

# THE PILATES JOURNAL



## Celebrating matwork

### WHAT MAKES IT ATHLETIC REFORMER

Understand what makes for an impactful athletic reformer class

### THE STUDIOS OF THE FUTURE

From pilates studio to holistic wellness space

### GROW YOUR STUDIO ATTENDANCE

Learn how to increase your retention and fix a flagging attendance issue



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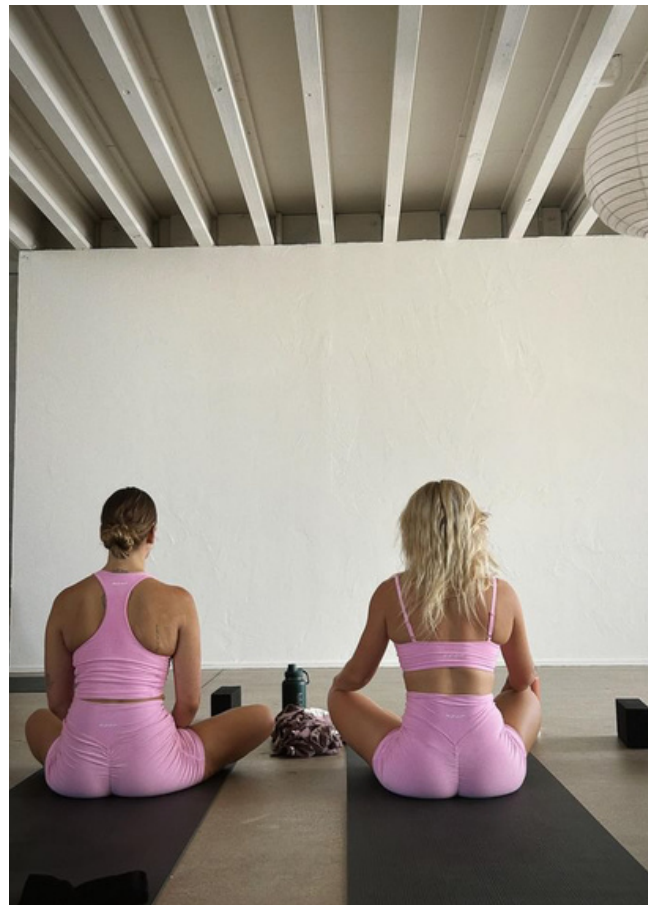
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Photography: @stefanicpilates

The Pilates Journal would like to acknowledge and pay respects to the Gadigal people of the EORA nation as the traditional custodians of the place we call home - Sydney - where this journal is produced.

The Pilates Journal pays respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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# Note from the Editor



## *Welcome to the latest issue of The Pilates Journal.*

As we dive into the month of March, we embark on a journey of self-discovery and physical empowerment with the celebration of "March Matness." This month-long ode to Joseph Pilates' classical mat exercises invites us to honour the foundation of our practice, engaging in a daily ritual that mirrors the conditioning routine he envisioned.

In the midst of this celebration, it is essential to address the evolving landscape of Pilates. With injuries on the rise and unchecked practices, it underscores the urgency for a unified understanding of what truly defines Pilates, as is explained by professor Penny Latey in this issue.

Dive into this edition to learn about what makes an exceptional athletic reformer class, how studio owners are transforming their Pilates offering into a holistic health business, and get tips on how to grow your studio attendance.

Let March be a month of mindful movement, growth, and unity in our Pilates community.

***CJZarb***

FOUNDER AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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### On the Cover

@stefanicpilates

# What makes it Athletic Reformer

WE TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ATHLETIC REFORMER PRINCIPLES AND WHAT MAKES FOR A DYNAMIC AND IMPACTFUL CLASS

*by Sean Bergara*



When was the last time you did a great Athletic Reformer Pilates class? What made it so great?

The Pilates Reformer was an innovative fitness tool first used not only for its original purpose of rehabilitation, but also for Athletic strength training and conditioning. Whether you want to build a strong core and lengthen your spine as traditional Pilates offers, or build strength and muscular size with Athletic Pilates, the Reformer will get you there.

It was my own journey that made me discover the benefits of Athletic Pilates and the Athletic Reformer workout. After herniating three discs during weight training, I took years off from strength training to recover and avoid reinjury. Occasionally, I would try gym workouts and find myself once again in pain. Quickly I realised my body could no longer withstand the heavy top loading. I began to explore athletic strength movements on the Reformer. I discovered the benefits of sharing the horizontal and vertical loads and over time, I began to increase my spring tension and found I was not in pain after training on the Reformer. This inspired me to rebuild my muscle mass in a more balanced approach.

In my view, it's simple Athletic Reformer and traditional strength training differ based on vertical and horizontal loads. Simply look at the Reformer as a "horizontal version" of a fitness cable machine and the options become limitless.

Typically as we all know, traditional Reformer classes use low load-bearing (spring tension), low rep count (three to five), and are set at moderate intensity, and therefore do not typically cause the onset muscle soreness associated with strength training. Meanwhile, Athletic Pilates is programmed with increased spring tension, multiple sets, and options for high intensity. In order to experience a burn and next-day soreness, we need to increase the intensity for our clients. This means doing 10 reps, then moving onto the next exercise won't cut it.

High-intensity and load-bearing exercises create tiny, microscopic tears in the muscle fibers. These tears are necessary in order to rebuild and develop stronger muscles. Your body responds to this by increasing inflammation, which may lead to what's known as delayed onset muscle soreness. The Reformer loaded with heavy spring tension, alongside long durations and repeated sets

focusing on one specific muscle group, will create onset muscle soreness ... and growth!

When we look at strength training principles the vertical loading causes the abdominals to react by strengthening them in relation to the force applied to the spine. In Athletic Pilates, the vertical and horizontal loads are proportional. This equality allows the abdominals to develop in a more balanced manner. Spine compression is a common side effect of vertically loaded body building techniques. If you were to measure the distance between the ribcage and the pelvis on the 45-year-old body builder, there would most likely be a few inches missing. This is another reason Athletic Pilates is more beneficial to the spine over time.

It's also important to understand that the format of an athletic Reformer Pilates class or session can vary greatly. I typically start with a warmup, then either pick a muscle group or choose a few muscle groups, offering options to increase spring tension. I have multiple circuit formats that work the entire body. They range from repeat sets of strength, core, and balance or metabolic movements. My programming keeps the movements fresh and varied. If I were to pick a muscle group to strengthen, I would build that into a circuit with options to increase tension.

If the upper back was the chosen muscle group, we could start with movements to warm up the spine, shoulders, chest, and back. Then we would get set for the strength portion. I would direct the students to find a medium spring tension appropriate for their strength and do 20 reps. Following the warmup set, we would drop the rep range down to eight to 10 and do four sets, increasing tension. The important aspect to increasing tension is that the students focus on proper movement, and if the tension increases to where they can no longer hold good form, breathing, and spine length, then they are instructed to lower the tension to a manageable tension.

I generally find that training primary muscle groups in Athletic Reformer Pilates is suitable weekly. In both my group and private training, it's common to focus on a primary muscle group(s) when doing a full-body strength-building routine. If we hit the upper back one day, we have a week to recover, which is appropriate for most individuals.

And finally remember we need to keep a focus on good form and healthy movement principles. This is paramount in Athletic Reformer Pilates. With the popularity of more rigorous Reformer classes, making the workout "hard" is not the best approach. We need to follow the Athletic Reformer Principles. These are the Pilates Principles, with the addition of recovery periods between sets, and allowing students to learn what their personal spring tension is rather than dictating tensions. For a student who is over six feet tall and super strong, the spring tension will feel completely different than it does for a five-foot-tall student building strength. We need to stop dictating spring tension, and let the student choose what's right for them.

I would also suggest that new Athletic Reformer teachers learn to slow the class pace, keeping the focus on quality of movement rather than on always trying to make the students feel worked over. I feel that when we teach an athletic based reformer class, that if we have it paced fast and with constant intensity, as seen in typical bootcamp classes, we are no better than a general fitness class where it's about the workout, not the movement.



