closed until further notice, we're all turning to home workouts in a bid to maintain our strength, stamina and sanity. Thankfully, there's a plethora of professional-quality fitness equipment on the market to turn any garage into a space worthy enough to rival your local boutique gym. The downside is that many of us don't have a spare room available to transform from a dumping ground to a training ground in the first place. But that doesn't mean you have to kiss your regular workouts goodbye. According to our panel of experts, even the smallest of fitness equipment can get the biggest results. Read on to discover their pick of the most easily storable fit kit to help you work up a sweat without taking over your front room.

## BEST FOR... FULL BODY WORKOUTS



### ADJUSTABLE KETTLEBELL

Laura 'Biceps' Hoggins, PT and author of *Lift Yourself* (Penguin, £14.99)

'The humble kettlebell is, in my opinion, one of the most versatile pieces of kit around as it's super space-efficient and can even double up as a door stop at home! But to avoid having individual kettlebells of various weights lying around, plump for an adjustable weight kettlebell that lets you increase or decrease the weight with a simple twist of a dial.'

An adjustable kettlebell works strength development, cardio conditioning, endurance, flexibility, stability, coordination and core control, but it's important that you select the appropriate weight for the rep scheme you're doing, depending on your goals. As a guide, a relatively heavier weight with lower reps will be more geared towards developing your maximal strength (i.e. how much weight you can lift), and a lower weight with higher reps is geared towards your work capacity, where the biggest challenge is not the weight itself, but in completing more sets with good form.'

- **Condition your entire body with bilateral moves that work many limbs at the same time, such as kettlebell swings or a clean and press.**
- **Strengthen individual muscles with unilateral moves such as biceps curls that work just one muscle and help overcome any specific weaknesses.**

Bowflex Selecttech 840 Adjustable Kettlebell (3.5kg to 18kg), £225; [fitnesssuperstore.co.uk](http://fitnesssuperstore.co.uk)



## BEST FOR... LENGTHENING LIMBS



### BALLET BARRE

**Vicki Anstey, leading UK Barre teacher and founder of Barreworks**

(online workouts available at [barreworks.co.uk](http://barreworks.co.uk))

'Ballet barres are perfect space-saving devices. Opt for either a wall-mounted barre which is brilliantly discreet (it doesn't need to take up an entire wall, just a space slightly wider than your hips), or a portable, self-assembly barre which can be neatly stacked up against a wall when not in use. A wall-mounted barre gives you more options for exercises as you can lean your body weight away from the barre to perform some of our signature movements such as "water ski" and "parallel thigh". But the portable barre system is versatile in

other ways and can be made as long or as short as you need. For many barre exercises, you simply need something to semi-stabilise you and, sometimes, not being able to rely on full stability via a wall-mounted barre can be an advantage for your core. If you don't have access to a barre, the back of a chair, a kitchen worktop or a sturdy piece of furniture will do.'

**Ballet Barre Portable for Home, £139; [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)**



## MOVES

**1** 'With a mini resistance band around your thighs (just above the knee) face the barre and hold underneath (you hardly need to use it for the movement so the back of a chair will do). Work from a ballet first position (heels together, feet turned out) and as you slide one leg away against the resistance of the band, soften the knee of your standing leg. Aim to keep your whole body (especially your trunk) completely fixed as you move your leg to the side of your hip and back in – you can perform small end-range pulses or full range movements. After 20 or so reps, you'll really feel the burn in your glutes and outer thigh.'

**2** 'Stand with your feet directly under your hips and fold forwards at the barre. Your back should be flat and your spine lengthened. Your standing leg should be soft at the knee. Take your other leg back until your knee is in line with your hip (add a hand weight behind the knee, if you have one, for added intensity). Perform small, pulsing movements with a pointed foot, taking the tip of your big toe closer to the ceiling with each movement. Try to do at least 50 reps before changing legs.'

## BEST FOR... LOWER BODY WORKOUTS



### RESISTANCE BANDS

**Emily Hawgood, PT and model (@emily\_hawgood)**

'Resistance bands are fantastic because they require hardly any space to use or store, and you can perform a multitude of exercises with them so you never get bored. Available in different lengths and levels of resistance, their effectiveness lies in the use of tension – not gravity, like free weights – meaning your muscles work under tension for longer to improve strength and increase calorific burn.'

'There are many types of resistance bands, from the long, flat variety to tube bands which are great for attaching to door anchors or wrapping around a pole for exercises such as triceps extensions and lat pull-downs. My favourite is the circular "mini band" which I use in most of my HIIT workouts to get my muscles really firing – they're great for glute activation, too!'

