

LesMILLS
REFORMER

The music-led Reformer experience turning
boutique fans into big box converts

By transforming underused space into a thriving Reformer studio, Nuffield Farnborough has turbocharged its timetable, winning over members from local boutiques and driving growth across the whole estate. Ria Summerhayes, Group Exercise Manager, explains how it happened.



How did you feel about launching a Reformer workout?

RS: I was aware, and so were my members, that Reformer studios had been popping up locally and were proving popular. So I was very excited to be able to tap into that demand with LES MILLS REFORMER™. We turned under-utilized space into a studio with ten beds, and I put the timetable together.

When I told Instructors Les Mills were launching a Reformer class, I had ten volunteers keen to teach! I've started with three for launch. They all successfully completed training and we've now got seven classes per week on a 40-class timetable.

What makes LES MILLS REFORMER stand out in an already competitive market?

RS: It's just so different. It attracts members who have heard of Les Mills or are already doing other Les Mills workouts and it's winning new members because they're curious, it's new, and it's choreographed to music. All of that is helping us with people who want to try it. It's really taken off.

What is the commercial advantage of offering LES MILLS REFORMER?

RS: We have over 40 classes on our timetable. We started off with a different Reformer Pilates offering. Then when Les Mills launched its own version, it opened up a whole new member base. We've seen an upsurge in new members coming from local boutiques over to us. It's because we can offer something completely different to other studios and it has really increased our membership base. The class is constantly full, with 90% occupancy month-on-month.

Acquiring LES MILLS REFORMER and the resulting new members means we've seen a 20% increase in our overall group exercise attendance as well. LES MILLS REFORMER is included in our monthly fee, meaning members get access to 100 group exercise classes, the gym, and the swimming pool. So a new member coming in for Reformer has got the whole package and more reasons to stay.



How did you timetable the workout?

RS: I was very lucky to have a newly converted, empty studio, and free rein to schedule the class where I thought it would be most successful. I worked around what I have on already and our Instructors' availability. We've got variety: I've scheduled 7am classes, evening sessions, and also some 4pm slots that work really well with members who come straight after work. All of the classes have been full, regardless of the timeslot.

How many times a week are members taking the class?

RS: Lots! I'd say most come at least twice a week to experience different Instructors, different times. We've got our regulars, and we're still attracting new members and participants.

What member profile does LES MILLS REFORMER attract?

RS: It's a bit of a mixture. It's definitely attracting wellness and strength fans, because the workout offers a mixture of the two: there's conditioning, but also stretching as well. We get a lot of men as well, it really has brought more of them into the studio.

What role is the group environment playing in elevating the Reformer concept?

RS: I spoke to some members who have done one-on-one Reformer lessons before and were a little bit cynical about it working in this environment. But this is so different from a traditional Reformer Pilates class – the offering is amazing. People are surprised by how challenging it can be, and they're so keen to come back! They love the music, the Instructor, the experience. It just gives that slightly different offering. They come out really hot, sweaty, and having had a solid workout that they've really enjoyed.

What makes a great Reformer Instructor?

RS: The Instructors that I picked are just amazing. They've been in the industry a long time. They're Les Mills Instructors as well as freelance Instructors, so they've got a bit of both.

I think the mindset of a good Reformer Instructor is the all-round group exercise factor – the balance, the strength, the cardio. They need to have energy, confidence, and be happy and calm within the studio. That allows them to deliver. They're very on it – they'll come in before and practice on the bed, to make sure they've got the moves down.

What should other clubs know about this workout to ensure a smooth launch?

RS: It's important to really plan your room set-up for success. Everyone needs to be able to see the Instructor, and depending on where you're positioned in the studio, there needs to be full visibility. So sometimes teaching points may need to be delivered from the floor. Or on occasion, our Instructor will swap beds with a participant for one track so that everyone has full visibility.

If you had to justify the investment to another club, what would you point to as the key benefits of this class?

RS: The program has drawn lots of people in. That's all down to the variety of the exercises, the music, and just the feel of it. It's an amazing experience and it will definitely deliver for you. Our members love it and our Instructors love to teach it. I've got more Instructors keen to teach it and asking when the next course is. And members are already asking for more classes on the timetable.

If you had to sum up the impact of LES MILLS REFORMER as a GFM, what would you say?

RS: It's been amazing. It really has made a difference to our numbers. When we started this in January, the impact was immediate. It's everything – the amount of people that were interested in it, the level of engagement, the amount of Instructors that wanted to come on the timetable and teach something new, even without having done Reformer before. Learning something new has made a massive impact on the club. And yes, it's brought a whole new energy to our club.

Reformer, Redefined

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