When we take the intensity down a notch or two, by slowing the pace, we can place importance on movement quality rather than busting through the workout. I tell my workshop teachers, learning to program athletic reformer classes to slow the pace of the class down in order to ensure that each student is focused on balanced and thoughtful movement rather than just working out. It's the same in a Pilates reformer class where the emphasis is the workout not teaching movement. My goal is to be the voice for the Athletic Pilates movement and stress that the principles of movement are equally important as they are in a traditional pilates class.

**Sean began his Pilates Journey back in 2005 after suffering a serious skiing accident in 1991. In 2007, he moved to Palm Springs in California and opened Ecore Fitness. Sean received his Pilates certification from Polestar Pilates. Sean teaches regular weekly group and private classes and believes continuing education is key.**

**His next workshop Progressive and Athletic Reformer will be held in Palm Springs in October 2024 – you can find out more [here](#).**

# Evolving to help other teachers grow

DANICA HAS BUILT A PILATES CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOCUSED LESS ON RIGIDITY AND MORE ON DEVELOPING A TEACHER'S SKILLSET AS A MOVEMENT PRACTITIONER

by Danica Kalendaroglu



I think I always knew I'd end up teaching others. Every job I have ever had has centred around teaching movement to children and adults. I've been a mover and surrounded by movement my entire life. Teaching was a natural evolution for me. I love teaching my clients but there is something much more enriching about teaching teachers. About making sure there are pilates practitioners out there who truly help change people's lives.

Often we talk about the moments that changed us. For me, it was my first knee surgery at age 16 that forever changed the trajectory of my life. All I wanted at that time was to dance and physical therapy could only do so much for my recovery. I pursued my Bachelor in dance at Goucher College in Maryland, USA specifically because of its intertwined Pilates department. I knew that if I wanted to keep dancing I would have to be able to take care of my body and Pilates was the magic.

I had the option to stay at Goucher to pursue a Romana Kryzanowska-based classical teacher training program, but I chose another path. Four years was enough, and I needed the challenge of something new. I also knew I only had so much dance life left in my knees. I decided to go straight to grad school at the University of Colorado (CU), Boulder once again for dance and Pilates. I completed my advanced teaching certificate in 2005 and I've been teaching Pilates ever since.

I began teacher training when I moved my home studio to a studio storefront. I had a very clear mission with Pilates 804 as a restorative studio and I didn't have comprehensively trained teachers alongside me. It was my husband who said, "Why don't you just start training teachers". He said it as a solution but as soon as the idea was sparked I got to work. Applicants were either under-certified or completely stunned by how different their training was from the traditional approach. This was around 2014 before the Pilates fitness boom but I could see it on the horizon. Then covid changed everything and I saw a way to make -classical training more accessible.

The options for teacher training and certifications are endless but not all programs are created equal. Particularly when programs are about volume versus creating confident quality educators. I have nothing against Pilates as simple fun fitness or teachers who want to teach it as such but Pilates as a methodology of movement is where I gravitate. I meet too many teachers who only have a Reformer certification but now want more; or have been piecing together a comprehensive certification and feel gaps in their learning; or started a traditional program and became overwhelmed by the amount time and money the outdated model demands. I knew when I started teacher training that I wouldn't compromise the standards of the method but there had to be a way to make it more accommodating. I started training dancers in



the area in Pilates and soon had full apprentices. All have moved on to become full-time teachers either at Pilates 804 or in their own businesses. In the beginning, I only offered an in-studio apprenticeship modelled after successful classical programs. Again, it was Covid that made me realise the potential to reach teachers around the world as a mentor and continuing education provider.

I now only accept three apprentices a year for the in-studio training. I want to be personally involved with their training along with the faculty. Completing the apprenticeship allows the graduates the freedom to teach anywhere because they are comprehensively trained in all apparatus and levels.

One of the biggest challenges of teacher training is the time commitment. I created and continue to expand the online curriculum known as Somaphyx. Somaphyx is traditional Pilates but without the rigidity that it has been so well known for. The program I created allows for more flexibility with the hourly requirements, much of the lectures are replaced with digital coursework and the advisors oversee each apprentice to help guide them on their journey. I also made it so teachers already certified could do it as well. I want teachers to fully embrace the technique of Pilates without sacrificing their movement independence.

Perhaps it's more easily explained by one of my students...

"The Somaphyx® program merges respect for the traditional Pilates method with a mastery of movement science. Danica's deep understanding of both is enhanced by her fluency in anatomy and kinesiology, and she's incredibly generous in sharing all of her knowledge with her students. For anyone seeking a deeper understanding of why and how the method works, any of Danica's programs will be of tremendous benefit. You'll learn to trust your own creativity when your clients struggle, and you'll make remarkable progress in your own practice too. I'm grateful that I pursued teacher training with Danica, and I plan to keep learning from her for a long time to come!" -Aisling Chapin, Graduate of the Somaphyx Practitioner's Apprenticeship

I have been evolving my teacher training offerings for almost a decade and I've seen so much change over that period too. I've often felt like the one thing that is lacking in our industry is transparency. I get so frustrated with the lack of transparency from total cost to curriculum and grading rubric. I wish there was a global industry standard when it comes to this. The National Pilates Comprehensive Program (NCPT) is doing its best but it's pretty much an untameable beast at this point. With such an expansive variety of programs, what they choose to cover, and many different module approaches, it's exhausting to navigate.

All I can do is continue to offer what I feel is a comprehensive program that makes the teachers I teach come with feeling empowered and confident in their teaching. I continue to train intimately in studio with the Somaphyx Practitioner's Apprenticeships and also continue to expand my programming further.

I have watched Pilates rebuild people's lives and I have had the joy of being a part of that. The world needs Pilates teachers and quality movement educators. It's not just about exercise. We've known we needed exercise since our natural instincts said run.



Keeping the body integrated as one machine is another. Giving other's that control and teaching them how to maintain it is a gift. Teaching teachers means more people move better and that makes me sleep well at night.

**Danica is a Pilates practitioner and movement educator with over 20 years of experience. Her studio, Pilates 804 in Richmond, Virginia is the homebase for Somaphyx®. Danica's unique teacher training and mentoring programs.**

**Currently, Danica only offers the apprenticeship from her studio in Richmond, VA, USA and at the same time offers the Pro Mentorship and Intensives which can be joined from anywhere. The online curriculum can also be licensed for any program in need of training material. Danica hopes to expand with host studios very soon.**

**Danica is currently accepting applications for 2024 – Pro-Mentorship enrolment will open in spring 2024. You can contact her [here](#).**



# Game-changing equipment that increases your studio capacity

PILATES & CO USES MERRITHEW PILATES EQUIPMENT EVERY TIME, EXCLUSIVELY FROM LEISURE CONCEPTS

by CJZarb

After working for some of the biggest fitness brands across the globe, Roz and Dave Norman needed something more, something for them. Roz explained, “my husband Dave and I had worked for multiple fitness brands and I finally decided I was ready to live my passion project...for me that was opening my own Pilates studio in Miami in South East Queensland back in 2015.

“I had three kids under four and I needed something to light my fire again. It was a small studio, two tiny rooms but we made it work.

“Then in 2017, Dave had an epiphany whilst on a surf trip in Indonesia that we needed to try something new after watching the direction of where the boutique space would head. We had sold out of his equipment business and moved to Singapore to work for Virgin Active. Dave was heading up the Fitness business while I headed up Pilates for Virgin in the Singapore and Bangkok markets (who also used Merrithew reformers). So we left our little studio with our manager and I made frequent trips back to check in.

“We were able to head home at the start of 2020 and expand and concentrate on our own brand but then Covid hit and that changed everything for us, the focus was on managing the lockdown and we started to film content for our clients to use online. We continued to build and support our community. When we were finally allowed to reopen we discovered that so many people needed to move again and Pilates was a perfect exercise modality as each participant had their own reformer per class and these were well spaced etc plus there was this influx of people from Sydney and Melbourne.

