

“Rambling On with Kathleen”

Pilates –What it is Anyway?

“Pilates develops the body uniformly, corrects wrong postures, restores physical vitality, invigorates the mind and elevates the spirit.” Joseph Pilates

Pilates, pronounced Puh-lah-teez, is a form of exercise that focuses on the core muscles (torso) and improves your mental and physical wellbeing, increases flexibility and strengthens muscles without “bulking up” the muscle. Breathing patterns are also utilized as one performs the Pilates moves and stretches. The program is designed around the principle that physical and mental health are connected. Thus, concentration, control, flowing motions, movement and breathing are all incorporated into the regime. Some people that use Pilates state they have improved posture and are less prone to some injuries, as well as experience increased body awareness and balance.

Although there is equipment that one can purchase, many Pilates exercises can be done on the floor with a mat using the body’s own weight as resistance. Pilates is growing in our world and is used by sports professionals, dancers and in physical rehabilitation as well as by ordinary people that just want to do some toning exercises in their own home or at a local gym. This is an exercise program for the novice or the professional trainer.

Joseph Pilates, born in Germany, is the founder of the Pilates exercise. He supposedly had many health problems as a child and took up sports to build his body and grow stronger. During WWI, he was assigned to care for patients in England and thus, began teaching them the exercises which he noted aided in their recovery and healing. He had been involved in self study of a variety of interests such as yoga, Zen and other physical exercise styles and routines for years prior to his work during WWI. Joseph Pilates then began devising equipment to assist in the rehabilitation of the people he cared for, some of which were bedridden. He later married a nurse and the two of them continued to incorporate the Pilates concepts into the treatment of their patients.

The interest in Pilates has continued to grow since WWI and many YMCA’s and other fitness clubs offer professional instruction. Instructors can also be certified by Pilates Organizations such as the PMA (Pilates Method Alliance) which was formed in 2000. Of course, having qualified instructors is highly recommended. Class fees can range in price depending on location in our Nation.

Other Benefits of Pilates Include:

- Strengthens your mind and muscles
- Redistributes your weight
- Shrinks waistlines
- Improves flexibility, coordination and balance
- Strengthens your back and joints
- Strengthens your core center

- Lengthens your core center
- Lengthens and balances muscles
- Builds confidence and self esteem
- Increases height

Resources:

Med 2000 Pilates Mind Body and Joint Health
Pilates and other movement and Exercise Therapies
PilatesMethodAlliance website
Kidshealth.org website on Pilates
Internet
Other Personal and Professional Experience

To learn more on this topic you can discuss it with your medical or health care professional, investigate the internet yourself and/or contact Kathleen at one of the following sites.

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