

DANCE[®] magazine

Working Out With Kimberly Van Woesik

February 29 2016 – Lauren Kay



The Ballet Hispanico dancer teaches one of NYC’s trendiest fitness classes.

Kimberly Van Woesik used to be a dedicated gym enthusiast, visiting regularly. But while weight lifting and cardio gave her extra stamina and definition, they didn’t produce any major changes in her technique.

Then a year ago, a friend recommended SLT, the New York City-based “Strengthen Lengthen Tone” class on a machine called the

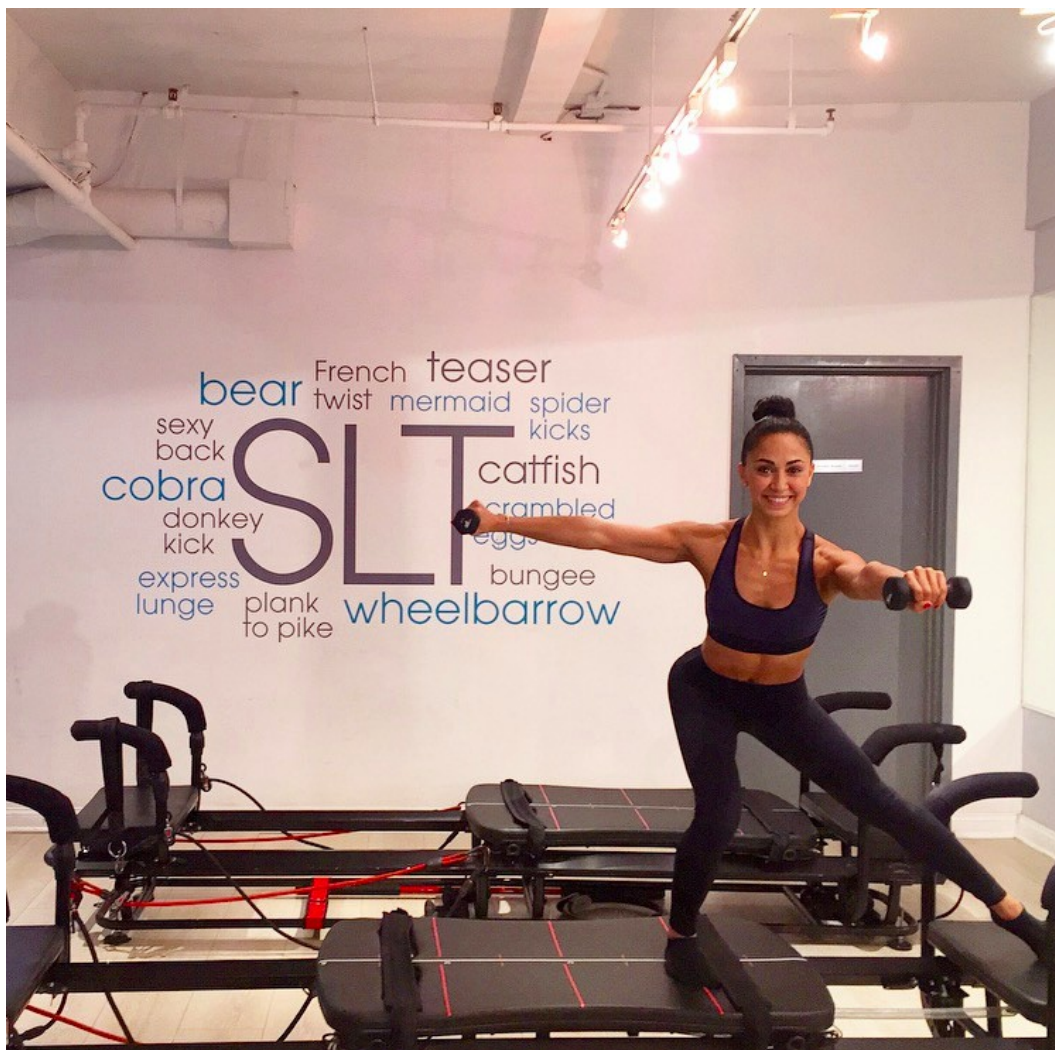
Megaformer (basically an enhanced Pilates reformer). “The first class I took was so hard,” she says. “But I was on a high because my body was burning in all the right places: my abs, obliques and upper body.”

Now, she’s a full-blown SLT addict, taking the 50-minute class four to five mornings a week before company class at Ballet Hispanico. She’s seen such striking results onstage that she’s even become an instructor. “My core is stronger, my balances have gotten more solid and I’m also turning better,” she says, crediting SLT’s abundance of planking movements and exercises that work in contrast to planking, like the chest-opener for the shoulders and lats. “SLT has helped my back and shoulder girdle come together for a more solid base.”

These benefits come from the system’s grouping off of muscles: Moving the Megaformer’s carriage with different body parts at a slow, controlled pace, while maintaining constant pressure on the springs, allows students to isolate and exhaust specific muscles. “A lot of times you should be using your obliques, but you’ll use your leg, for example,” Van Woesik says. “So in SLT we practice finding just the obliques, which means the leg simply floats in as a result.”

Van Woesik loves exercises that challenge her this way. “I’m five years into my career, and each year

the body wears more,” she says. “But since doing SLT, I’m not feeling as much pain anymore; I’m not compensating for a weakness. I now have the strength to hold things.”



First Time at SLT? While the many moving parts of the Megaformer machine can be scary for first-timers, Van Woesik reminds dancers: “You’re in control. The machine doesn’t move unless you make it. There’s no shame in taking a break as you work to get stronger.”

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