“The majority of our classes cater for beginners and intermediate clients so it’s important that our equipment can support up to 45-50 classes per week.

“We have 43 Reformers, all SPX Max, four Cadillacs, three V2 reformers, six (Stability) Wunda Chairs, two Ladder Barrels plus other accessories to look after and I’m a clean freak so it matters to me that we maintain these machines well.

“We also run a lot of workshops and film content once a month, so it’s important that these machines are stackable. Sure it takes two people to stack it but they are also easy to roll out.

“I must admit along the way I did try and get a couple of pieces from another equipment provider and quickly regretted my choice. I got rid of it and started to ask myself why I doubted my choice in the first place.

“Not long after re-starting our business in real life, we had to move out of our existing premises. This saw us find a new space in Burleigh for a flagship studio. Increasing from 90 to 220 square metres was a game changer for us. With a bigger premises we needed more reformer equipment and I knew that I’d be purchasing Merrithew products from the Leisure Concepts team. Not long after opening Burleigh we opened Bundall - it was all within a couple of months but we made it happen. The Leisure Concepts team assisted us greatly during this time.

“For us it had to be Merrithew equipment because it just does the job well. It does what it says it does and it’s one of the best. The equipment is really sturdy.

“I’ve been in studios where I hear another reformer creak and it makes me feel uncomfortable. Whereas with the Merrithew equipment from Leisure Concepts, the rollers and the ride are always smooth. Some equipment can feel quite clunky, like when you need to hook on the springs and you feel like you could get yourself hooked. I like that the ball that fits on the gear bar fits well.

“I need to have confidence in my equipment and with Mike and the team at Leisure Concepts I know I can be safely assured. I have several reformers from them that are now nine years old and still going. I have so much confidence in this product. Sure it’s an investment but it’s completely worth it.

“In May 2023 we opened our third studio Robina which meant we needed the help of the Leisure Concepts team again to get enough equipment promptly for our third studio. We operate the Robina studio the same as our proven model of group reformer classes (14pax) and a small group area for 1:3 and private appointments using the apparatus equipment. Robina does offer a slightly different experience for our clients with an upstairs mezzanine for our privates and we have group reformer classes downstairs. At Pilates&Co our group formats can be beginner, all levels, intermediate then we have Reformer HIIT, Reformer Strength and Reformer Fit (jumpboards) as well as stretch and relax and bring your bubs. It’s been nearly a year now and this business keeps growing from strength to strength.

“At the end of the day, we didn’t want to be just another Pilates studio. We wanted to give our clients a broader offering that included some HIIT training, strength training and other elements to create a well-rounded workout and I’m proud to say that’s what we do so well. Offering private and tailored small group sessions also means clients can experience a full repertoire of equipment Pilates movements whatever their level. The Merrithew equipment from Leisure Concepts just makes it all the more possible. I wouldn’t use anything else,” said Roz.

Speak to Mike from [Leisure Concepts Australia](#) to find out which equipment is best for you and your studio. 1300 911 441.



Leisure Concepts supplies premium fitness equipment to industry professionals, focusing on complete service from the initial design concept to ongoing professional service and maintenance. They believe in strategy before price and suggest products that result in clients coming back time and time again. View their products [here](#).

# The studios of the future

A STRONG PASSION FOR HOLISTIC WELLNESS HAS HELPED FOUR DYNAMIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS REVOLUTIONISE THE STUDIO EXPERIENCE

*by Marney Jury*



So many studios are focused on building a studio that balances the aesthetic with well-rounded Pilates and or Cardio/HIIT programs. But have you ever thought about creating a comprehensive wellness hub for your clients before? Curious, then read on about Marney Jury's journey.

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We had a vision when creating Sum of Us Studio that we would be a total wellness studio, where we could cater for all people across their lifespan and across all aspects of wellness. Sum of Us is the lovechild of four dynamic and progressive health professionals, with a passion for wholistic, accessible and honest health and wellness care, fulfilling our dream of providing a beautiful wellness hub to the people of Melbourne, Australia.

We consider ourselves a health clinic, a fitness studio, a community hub, a retreat and a home, all disguised in one gorgeous studio! We wanted to provide a one-stop home away from home where all people felt welcome to come and enjoy the best of services to achieve total wellness. We wanted to provide a

safe and beautiful space where we could be sure people were getting the quality of service we expected across the expansion on their journey and life. One place to see people through from injury and pain, to fitness, and vice versa.

The idea for our business was created while I was living in London. Upon my return, I started working with some like-minded physios and a myotherapist who all shared the same vision and dream - to create a beautiful, luxurious, urban oasis run by health professionals who offered much more than just conventional western style medicine and practice.

Essentially we have physiotherapists, myotherapists, a dietician, an acupuncturist, massage specialists, Pilates teachers, Yoga teachers, meditation and sound bath healers, management and administration staff all working together to tune in, find and offer the most effective personalised plan for any person.

Our studio focuses on the myriad of components needed for a person or a population to be as well, healthy, happy and able as possible across the lifespan. Things like a personalised and



individualised approach, connection and community, accessibility, consistency, and commitment. So we have worked hard to create a space and service that organically and naturally feeds these components, allowing us to create health and wellness outcomes on an entirely different level. Strategies such as incorporating a cafe to encourage connection, having intimate spaces that feel private and safe, using a calming colour palette, natural light and incorporating the outdoors, and hand selecting staff allows us to create the experience we want our clients to feel.

We select staff and service providers based first and foremost on their values, philosophy, and intent. This means the feel and culture is highly consistent, and that every staff member encountered in the studio, has the client's whole wellbeing, experience and outcomes as the highest priority over anything else.

Our physiotherapists are all Pilates-trained teachers, our myotherapists are all either pilates, yoga, meditation or massage trained. The uniqueness is that our therapists all use a combination of techniques and work interchangeably, we have all learnt from each other and combined our knowledge and skills to create our own unique way. We all use manual techniques (massage, dry needling/acupuncture, mobilisation, etc) as well as exercise-based therapy to sustain manual changes. We work closely with our exercise physiologist, dietician and podiatrist who all also embody our approach of looking at health and the body as a whole, not a part. Our team works interchangeably and with clients to give them the best and most effective and honest service and outcomes.

The feel of community, family and connection is paramount in health and wellness outcomes. This feel is genuine and true at Sum of Us. It comes from the heart of the four of Us and the people we select who naturally embody it and are encouraged and coached to grow it. At Sum of Us you'll find our instructors also work as managers and front of house/administration, our

***“Part of our strategy for retaining clients is to inform and educate them on the options most suitable to them in their life stage/journey and what we can offer them through our marketing efforts, events and promotions.”***

admin team are studying myotherapy or physiotherapy, we are all on the same level and all intertwined, but most importantly understand our clients' needs in great detail and where they fit and need to be in our studio.

In any given week we might see children and teens, young professionals for pilates, yoga, massage, injuries; mums-to-be for prenatal pilates and pelvic floor assessment, middle-aged men and women with back or neck pain, post-menopausal women, athletes and more! Best of all they stay with us forever – increasing our client retention, our referral pool and satisfaction.

Part of our strategy for retaining clients is to inform and educate them on the options most suitable to them in their life stage/journey through our marketing efforts, events and promotions. Our staff are also heavily immersed in our offerings and culture so they also understand the why, the what, the who and the how, so that no matter who a client encounters, they can be guided towards what will work best for them.

The typical client might come into our Studio and start working with us through a “Starter Pack” that includes an initial individual session with one of our Physiotherapists who can then act like a concierge service to best inform, direct and guide clients towards an experience and journey most suited to them. Taking into consideration genuine needs and desires, financial ability, time ability, commitment ability, the complete consideration set. Often our clients might be coming for general fitness pilates or yoga, become injured or develop pain, see one of our physios or therapists to help manage the issue with guidance for adjustments to take in classes, or to do some rehab clinical classes. While other clients might initially attend for an injury or pain, and progress their rehab into to fitness/maintenance.

