



JUMPING FOR JOY

Trampolines are not just for kids: 'mini-rebounders' are good for your health, figure and mind. Plus, they're just so much fun, argues **Eve Menezes Cunningham**

Ever wanted to jump on one of those giant trampolines you see in people's gardens, packed with laughing children? Here's your chance: mini-

trampolines are the latest health craze. Low impact, they're great for arthritis sufferers and others who are unable to run. "Rebounding for 20 minutes at moderate intensity burns approximately 100 more calories than jogging," says Jason Vale (aka the JuiceMaster). "Jogging/running and rebounding produce similar heart rate levels, yet rebounding results in less demand on the heart, allowing for a more efficient and prolonged workout. There is also less impact on the bones and joints by rebounding as opposed to running, usually allowing for lessened 'stoppage' time and injury."

Since a NASA report was published in the *Journal of Applied Physiology* a few years ago, the benefits of mini trampolines have

become more widely known. Astronauts rebound to build up muscle and bone density after they've been in space.

WHAT IS REBOUNDING?

"Rebounding is done on a good quality small circular trampoline," says James Winfield, sports conditioning specialist and Managing Director of Rebound UK (rebound-uk.com). "Pro rebounders are best. Very low impact, they're designed to give extra spring and absorb impact.

"Rebounding is very different to mainstream trampolining. It involves a controlled pushing technique through the balls of your feet, whilst keeping your knees slightly bent, a slight lean forward at

brilliant for increasing agility and improving balance. Personally, I think rebounding is one of the most fun workouts there is. No other exercise can provide such an instant high. It's rare to find anyone who doesn't enjoy rebounding – I've even got rebounders at Juicy HQ for the team to use when they feel the need to get moving."

HOW DO YOU USE IT?

"I started out mostly jogging on it," says personal trainer Becky White. She runs OneSixEightFitness and has her own rebounder launching this year. Initially just jogging, Becky did a course on rebounding. "I learned new moves and had loads of fun with it. It didn't feel like exercise." Feeling a little embarrassed, I confess to Becky that I am already a big fan and pretend to dance on my rebounder, fast-forwarding to favourite songs while watching music television. "That sounds great," she said, as I told her how much fun it is. "You're more likely to do it again and again and again. People go wrong with exercise by forcing themselves to do it."

But should I be forcing myself to follow a proper rebounder routine? "There's no right or wrong way," says Becky. "Just push down into the trampoline more with every bounce. Then you have more gravity acting against your body so effectively, you weigh more. When your body mass is higher, you're burning more calories. A heavier person will burn more calories than a light person so push as much as possible."

James Winfield advocates a more formal approach. "Sessions typically last 20–45 minutes and can be tailored to focus on cardio, strength and core, and sports specific routines. Concentrate on the

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downward push into the mat, with your knees bent and hips pulled back then jump off the mat, not more than six inches.

"This creates gravitational pull which is at the heart of what makes rebounding work. At the bottom of the bounce (or 'push') your exercise body weight can be up to 3.24 times heavier than normal whilst at the top ('jump') you are weightless. This constant change in gravitational pressure works every single cell in the body, including internal organs, muscles and skin; making rebounding one of the most effective all-over body workouts ever designed."

How-to DVDs can help you at the beginning, like watching a workout video. "Rebound UK Instructional DVD workouts are presented by our qualified and experienced fitness professionals," says James. "They demonstrate good, safe and fun techniques and routines that are both motivating and very effective. Moves such as jogging on the spot (low knee and high knee of varying speeds) balancing exercises, twists, squats, strength bounces pushing in to the mat surface through the balls of your feet, and even gentle bouncing for 5-10 minutes a day has huge benefits."

The main thing is to enjoy it, agrees Becky,

BOUNCING BACK WHERE TO BEGIN

1. See onesixeightfitness.com for more information about Becky's beginner specific DVD, upcoming rebounder and effort to win back her rebounding World Record.
2. Suitable for all fitness levels, juicemaster.com/bounce-fit-app gives more information about Jason's new Bounce Fit app and has plenty of videos.
3. Go to rebound-uk.com for more information about James' products (including rebounders and DVDs). The 'FEELBETTER' code offers all Woman's World readers a 20 per cent discount.

the hips, chest up high and head forward maintaining a good posture." Suitable for all ages, genders and abilities, rebounding is now one of the fastest growing workouts throughout Europe and the USA.

