

Everything you wanted to know about Pilates!

What is Pilates?

Pilates, pioneered by the late Joseph Pilates, is a mind-body exercise system designed to strengthen the weak and challenge the strong. Pilates (1880-1967) was a German expatriate who first made his mark in England during WWI when he developed a series of exercises and innovative equipment to help prisoners of war regain strength and mobility. When Joseph Pilates immigrated to New York, the local professional dance community discovered that his conditioning techniques helped prevent injury and improve strength while maintaining long, even muscle tone. This sparked a vast following of the method of exercise.

Is Pilates like Yoga?

In some respects Pilates is like Yoga. Both are considered mind-body methods of movement; both emphasize deep breathing and smooth, long movements that encourage the mind-body connection. The difference is that while Yoga requires moving from one static posture to the next, Pilates flows through a series of movements that are more dynamic, systematic and anatomically based incorporating resistance equipment. The goal with Pilates exercise is to strengthen the postural muscles while achieving optimal functional fitness.

How does a “contemporary” approach differ from more traditional ones?

Contemporary approaches to the original exercise method pioneered by the late Joseph Pilates have been developed with the aid of physical therapists and sports medicine and fitness professionals. This resulted in the inclusion of modern principles of exercise science and spinal rehabilitation, making it one of the safest and most effective methods available. For example, some approaches may promote a flat back, whereas contemporary Pilates exercises are designed to restore the natural curves of the spine and rebalance the muscles around the joints, there is also more emphasis on scapular stabilization. As well, there are more preparatory exercises and modifications to cater to many different body types and abilities, making it applicable to everyday life. This clear and detailed approach has allowed Pilates to be used by rehab and pre/post-natal clients, athletes, celebrities and everyone in between. Pilates exercises help both men and women develop optimal strength, flexibility, endurance and posture, without building bulk or stressing joints. The perfect complement to cardiovascular exercise, athletic training or rehabilitation, Pilates exercises help you tone your body, feel revitalized, and move with ease.

Can anyone do Pilates?

No form of exercise is appropriate for everyone, but Pilates exercise is appropriate for most people. As with any exercise method, you should always consult with a medical expert before beginning an exercise regime. A modified program may be recommended if you have any physical limitations. Everyone from serious fitness enthusiasts, to rehab patients, elite athletes, and prenatal clients will see a difference.

What are the benefits of practicing Pilates?

- › Builds core strength and stability
- › Improves posture and alignment
- › Increases flexibility, balance and coordination
- › Improves muscular balance and strength
- › Increases endurance and muscular tone
- › Prevents injury and heightens body awareness
- › Enhances athletic performance
- › Relieves stress and back pain

I have a bad back. Will I be able to do Pilates?

Although you should always consult your physician before starting any fitness routine, a Pilates workout is gentle and controlled with no sudden jarring actions. It is more important, however, that you work with a qualified instructor to ensure that you are doing the movements correctly. An experienced instructor will be able to modify the exercises to accommodate your limitations, continually challenge you within your ability, and monitor your improvements. If you commit yourself to a consistent workout schedule you will certainly feel results.

Can I do Pilates if I am Pregnant?

Women are generally encouraged to continue exercising at a mild to moderate level during their pregnancy, as long as it is uncomplicated. However, like other special health conditions, exercised should be with the permission of your physician. Also note, that IT IS NOT ADVISABLE TO BEGIN A NEW EXERCISE ROUTINE UPON PREGNANCY; so if you were not already practicing Pilates, you should wait till after the birth to begin. Because of the special considerations and modifications that go along with Pregnancy, it is not recommended that you join group class, unless it is specifically formatted for pre-natal exercise. Private sessions would be a more appropriate way to address your special needs. After birth, feel free to join our group Pilates classes, with your physicians consent.