We have two, eight bed reformer studios, and one mat/yoga room and we see about 700 attendees through the door each week. We have three clinical pilates studios and five treatment rooms, which see around 500 people through each week. The beautiful thing is, our two, double-story Victorian buildings feel private, warm and homely making it a much more personable experience for our clients.

I think our clients describe it best themselves, calling our services “The most professional generous care”...Another said, “I have experienced a wonderful improvement in the pain I was experiencing and a much stronger body.” These are the moments we live for.

I'm grateful for what my business partners, Chris and Brigid Jellis and Melissa Price and I have created. We wanted to join together all the things we loved doing - to deliver personalised and progressive health, to exercise and move, to go to beautiful yoga studios, hotels and retreats, gorgeous cafes, to eat healthily (but not exclusively healthy!!), to hang out together with family and friends, to receive a treatment, class or service that cared for us and so we created our own oasis...and our clients wouldn't have it any other way.

**Marney Jury is a physiotherapist, Pilates teacher, and passionate advocate of holistic wellness. Combining her skills and passions she created [Sum of Us Studio](#), spending her days helping people feel better - treating clients, taking clinical and reformer Pilates classes, teaching, educating, empowering and connecting with her clients and team.**



# Build a schedule that helps you grow your business

LEARN HOW TO AVOID GETTING BOGGED DOWN IN ADMIN AND GET TO BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS STRATEGIES

by Lesley Logan

You became a Pilates Instructor to teach people Pilates. And then found yourself also wearing the job title of marketing, cleaning, scheduling, bookkeeping, CEO, social media manager, community leader, website developer and if you have teachers organizer of multiple personalities!

Most days it feels like you have fewer minutes in the day and that you end up further behind than when you started. While you still LOVE teaching Pilates and having a studio. You do wonder if it will ever get any easier.

If nothing changes, then nothing changes.

What does this mean? It means, if you keep wearing all of the hats then you'll get to keep wearing all the hats.

But, how do you get out from being bogged down? How can you grow your business without working every single day?

I've got six ideas to consider. And a step-by-step approach to creating a schedule that works for you. Before I get into them, its important you know that I understand exactly where you are coming from. Back in 2015, I found myself running nine studios, teaching 15+ hours a week, leading teacher training programs, planning my first retreat and travelling to teach workshops. I was really good at a lot of things. And, I loved each project I was part of. But, I was headed for burnout and fast.

One day, I found myself having a panic attack on what was supposed to be a day off. I knew something had to change. I couldn't keep going the way I was going. I sat down and evaluated every job title, every task, and every income stream. I made the tough decision to let something go that took more time than they were paying me. Then made it a priority to get a few more clients so I could let go of my managing job. After I freed up time from managing studios I was able to take on my clients to then hire an assistant who could take more off my plate. These changes didn't happen overnight. But, with a plan and a few months they did happen. By 2016 I was making more than I had the year prior, working less and more aligned with my WHY than I was before.

1. Own your strengths! We all have things we are the best at. And, not just good at but that they give us energy. Have you ever



noticed how when you are doing some tasks it feels like you just get in the flow? Anything that gives you joy you get to keep!

2. Make a list of all the things that drain you. It doesn't mean we get to ditch them. But having this list of every single task in your personal life and business that takes more time than it should on one list allows us to take the next step.

3. Any task that costs less than you make in an hour hire out. For example, cleaning my home and studio was on my drain list. And, hiring someone who it brought joy to cost me the same as teaching an hour-long session. By delegating the cleaning I gained hours each week. Start with one task at a time.

4. Have clear expectations. Hiring teachers or team members to support your biz or life only helps if you're clear in your communication. People unfortunately are not mind readers. Share what you specifically love that they do. And be very clear on why you would do something different than they did it if you're unhappy with their work.

5. Move the deadlines! Too often we create unnecessary stress by making everything have to be done today, tomorrow or next week. A workshop might sound exciting. But, does it have to happen in the same month as a new website build?

6. Evaluate if you really need to do it. Do you really need to post on social daily? Do you really need to have a YouTube channel, on-demand platform, and teacher training? Just because you can, doesn't mean you should. And, while I am a huge fan of additional income streams. I am also a fan of growth without burnout.

Busy isn't the badge of honor you think it is. And, it is possible to make the money you want to make, have a life, and make the impact you desire.

You are the only person who can do what you do the way that you do it. If you burn out, your people miss out on the life-changing work you do.

Once you've thought through these six steps. The next step is to create a schedule that has your priorities in it first!

This is how I create a schedule that helps me get my work done without over-working:

Take a blank calendar out. Whether you start the week with Sunday or with Monday. Make sure you can see the entire week.

Block out when you go to bed, when you wake up, work out, or anything that is a personal priority. That could be kiddos, date night, etc.

Next, block out the hours you teach. This is different from the hours you work ON the business.

I call all of these ROCKS. Think like big rocks out in the world. They are tough to move. They take up space. They go in first.

Once your ROCKS are in next its the GEMSTONES. The tasks that propel your business or life forward. Maybe that's the marketing you have been putting off. Or reaching out to a local business to do a collab. This is not admin. This is not email. This is not scrolling on social. This is time block will be protected for those tasks that might be uniquely different week to week but they move the business or your personal life forward.

Lastly, and you don't have to block this off. Its the GLITTER. It is all the things that end up taking priority but really will always be there. You will always have emails to read, bills to pay, and comments to respond to. It's not that they aren't important. But, they take up more time than they need and keep you from working on those projects you really desire to do.

If you want to take this to the next level, see the end of this article for a free webinar on how I create my schedule to get everything done.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, remember WHY you are doing this in the first place. I bet your WHY wasn't to be "BUSY." I bet it was to change lives. So ask yourself the next time you feel bogged down if that task or project really is aligned with your WHY.



**Lesley Logan (ProfitablePilates Founder) - Lesley Logan fell in love with Pilates after her first 100! From side-hustle to full time, she jumped from teacher to manager to running multiple studios. She wrote a book that focused on the business of Pilates, which grew into ProfitablePilates.com and is now a business coaching program called Agency. Take class from LL at [OnlinePilatesClasses.com](https://OnlinePilatesClasses.com) and listen to her podcast at [LesleyLogan.co/podcast](https://LesleyLogan.co/podcast). When not in Las Vegas she travels, leading workshops and retreats around the world.**

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# How To Grow Your Pilates Studio When Attendance is Flagging

LEARN HOW TO INCREASE YOUR RETENTION AND FIX A FLAGGING ATTENDANCE ISSUE

by *Chantelle Bruinsma*

Can I tell you about one of my favourite studio owners I've ever worked with? Her name is Jen, and she's from Iowa USA. She noticed that students started missing classes, and a few had disappeared altogether. She knew it was time for a change, but instead of shifting her focus to new students and paid advertising, she started working on her team.

Did you know it is much more economical to keep a student than to spend money getting a new one? Retention is the key to a successful Pilates studio, or any studio in fact.

Read that sentence again. It's ALL about retention.

Here are my best tips from Studio Evolution's Retention Solution (a module of my signature program) that helped Jen increase retention and fix her flagging attendance problem. Here's what she did.

— She knew most of her students were coming to her studio via word of mouth, so she ensured that her current students felt cherished and valued.

— Jen knew that changes had to happen within the team, so she turned to the 5 Love Languages—acts of Service, Physical Touch, Quality Time, Gifts and Words of Affirmation. Every person has a love language, so Jen took the time to get to know the love language of her teachers. She left little notes and presents for those who love gifts, gave compliments to those who needed affirmation and took the lovers of quality time out for coffee so they all felt valued and appreciated meaningfully.