THE HEALTH BENEFITS

"Lots of scientific research proves the benefits," says James. "It burns hundreds of calories each workout, detoxifies and tones the body (including internal organs, muscles and skin), improves posture and strengthens the core."

"As an overall workout, rebounding is great for reducing body fat," adds Jason. "It firms the legs, thighs, abs and hips, as well as strengthening muscles all over. It's also

who has her own beginner-specific workout DVD. "I used to watch *Grey's Anatomy* DVDs. Jogging with Patrick Dempsey in front of me didn't feel like exercise. If you're going to watch TV, do it with exercise equipment. Or get a DVD to follow a routine or listen to your favourite songs."

WHEN AND HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU BOUNCE?

"Aim for 30 minutes a day, three to five times a week," says Becky. "It shouldn't feel like a chore. You want it to be enjoyable. That makes it more likely that you'll do it for the rest of your life."

"If you're wanting to improve your fitness and stamina, 30 minutes nonstop is best. Other days, ten minutes at a time is fine. For weight loss, three lots of ten minutes a day, before breakfast, lunch and dinner can be better as you have a higher metabolic rate after bouncing."

Becky's practical approach is refreshing. "It's got to work in terms of your schedule. Thirty minutes in one go might be best but just 10 minutes is better than nothing."

Jason says: "Beginners should practise by building up times from two to five minute sessions to two-30 minute sessions, when ready. Rebounding isn't something you'd really need a 'rest' period from but always listen to your body and see how you feel. Once you've gotten used to the jumping to start with, you can throw in the twisting at the waist, jogging and slightly higher jumps."

WHICH ONE TO CHOOSE?

"If you're serious about getting into rebounding for fitness, a good quality rebounder is a must," says Jason. "Go for a six-leg design. These are much more stable than some of the four-leg models available. If you're looking for easy storage, I'd suggest getting a rebounder with unscrewable or foldable legs. Many rebounders can be folded to make them easy to transport. Ensure the rebounder has a good, solid spring or bungee system to help support your joints and make sure a non-slip mat is included for safety."

If you're feeling overwhelmed by the choices, Becky recommends choosing a rebounder over a mini trampoline, to allow for that important resistance and 'push'. "If you've got a trampoline in the garage, you don't need to go out and get another, high tech one."

James says: "To get the best benefits you



need a unit that is obviously robust and well-made. One that is sprung correctly, that is neither too soft a bounce like the bungee sprung units that make you feel you are sinking and restrict you to just bobbing up and down, nor something that has tiny springs and a very hard bounce as this will not be low impact and may hurt your joints.

"Ideally, a rebounder should have large muscle shape springs that give a soft but resilient bounce in order for it to be low impact but enable you to perform many different movement patterns to ensure a complete full body workout is achieved. Make sure the supplier stocks spare parts and that the component parts on your unit are replaceable should something break/ need replacing over time."

WHAT TO WEAR

A good sports bra is essential. My favourites are by Panache and Freya. Becky recommends Shock Absorber. "They do wide range of sizes. You'll always get some bounce but it will take out some of the pain."

There's some disagreement over footwear. James says: "Always wear a cross training shoe. Rebounding in bare feet or socks will cause your ankle, knee and hip joints to pronate (turn inwardly) which can lead to injury and joint pain. Wearing a cross training shoe will help your joint alignment and give you extra stability and confidence whilst rebounding."

But Becky says barefoot is fine as long as care is taken. "Bare feet can be better as

you feel more in touch with the trampoline. Some trainers offer stability and support, keeping the ankle upright. Wearing those trainers on trampoline could lead to injury as well as being uncomfortable. Avoid socks. You don't want to be slipping. At the gym or in a class, trainers (without that extra support) are fine in public. If you're working from home, it's easier to go from sitting at your desk to having quick bounce to wake yourself up and energise if you're not worrying about putting trainers on."

You'll know what feels best and safest for you, but James warns: "Leggings or shorts are preferable. No long, baggy tracksuit bottoms that can get caught in the springs!"

AVOID THAT 'WHOOPS!' MOMENT...

"Some rebounder brands have handles," says Becky. "This can also work well for people really wanting to go for it, pushing down hard. It's also good for people worried about balance. Or you could put it closer to the wall as long as it's safe. I've worked with people who say they haven't got very good balance but they're fine."

"Most rebounders come with stabilisers which can help beginners who may be a little unconfident," agrees James. "Many people choose this option when they are rebounding as part of a course of physiotherapy too. We have had some amazing pictures sent in from people rebounding well into their 70s." ■