

♥ Pilates ♥ Keep-fit ♥ Dance-fit ♥

Fit for life - your life

What is Pilates?

Pilates is a series of movements which are slow, graceful & continuous designed to improve your posture, balance, produce long lean muscles plus build a strong centre from which to work from. Working on the A, B, C - correct alignment/posture, how we breath in Pilates and activating our deep core postural muscles. Applying the below principles:

8 Principles of Pilates

Concentration - concentrating the mind and breath on the flow of each movement as it is performed. Concentrate finding correct posture and performing each movement correctly, slowly & with control

Breathing - in through the nose and out through the mouth (as if exhaling through a straw). Breathing wide and full into the ribcage (lateral thoracic breathing) movements flow with the breath pattern. Keeping shoulder girdle down throughout.

Centring - centring the mind and body (correct posture) finding and maintaining neutral spine (in all positions) plus core activation.

Control - all movements are performed in a slow, graceful & continuous manner all requiring control to ensure correct technique is applied. Controlling the muscles by adjusting the firing order in which muscles are recruited, in turn correcting muscular imbalances, restoring good alignment and posture.

Precision - all Pilates movements are performed in a precise manner, ensuring correct technique is applied at all times. Each movement is performed slowly and gracefully with control.

Isolation - isolating specific muscles ie - core activation - isolating Transversus Abdominus, Multifidus and Internal Obliques working these deep muscles to build a strong core.

Flowing movements - continuous, graceful movements which flow with the breath and each movement flowing from one to the next. Nothing is strained or forced.

Routine - as the above principles are applied over a period of time the movements become more familiar and routine plus the muscles remember the movement pattern (neural plasticity)

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# History of Pilates

Joseph Pilates was born near Düsseldorf, Germany in 1880. Very little is known about his early life, but according to various biographies, he appears to have been a frail child, suffering from asthma, rickets and rheumatic fever. His drive and determination to overcome these ailments led him to become a competent gymnast, diver and skier.

In 1912 Pilates lived in England working as a circus performer, boxer and self-defence instructor. During World War I, he was interned with other German nationals and it was during this time that he further developed his technique of physical fitness, designed for a confined space, by teaching his fellow internees. During the latter part of the War, he served as an orderly in a hospital on the Isle of Man where he began working patients who has sustained war injuries. It was here that the inspiration for his famous piece of equipment the "Cadillac" was born, as he attached springs to the hospital beds to help support the patients' limbs while working with them.

After the War, he returned to Germany where he trained the police in Hamburg and the German Army.

Pilates immigrated to the USA in the early 1920's opening a 'body-conditioning studio' with his wife Clara in New York City in 1926. The studio featured the apparatus that he designed to enhance his rehabilitation work. It soon became very popular with the dancer, actors, athletes and gymnasts offering a chance to improve their technique or recover from injuries.

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