— Jen set up a monthly meeting for the whole team to sit and discuss the studio business. What's working, what's not. It was crucial to set this time aside when no one was teaching to keep in tune with her team. Jen says this step made a tangible difference in how her team represented her business.

— She observed one class a month per teacher. Not in a Big Brother way, just to see how the teachers interacted with the class and if there were any improvements she could help them make.

The key to dwindling attendance is to create a place where the students WANT to be. The most significant ad spend in the world



will be only helpful if you can get your team on board to get your students to feel like they WANT to come back again and again. Otherwise, you're throwing money into the wind to gain new students who might leave again quickly because you still need to brush up on your customer service experience.

Jen no longer needs to market - her studio is self-fulfilling, and she's living the dream.

With all that said, we can't ignore marketing completely. So here is my 5-point checklist of things you can do today to get your Pilates studio marketing looking oh-so-swish.

1. Combat blank page syndrome by remembering to keep it simple. Simple language, simple instructions and simple calls to action. There's no need to overdo it. Just say what needs to be said.
2. Consistency of branding. Make sure all your colours, logos and fonts match everywhere. Your studio, your fliers, your website and your social media. If someone picks up your flier from a cafe and visits your website, and they look different, they'll click away. Keep your branding consistent.
3. Use emotive language. "Have fun and get fit!" How many times have you seen a Pilates studio use that phrase? Let's think of other words - elegant, glide, strength, breath, control, flow, centre. Think rich and evocative!
4. Keep it short and sweet. No one wants to read a 3-page tri-fold brochure with teeny tiny font.
5. One ad = one purpose. Don't run an ad that tells people to sign up for your 5 Pilates Principals Worksheet, sign up for a class, and get in touch if they have any questions. Pick one

objective for your ad and ensure all your language points to that CTA.

If your studio's attendance is flagging, this combination of foundations and marketing basics will quickly fix your client flow!

If you loved these marketing tips, we have a gift for you - our FREE 61-page Ultimate Studio Marketing Guide, where I share even more tips and tools for increasing your marketing reach without increasing your marketing spend.

You can learn more about Industry Leading Studio Strategist Chantelle Bruinsma and Studio Evolution [here](#). Studio Evolution has been helping studio owners for the past 10 years redesign their studio business for maximum, profit, freedom and joy.

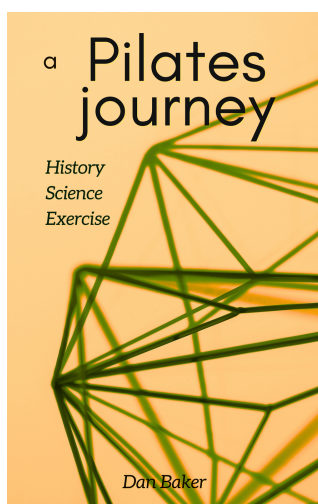
Chantelle founded a thriving performing arts studio in Sydney, Australia expanding to six locations in four years. To meet growing demand for her strategies, she launched Studio Evolution, a program that has since helped studios in 34 countries double student enrollment, achieve 97% retention, and reduce workloads by half over the past decade.

Click below to get their Ultimate Marketing Guide.

<https://we.studioevolution.com/The-61-Page-Ultimate-Studio-Marketing-Guide>



## New releases



### A Pilates Journey by Dan Baker

Take a journey through the history and origin of the Pilates Method, examine its claims, and navigate the science of the exercises.

Available via [Amazon](#)



### Sage Does Pilates by Clarissa Shepherd

A quick and simple book to introduce children to Pilates at any age.

Available [here](#).

# Evolution of Pilates Part 1: Development and Diversification

*Dr Penelope Latey 2024*

*Cert Pilates (UK, USA), Dip Pilates Movement Therapy, MSc, PhD*

## Abstract

Pilates is increasingly being used for fitness, rehabilitation and chronic disease management. This paper is part one of two on the evolution of Pilates. This discussion paper explores the diversification of Pilates, from a mind-body exercise system for maintaining wellness even with comorbidities, to assist biomechanical malalignments and pathological conditions, for rehabilitation, and gym exercise providing cardio workouts. The scope of this paper traces the development of Pilates principles and modifications that have contributed to the diversification of the Pilates method from Classical Pilates to comprehensive, therapeutic, clinical Pilates and gym/fitness Pilates and the acceptance of Pilates as an allied healthcare workers treatment tool. Popularisation, and commercialisation of Pilates has produced a confusing range of Pilates providers, with markedly different philosophy, educational pathways and competencies. The substantial disparities between the skills, accreditation and the service provided by the various types of Pilates need to be recognisable for students, course providers, consumers, public health funding bodies and private health insurance funds.

The Pilates profession(s) require accurate and distinctive descriptors of provision of service. Clear labelling of the different types of Pilates supported by transparent independent regulation will improve safe practice.

## Key words:

Pilates, fitness, mind-body exercise, rehabilitation, Allied Healthcare, Complementary Medicine.

## 1.1 Background

Over the last 40 plus years, Pilates has undergone a dramatic shift from a little-known mind-body exercise system practiced by performing artists to being available to the wider public. Pilates can be found in a range of settings – from the gym, taught by fitness instructors or group Pilates teachers, to independent Pilates studios and allied health clinics as a therapeutic exercise intervention provided by Pilates teachers, and allied health practitioners.

### 1.1.1 Historical development

Initially, the Pilates exercise system Contrology, was utilised by gymnasts, dancers and boxers to maintain and improve whole body wellness[1]. From the late 1930's Joseph Pilates taught group exercise classes to dancers, and semi-private studio sessions

primarily to performing artists, using mat and various Pilates apparatus. Individually prescribed programs were provided for those with problems or conditions and dance or sports injury recovery [2]. Up to the late 1970's Pilates was primarily taught by ex-dancers, commonly to performing artists and was not well known outside these professions.

After the late 1980s, Pilates expanded considerably beyond the world of the performing arts. Various Pilates teachers reinterpreted and modified the traditional Pilates method making it safer and more accessible for those from a non-dancer background [3]. From the early 2000's with an increase in popularity and broadening of the client base, the brand 'Pilates' was marketed widely. Pilates became the 'in thing' for fitness and injury recovery, a new style of gym exercise and a therapeutic treatment modality [4].

### 1.1.2 Fundamentals of Pilates

Contrology, developed by J H Pilates during the 1920s, is a comprehensive body-conditioning method directed toward development of the whole person [5] for the "PERFECT balance of mind and body ...that cured (many conditions) through corrective exercise" [6]. His principles included: the body guided by the will; striving for a straight posture and flexible spine; using deep coordinated thoracic breath with the abdomen held in [2], from the powerhouse at the mid torso [7].

After Pilates' death his Contrology principles were elucidated as: concentration, control, centering, flow, precision and breathing [1] and the method renamed Pilates. From the 1980s onwards several Pilates teachers began to reinterpret the principles [8], exercises were modified, and new exercises introduced. The 'Center' or powerhouse was expanded down from the top of the pelvis to include the pelvic floor and breath engagement was modified [3, 7, 8]. Pilates ideal spinal alignment of a straight flat back was modified to a natural or neutral spine [3, 9], although there are different opinions on what constitutes neutral spine [10-13].

The Pilates system of body conditioning is more than an exercise routine, founded on stabilising the core musculature [14], while performing a controlled range of motions [15, 16]. The principles have been altered by some Pilates training providers for allied health care workers, and gym-fitness Pilates providers [17]. Physiotherapists are reported to perceive Pilates as an exercise approach requiring core stability, strength, flexibility with attention

to muscle control, posture, and breathing [18, 19]. However, physiotherapy thinking has, until recently, been focused on the physical functioning of the biomechanical body [20] suggesting that the adoption of Pilates' emphasis on the complete integration of mind and body remains challenging. Some gym Pilates providers have reduced the principles to: strengthening core, gaining toned muscles, improving balance and posture [21]. The importance of mind-body awareness that is fundamental to Pilates is left out. The popularisation of Pilates may have financial benefits for some stakeholders however clearly distinguishing between types of Pilates is important for consumer safety.