**'Here are two of my top moves'**

- **'Lateral banded walks: wrap the band around your quads and walk side to side in a squatted position.'**
- **'Glute bridges: place the band above your knees and resist against it at the top of the movement. You definitely feel the burn afterwards!'**

Gymshark Light Resistance Band, £15; [gymshark.com](http://gymshark.com)



## BEST FOR... CORE WORKOUTS



### GLIDERS

**Diana van Heerden, head of fitness at Frame Studios (online fitness classes at [moveyourframe.com](http://moveyourframe.com))**

'Gliders are one of the lightest, cheapest and most creative pieces of exercise equipment for your home workouts, not to mention easy to store. Just make sure your set is dual-sided to work on both carpet and hard flooring. Gliders improve your stability (imagine you're skating on ice!) and develop core

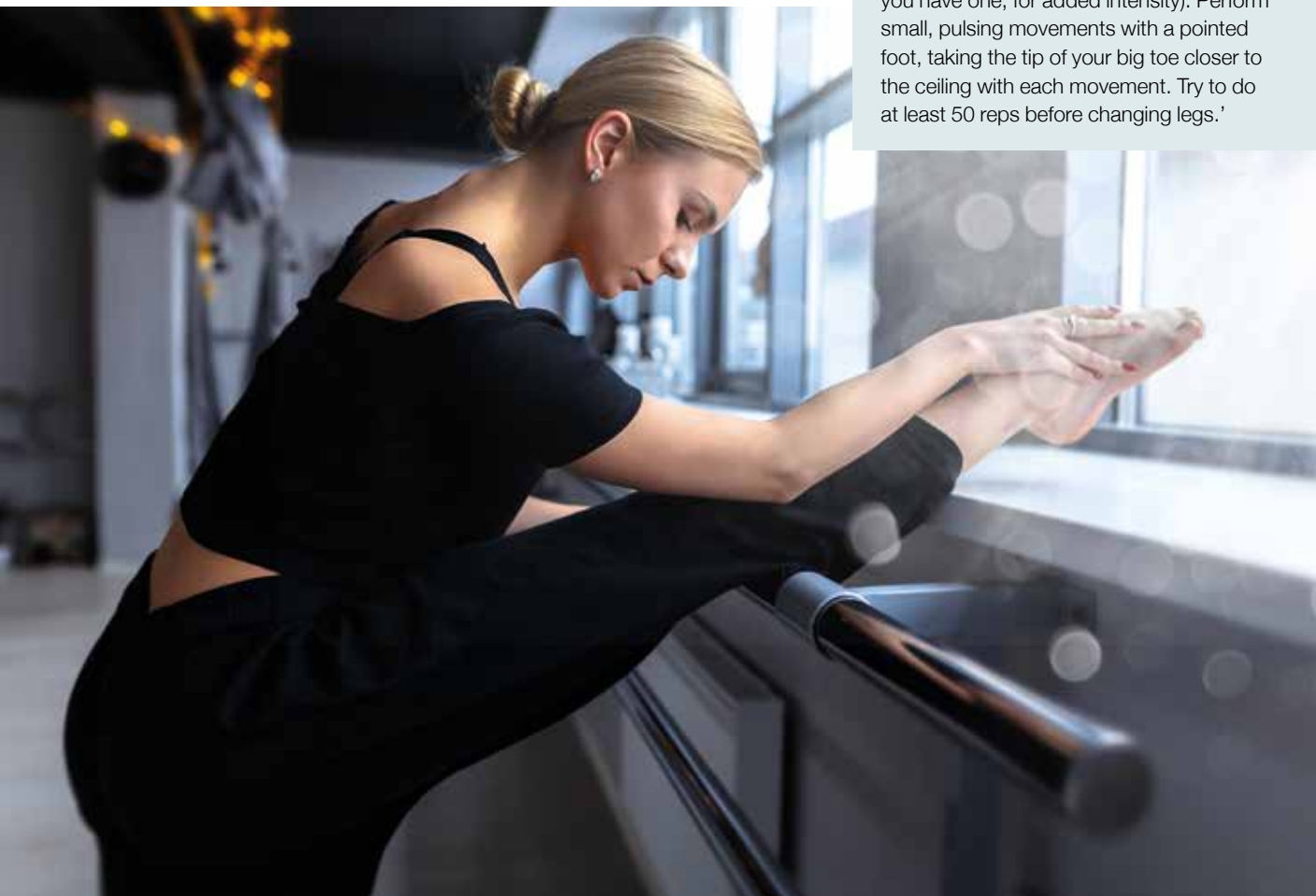
strength because you'll need to "switch on" your core for all exercises. Using gliders also keeps things low impact, without sacrificing the intensity of work.'

