

## Denise Coleman

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## Equipment and Maintenance: The Push-Through Bar: Keeping it Fun and Safe

by Denise Coleman

The Push-Through Bar (PTB) is located on the “tower” end of your Cadillac, Half Trapeze, RTC or Allegro Tower. It is a tremendously versatile component that greatly increases the amount of exercises you can add to your Pilates repertoire. However, some precautionary measures are recommended for the safe use of this device, and it is important that instructors spot their clients when in use.

Here are some tips on keeping your PTB safe for both clients and instructors:

### Safety Strap

Make sure you know how to use the PTB safety strap correctly. Do not hook the safety strap to an eyebolt. Attach the safety strap by looping it around the horizontal tube at the tower end and then thread the strap through the end loop.

When the PTB is sprung from the low position, the safety strap must always be used in case the hands or feet slip off the bar. Make sure the strap is adjusted high enough so the bar is above the client’s shins or head. The angle of the PTB, when viewed from the side, should be no lower than either a four or eight o’clock position. It’s a good idea to attach the safety strap to the PTB before connecting the springs.

### Proper Clearance

A client who is lying under the PTB should always have sufficient clearance to prevent contact. Always check to make sure the bar clears your client’s head before starting the exercise.

If you are performing an exercise that requires the feet on the PTB, it is very important to have firm contact between the feet and the bar. Wearing socks or anything slippery on the feet during these exercises is not recommended. The bar can be taped or padded for additional safety.

### Spotting

For additional safety, use a spotter whenever a client is using the PTB – even if the safety strap is attached. The PTB should always be controlled through any exercise, especially when springs are attached.

While you should use your safety strap whenever possible, there are a few exercises that are exceptions to this rule. At these times it is especially important to use a spotter.

### Springs and T-pins

When attaching a spring to the top of the tower in order to use the PTB, be sure to attach the spring(s) to a connection point on the horizontal bar, NOT a connection point on the vertical pole.

For shipping purposes your Balanced Body PTB will arrive with the “T”-shaped locking pin located on the inside of the two upright poles. The pins should be moved so the “T”-shaped handles are located on the outside of the two upright poles.

### The Circle of Caution

The entire arc or range of movement that the PTB can swing through is called the circle of caution. No matter what exercise you are doing or instructing, it is important to keep both your head and the client’s head out of this “circle”, as sometimes the bar can be released unexpectedly. If a client’s head is within this area, it can be hit by the bar.

### Walking Behind the PTB

Do not walk behind the tower when the PTB is in use. If at all possible, place any Pilates equipment that contains a PTB in a position where people (especially passersby who may not be paying attention) are not able to walk behind the tower-end of the equipment.

### 3-sided and 4-sided PTB options

Balanced Body makes two types of PTB’s. The most common is the anodized aluminum convertible PTB and the 4-sided maple PTB. The aluminum convertible PTB can be used as a 3-sided PTB or, with the addition of the PTB connector, as a 4-sided PTB.

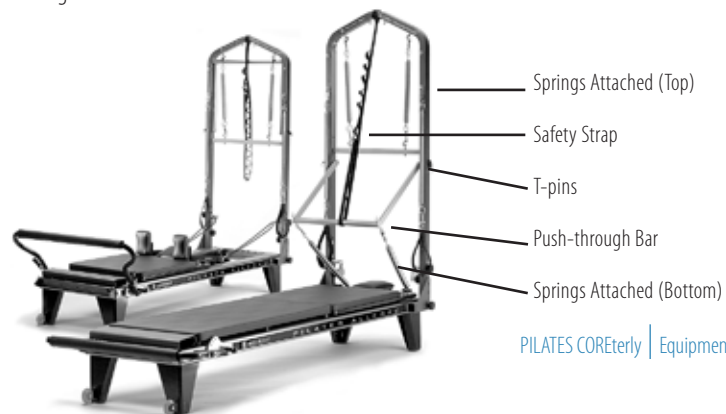
### Using the 3-sided bar

As you use the 3-sided bar you’ll notice that as you push the bar through the vertical plane of the tower’s upright tubes, control of the bar shifts from a compression control challenge (resistance) to an extension control challenge (assistance). This changes the exercise from a resistance-based challenge to a stretch. Please be aware that accidental release can cause the bar to swing back towards the user.

### Using the 4-sided bar

**NOTE:** to convert the aluminum PTB to a 4-sided bar, just pull the T-pins that hold the PTB in place slightly outward, insert the connector bar and replace the pins to their original position.

When pushing a 4-sided bar through the vertical plan of the upright Tower tubes, control of the bar continues to be a compression control challenge (resistance). You will find that there is a slight increase in resistance as the spring bends around the connector bar. As with the 3-sided bar, please be aware that accidental release can cause the bar to swing back towards the user.



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