### 1.1.3 Types of Pilates

The Pilates Method has evolved and diversified, with different types of Pilates providing different services. The significant differences are multifaceted and include the setting, content, delivery, client population and intention (Table 1). These differences are also reflected in levels of skilled competency and the education of providers. Types of Pilates include Gym large group Pilates classes, small group population specific classes, Studio based Classical, or Comprehensive Pilates, modern therapeutic Pilates and clinical physical therapist provided Pilates.

Gym (fitness) Pilates involves teaching the same exercises to a large group, at a gym, fitness facility, multidiscipline health practice or dance studio and may involve the use of minimal equipment such as mat or barre Pilates or uses a single apparatus such as the Reformer. GymPilates group classes can be beneficial as is general exercise/physical activity [22], when taught to a fit and well client. However, like any exercise modality if inappropriately taught, can cause harm.

Classical and Comprehensive studio Pilates sessions are delivered using a mixture of specific Pilates apparatus [25, 26] (Figure 2). Classical Pilates closely adheres to the Contrology exercises described by JH Pilates [2, 6], as well as information from original film footage and work passed on by some of those trained by him and his partner, Clara [27]. The Classical method is more physically demanding as there is assumed pre-existing physical skill, flexibility and coordination.

Comprehensive Pilates is taught in both private and semi-private sessions using Pilates apparatus. This style of Pilates includes various exercise modifications. Some undertake a brief movement assessment with exercises graded into basic, intermediate, and advanced [28]. Commonly if the client has any conditions or problems, Classical exercises are removed from the program and some modified or pre-Pilates exercises used [26]. Usually, pathologies or conditions are not directly addressed.

Modern Therapeutic Pilates is taught using multiple Pilates apparatus and additional specialised equipment [12, 29] (Figure 3). It can be practised by anyone, regardless of age or level of fitness, and is usually taught in individual sessions or semi-private sessions and can be used for rehabilitation [30]. After initial assessment, a treatment plan and tailored programme is devised. Ongoing assessment, program modification, guidance to manage any conditions and ensure enhanced performance skill continues over the course of the sessions [31].



Figure 1. a) Group Mat GymPilates [23]

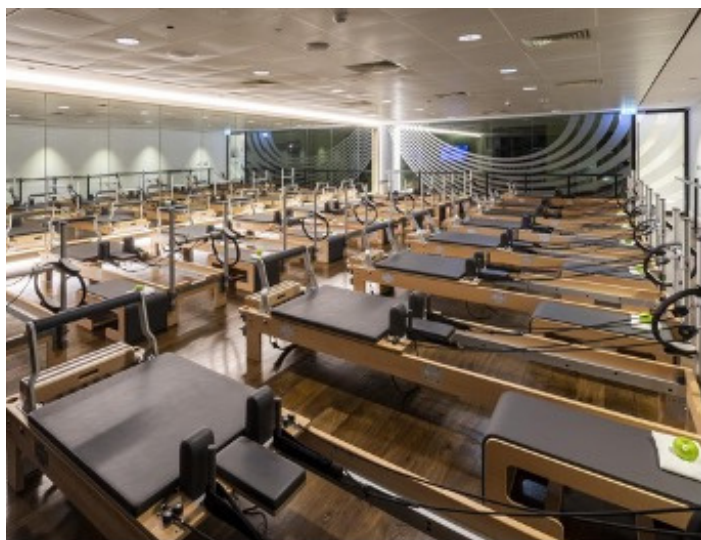


Figure 1.b) Group Reformer GymPilates [24]



Figure 2 Fully equipped therapeutic Pilates studio

Clinical Pilates provided by a registered allied health care worker is taught in both private and semi-private sessions usually with limited Pilates apparatus. After assessment, a treatment plan and an initial exercise programme is provided. An exercise sequence is devised to address specific injury rehabilitation needs [32] and is different from generic Pilates [33]. Notably, ongoing supervision may be provided by a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist, an allied health assistant, comprehensive or therapeutic Pilates teacher or uncertified Pilates instructor.

Small group, population specific sessions can also be provided by a comprehensive, therapeutic Pilates teacher or allied health worker. This entails an individual assessment to determine suitability for inclusion. Exercise progressions from basic small range of movement are to be mastered before more complex and challenging exercises introduced. Group classes of up to eight participants with the same condition or problem may exercise together effectively.

Pilates classes or treatment sessions range from 45 to 90 minutes in length. Some Pilates teachers provide individual homework programs. Various online classes are also available. The highly variable provision of service of different types of Pilates are further complicated by extensive inconsistencies in the education of Pilates providers.



Figure 3. Therapeutic Pilates for Bill a person with Parkinsonism

**Table 1 Characteristics of the different types of Pilates**

Type	Setting	Client evaluation	Content	Delivery	Population	Intention
GymPilates Mat	Large group >8 to 30/50p Multiple Mats	Gym Information form No assessment	Set exercise list for all attendees	Follow along class. maybe delivered via video some demonstration verbal group cueing	General admission	General exercise to improve cardio and core strength
GymPilates Reformer	Large group >8 to 30p Multiple Reformers	Gym Information form No assessment	Set exercise list for all attendees	Follow along class. maybe delivered by video some demonstration verbal group cueing	General admission	General exercise to improve cardio, core and limb strength with resistance equipment
Classical Pilates+	Semi - private 2 to 4p Fully equipped Pilates studio	Information form Minimal assessment	Set original Pilates exercises with minor modifications, variable equipment for attendee	Some demonstration verbal cueing some hands-on guidance	For athletic and flexible client with minimal or no conditions	Improve: core strength with thoracic breathing; postural alignment (straight spine);athletic flexibility. Challenging high level workout using classical Pilates principles
Comprehensive Pilates+****	Private Semi-private 1 to 4p Fully equipped Pilates studio	Health history form plus discussion Postural and limited functional assessment	Original and with pre- Pilates modifications. Some listed exercises avoided if contraindicated	Demonstration verbal cueing some hands-on guidance	General and for those with mild or moderate problems, no complex conditions	Improve well-being, manage mild or moderate physical and mental conditions using modified and classical Pilates principles. Reduce pain and improve functional performance
Therapeutic Pilates+**	Private Semi - private 1 to 4p Fully equipped Pilates studio	Health history form plus discussion Postural and detailed functional assessment	Customised exercise program based on original and pre-Pilates exercises with extensive tailored client specific modifications	Demonstration verbal cueing extensive tailored assistive hands-on guidance and discussion	General and for those with mild, moderate, or complex problems and or chronic conditions	Improve well-being, manage mild, moderate chronic physical and mental conditions, pre and rehabilitation using modified principles and tailored Pilates exercises. Reduce pain and improve functional performance
Clinical Pilates+**	Private Semi - private 1 to 4p Variably equipped Pilates studio	Health history form Postural and functional/bias Physio assessment	Set exercise list with modifications to dose and load specific to client diagnosis	Some demonstration verbal cueing some hands-on guidance	For those with moderate problems and/or chronic conditions	Adjunct tool of Reg AHP. Manage moderate problems, chronic conditions with modified Pilates principles using limited modified Pilates exercises. Reduce pain and improve functional performance
Small group Pilates**	Group Mat ≤8p Equipment ≤5p	Health history form Postural and functional assessment	Set graduated exercise list tailored to specific population	Demonstration verbal cueing guidance	Designated specific population	Manage and improve functional performance for specific populations using various modified Pilates exercises and principles

Key: +May provide small group Pilates. \*\* Client evaluation may vary between providers. ++ Broad classification dependent on provider education and experience. Reg AHP: Registered Allied Health Professional. p: participants.