**'Two of my favourite moves'**

- **'Glider burpees: stand with your toes on the gliders, feet hip-distance apart. Squat to bring your hands to the ground and slide into a high plank position. From here, reverse the movement and bring your feet back outside of your hands into the frog squat position. Then rise to the start position by sliding your feet slightly closer back together. Aim to do 10-12 reps without stopping.'**

- **'Glider mountain climbers: start in plank position with your toes on the gliders. Brace your core, glutes and lats. Bring (slide) one knee underneath your tummy, then switch legs, and continue alternating. Aim for 10 reps per leg.'**

BaseBody Gliding Discs, £7.99; [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



PHOTOGRAPHY: iStock



## BEST FOR... A NEW CHALLENGE



### PULL-UP BAR

**Aroosha Nekonam, PT at Ultimate Performance (try its LiveUp online body transformation programmes at [upfitness.co.uk](http://upfitness.co.uk))**

'Being stuck at home with more time on our hands doesn't have to be a bad thing – it can be an opportunity to work on a goal many women want to achieve – such as a pull-up! A pull-up bar is a cheap, compact but effective piece of equipment that attaches to a door frame, enabling you to train many pull-up variations as well as doing hangs, holds and abs exercises. You can even use it as an anchor to attach resistance bands. Mastering pull-ups is a great way to build upper-body strength using your own bodyweight to work your back, arms and core.'

- **'First and foremost, if you want to learn to do a pull-up, you need to be working on it two to three times a week if possible. A great starting point is to begin with isometric holds – paused holds at the top and middle position of the rep. If you struggle with**

**grip, incorporate hanging drills so you can get used to hanging from the bar until failure, increasing the duration you are holding on for each time.'**

- **'To progress, focus on the eccentric portion of the exercise (negative reps) by jumping up to the top position and lowering back down slowly, concentrating on keeping your shoulders back and your core engaged throughout the exercise.'**
- **'Then, combine isometric holds and negative reps to keep progressing, before moving onto the concentric portion of the exercise. This is when you'll have built up enough strength to beat gravity and achieve your first pull-up.'**
- **'Remember, pull-ups are an advanced exercise, so be patient with yourself and consistent to see improvement.'**

Ultrasport Multifunctional Door Pull-Up Bar, £19.99; [amazon.co.uk](http://amazon.co.uk)



Pull-ups are a great way to build upper-body strength to work your back, arms and core

## BEST FOR... CARDIO



### REBOUNDER

**Kimberlee Perry, founder of award-winning mini trampoline fitness class ((BOUNCE)) ([bouncefitbody.com](http://bouncefitbody.com))**

'Mini trampolines are perfect when you only have a small workout space because you're essentially exercising on the spot. Ours are just 40 inches in diameter; the legs fold for easy storage so you can slide it under the bed or behind the sofa; and the mat delivers the smoothest bounce with reduced noise so you won't upset the neighbours!'

Bouncing on a trampoline, particularly when combined with dance-choreographed routines, is the epitome of fun, and delivers fast, safe, effective fitness results. Rebounders absorb up to 87 per cent impact, making the workouts suitable for most people, including new mums returning to exercise and those recovering from injury. Due to the added G-force and gravity, workouts are up to three times more effective than floor-based sessions, and you can burn a massive 500-plus calories in one of our 45-minute high-intensity online classes.'

- **'For the best workout, keep your core tight and brace your tummy to build your abdominal strength – but don't forget to breathe or you'll get a stitch!'**
- **'Bounce down into the trampoline – avoid jumping high into the air as you did as a child on the garden trampoline. And if you want to make your workout tougher, push down even harder.'**
- **'Bounce on the balls of your feet, rather than jumping flat-footed or tapping your heels. This will give you the most effective workout and tone your legs.'**

((BOUNCE)) Trampoline, £150; [bouncefitbody.com/online-store](http://bouncefitbody.com/online-store)



### TIP

'Mini-trampoline exercise is also renowned as a cellular workout because it pumps the lymphatic system to flush the body of viruses, toxins, bacteria, waste and dead cells – in other words, it gets rid of all the things you definitely don't want!'