## 1.2 Development of Pilates teacher training courses

Pilates teacher training was initially only by apprenticeship. This process started with a client or student of Pilates embracing the method and wanting to learn more. Students learnt by example and in discussion with the teacher. Some Pilates teachers trace their qualifications back to those who originally learnt the method with Joseph or Clara Pilates [27]. While learning by apprenticeship still occurs today, it is more common for trainee teachers to undertake formal structured courses, work placement and mentoring. Although there are differences in Classical or comprehensive Pilates teachers, both adhere to a similar training framework [34].

During the 1990s, formalised training courses were developed by studio and independent private course providers [35]. Pilates training providers flourished in the early 2000's with most teacher training businesses initially offering comprehensive courses. Some of these courses continue to be offered around the world [36-38].

Moves to legitimise Pilates teacher training courses came from Pilates associations, course providers, and the fitness and allied health industries. Many private course providers were involved with professional Pilates associations who sought to regulate the profession, linking membership to certification. Some courses were recognised by various government training organisations providing certification from level 3 to diploma level [39]. While Pilates classes were available at a few universities, there were no tertiary teacher training courses except the Graduate Certificate in the Pilates Method (2001 to 2005) in Australia [40]. During that time students applying for a comprehensive or graduate entry Pilates course were required to have prerequisites of tertiary level anatomy, physiology and Pilates personal practice then undertake workplace practice as well as learning and applying the mind-body movement philosophy for course completion. Passing all invigilated exams on course work theory and face-to-face assessment of personal practice and teaching skills were compulsory for certification. It is unknown if these requirements continue to date for privately run courses.

Perceived financial benefits may have led course providers to change the comprehensive training courses and provide stand-alone repertoire courses. Short repertoire courses were promoted by training providers to gyms, fitness facilities, and some allied health business, who then began to advertise group mat and/or reformer sessions at prices considerably less than comprehensive semi-private studio Pilates sessions. Large group Pilates sessions are promoted as having all the benefits of comprehensive or therapeutic Pilates. However, Pilates-based repertoire is only a small component of the method and group reformer classes are equivalent to using your 'core' while exercising with a multi-gym resistance machine. Since all types of Pilates have a fitness component for clarity, the large group classes should be identified as GymPilates.

Even though various mind-body exercises flourished in the early 20th century [4], Pilates' Contrology was not embraced by the registered allied healthcare professions during his lifetime. With the modifications made to the method and increasing high profile of Pilates as a functional exercise modality, in the late 1980s some physiotherapists began to train and use Pilates as a treatment tool. Research on lumbar stabilisation [41] and therapeutic exercise for low back pain [42] created interest in core strengthening [43] which is strongly associated to the

Pilates powerhouse or Center [44], was published. Pilates teacher training expanded to allied health professions, with some physiotherapy-based Pilates course providers encouraging their profession to incorporate Pilates into their treatment toolbox for rehabilitation [45, 46] and as an adjunct to their practice [14]. Physiotherapy expanded with a renewed interest in exercise as medicine [47, 48]. From the mid 2000's Pilates began to be integrated into various allied health practices and recognised as a treatment tool within some government and private health schemes [49].

## Significance

The evolution of the Pilates method has in part led to its popularisation. The subsequent diversification of the method has also led to a confusing range of provision of service and types of Pilates. Clearly naming and independently verifying the skills of Pilates providers and the potential risks of practicing the different types of Pilates is vital. The differences need to be recognisable for those interested in becoming a Pilates teacher, consumers, public health funding bodies and private health insurance funds. Large group mat or reformer GymPilates classes are substantially different from studio provided Pilates sessions. The differences between the various styles of studio Pilates are harder to determine. Often there is overlap between Classical, comprehensive, therapeutic and clinical Pilates making occupational boundaries challenging to determine [50]. Some of the differences are most observable on review of Pilates teacher training, qualifications, or accreditation and on reflecting on the intention of the provision of service which will be discussed in the second part of this two-part series on the evolution of Pilates.

## Declaration of interest:

none

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References available at the end of The Pilates Journal.

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**Passionate about the holistic connection of mind, body, and spirit, Penny advocates for a person-centered, therapeutic Pilates approach to enhance overall well-being. You can find Penny [here](#).**

# Your skills gap might be a result of your education

HOW SCIENTIFIC LITERACY CAN SHORE UP AN INDUSTRY SKILLS GAP AND ADVANCE THE FIELD OF PILATES

by Kyle Georgina Marsh

Raise your hand if you have heard the term “evidence-based practice” and found yourself wondering what it really means. More importantly, why should you care?

Let’s start from the beginning.

On the surface, we all know that excellence in our work goes beyond our opinions, habits, or old beliefs. In fact, excellence often means that we have a framework and standards for doing our work. The framework and standards we are talking about in this article is evidence-based practice (EBP) and the ways in which it should inform how we practice and conduct Pilates education and practice in our field.

If you’re a Pilates practitioner chances are you’ve heard of evidence-based practice (EBP) - a widely used approach in the fields of education, science, and healthcare which implies that a practice, concept, or strategy you are using has been derived or informed by objective evidence using rigorous scientific study, review, and analysis. The goal of EBP is to incorporate the best available research, clinical guidelines, and standards for care into your respective field and area of expertise.

Perhaps the best and most practical description of EBP is from the Oxford Review:

“decision-making by using clear, well-researched and evidenced justifications for why we do things in certain ways, with the ultimate goal of delivering continual improvements/innovations, learning and excellence in our organisation or business. In short, it is about developing and fostering best practice and thinking by looking at and critically considering the real evidence and data about an issue rather than just using personal subjective opinions or gut feel.”

It is a practice for what is defensible and trustworthy. Using EBP is fundamental to the credibility of any field. Hence we should consider how it is possible to ensure that we use EBP in Pilates, in the field in general and in our Pilates education specifically.

A case in point: scientific literacy as the basis for standards of practice.

One of the primary skill sets any Pilates professional needs in order to pursue EBP within their own scope of practice is scientific literacy. Scientific literacy is a very specific skill set that involves the capacity to understand empirical knowledge to draw evidence-based conclusions.

As Pilates professionals, because of our work with the human body, our knowledge base should take into account advances in fields like exercise science, health care, and motivational psychology. Each of these fields has the capacity to directly inform what and how we teach, making us more effective as instructors and educators. Using EBP as a guiding framework to help us integrate these ever-evolving scientific advances into our everyday practice should be the hallmark of our field. We have a responsibility to bring Pilates as an industry into the 21st century. A big piece of achieving this feat includes bridging the gap between the practices that accelerated the value of Pilates in the early 1940s and beyond, to a new vision for the practice of Pilates in 2024: that is informed by EBP and supported by an appropriate level of scientific rigor.

To illustrate this point, here is a summary of skills that most leading big brand name comprehensive Pilates teacher training programs are currently focused on delivering as illustrated by the [National Pilates Certification Program](#) (NPCT):

- A minimum 450 hours of training covering: mat, reformer, Trapeze Table (i.e., Cadillac), Wunda Chair, Ladder Barrel, Spine Corrector, Magic Circle
- Lectures: on the history of Pilates, anatomy, special populations
- Observation hours (i.e. a student observing an experienced teacher)
- Practice teaching (under the guidance of an experienced teacher)
- Self-practice hours

To be clear, none of these skills are inherently “undesirable,” however the majority of them are not comprehensively informed by EBP either. By comparison here is a list of additional EBP skill sets that most Pilates professionals would also benefit from being exposed to through teacher training and continuing education in an effort to support the development of more scientific literacy within the field:

- Understanding activity and clinical guidelines, as dictated by science-based, data-driven service organisations such as the [Center for Disease Control](#), [World Health Organisation](#) (WHO), [American College of Sports Medicine](#) (ACSM), and [The American College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#) (ACOG).

- A basic understanding of motor learning, understanding how people acquire movement skills
- Motivational psychology, i.e. what prompts people to engage in goal-oriented behaviours
- Pain science, understanding that a person's experience of pain is multifactorial and complex
- Where and how to seek out relevant scientific journal articles and systematic reviews as it relates to specific pathologies, exercise science, and pain science.

Ok, deep breath.

If these suggestions feel overwhelming, it's ok you're not alone. To be clear this is not to suggest that all Pilates professionals now need to also become medical professionals or scientists in order to teach Pilates. That is most certainly not our scope of practice. However, because Pilates as a field is arguably adjacent to that of physical therapy, exercise science, and sports medicine it would make sense if more of our education centered around current best care practices.

For example, the fact that so many leading Pilates education institutions are still teaching transverse abdominis activation and neutral spine as a prerequisite for clients with low back pain is unhelpful and outdated. \* Or for comparison the idea that static postural assessments can give us any real data about what is happening inside of a person's body without an MRI or X-Ray is absurd. I could go on but we would need an entirely separate article to cover this list.

It's do-able.

Learning to identify our skills gaps, and then working to improve them is the hallmark of consummate professionalism and leadership. It goes without saying that presumably no Pilates instructor, studio owner, or educator shows up to work every day aiming to be merely "adequate" at our jobs. The desire to be excellent is widespread in our industry; most of us simply need the tools to achieve it. This journey starts with the overhauling of educational programs that can genuinely equip students and continuing education seekers with the necessary tools to comprehend and apply advances in related fields like exercise science, motor learning, and pain science to the field of Pilates more comprehensively.

Naturally this begs the question: what can we as individual instructors and small business owners do to ask more of our leading industry institutions? While the answer to this question may be nuanced, it begins with the courage to question what we think we know. To look outside of our industry at related fields and ask ourselves what are they doing better that could apply to us also?

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\* See this [ACSM Article](#) on low back pain for reference.



The simple act of reflecting on how we can improve the services we offer individually as Pilates professionals and collectively as a field does not have to be approached from a deficit mindset. There is strength in being humble and nibble enough to change, adapt, and update information as we evolve. The process of learning to question the things that we think we know, in an effort to update our beliefs and understanding can feel extremely uncomfortable. But asking ourselves and our institutions the question, "how can I/we do better?" does not have to imply that we are either inept at our jobs or morally deficient. Rather, making a point to ask ourselves these types of questions is constructive and can help support us in learning more in the pursuit of excellence.

**Kyle Georgina Mash**, is an NYC-based Pilates instructor and movement coach who caters to a select group of private and corporate clients. She's the founder of the online fitness platform, True II Form Pilates & Wellness. As a dedicated trainer and educator, Kyle is known for her ability to empower clients to move powerfully and more fearlessly, both on and off of their mats.





# Breaking down the Side Sit Up

UNDERSTAND HOW TO REGRESS AND PROGRESS THIS FOUNDATIONAL EXERCISE FOR YOUR CLIENTS

by **Luisa Saiter Lins**

The Side Sit-Up on the Ladder Barrel stands as an excellent exercise to target lateral flexion mobility, oblique strength, balance, proprioception, and pelvic stability while performing lateral flexion. Though there are numerous exercises on the Pilates repertoire that can help to prep for this exercise, mastering the full version demands not only strength but a comprehensive understanding of the elements involved in this exercise. This article explores several variations designed to help you efficiently perform, progress, or regress the Side Sit-Up exercise.

Irrespective of the variation you decide to teach, there are some rules that are essential, like executing the exercise on the coronal plane with a stable pelvis and axial elongation. Proper performance requires understanding where the movement initiates from, with the head leading in both directions during the lateral flexion phase, creating an arc shape. Arm positioning plays a crucial role in adjusting leverage for added challenge or support, and the choice of which leg goes in front depends on pelvic alignment, comfort, and balance.

## Variation 1

The full variation involves placing both feet on the first-round bar

from bottom to top, one in front of the other. Connecting the adductors ensures engagement of the anterior oblique sling, enhancing pelvic and general stability. Visualising the mermaid exercise's curve can be helpful to prevent a mere up-and-down motion, emphasising true lateral flexion. The depth of the movement is limited by the stability of the pelvis, which should be positioned just below the apex of the barrel.

## Variation 2

Two elements that contribute to this exercise's level of difficulty, is its orientation to gravity and the small base of support. When brainstorming possible variations that cater to different skill levels, it is important to keep those components in mind. A well-known regression involves performing the exercise with feet on the floor or the lowest frame of the ladder barrel, adjusting barrel proximity for optimal hip placement. By changing the angle of the body, the level of difficulty decreases due to orientation to gravity.

## Variation 3

If you can access the Trapeze Table springs, you can use them for

further assistance, by holding the dowel or the handle attached to the spring. In this case, the springs work in an assistive way, assisting on the eccentric phase by slowing down the movement and concentrically by assisting the way up. The support of the springs is very handy when organising the body in the frontal plane, allowing for extra support and therefore time to address pelvic stability, proper lateral flexion and movement quality.

#### Variation 4

In a scenario where the focus is placed on the lateral flexion component, incorporating a chi-ball as a proprioceptor during the motion proves effective. By having a chi-ball under the bottom waist, it becomes easier to create the necessary length of the top side of the ribcage as well as the top waist to create a long arc.

#### Variation 5

The variations discussed above serve as valuable tools to de-escalate the exercise difficulty, facilitating a deeper understanding of some important elements that need to be addressed and mastered to perform the Side Sit-Up well. However, even after learning these variations, setting up for the full exercise can be challenging, and as we all know, if the set-up of the exercise is not ideal, the execution of it will most likely be compromised. A simple and effective option is to modify the foot placement, such as hooking the back foot under the lowest bar, which can help with the balance component, increasing general stability and proper pelvic organisation which is crucial for optimal set-up.

#### Variation 6

Upon mastering the exercise's full variation, additional challenges can be introduced, such as extending the arms overhead with or without props. These modifications add challenge due to the long lever length, increasing the resistance and the load. When choosing a prop, it is important to bear in mind that additional weight can add extra challenge to the movement. A Pilates ball, which seems quite light at first, has its weight easily noticed during this exercise which can advance this movement even more. Alternatively, you can choose other props, like a dowel or a magic circle, that are not as heavy, but work well to keep the alignment of the upper limb.

Although this article focuses mainly on variations performed on the Ladder Barrel, it is important to mention that the Side Sit Up exercise can be performed on other Pilates equipment. The Spine Corrector, for example, is considered by many, depending on the length and height of the arc and the height of the participant, a way to regress this exercise and can be a good ally when building up strength to be able to master the Ladder Barrel variations. On the mat, any side plank variations can contribute for lateral and oblique strength and the Mermaid exercise on any equipment can teach the organisation necessary to perform the Side Sit Up with better understanding and precision.

The Side Sit Up can also be executed on the Reformer using the short box, but when we take a closer look the Ladder Barrel helps to facilitate a better movement of this exercise when compared to the Reformer. On the Ladder Barrel, the feet are closed chain, and this is such a plus when seeking pelvic stability. The shape of the barrel is a great reminder of the curve that needs to be created, thereby helping with proprioception while performing the exercise. Also, for those who struggle with



the lowering or eccentric phase of the exercise, the barrel gives more physical support as the side bend is performed on top of it, instead of up in the air towards the well as you do on the Reformer.

This exercise offers a wide range of benefits suitable for individuals with diverse fitness goals and lifestyles, including athletes, fitness enthusiasts, those recovering from back pain, and postpartum clients. While the Side Sit Up exercise has so many benefits, instructors must have a comprehensive understanding of the associated precautions and contraindications. Clients with a healthy, pain-free spine can benefit, but late-stage pregnancy or individuals with conditions such as osteoporosis, acute back pain, disc bulge or herniation, pelvic instability, or facet joint syndrome should avoid this exercise. As instructors, our responsibility extends to assisting clients in improving these conditions and the fact that an individual has acute back pain today, does not imply that the scenario is unchangeable and that they will always be restricted from challenging exercises like the Side Sit Up. Improvement is possible with proper guidance and tailored modifications.

Overall, Side Sit up is a great exercise to incorporate as part of your repertoire as it has so many benefits and allows room for effective progressions and regressions based on the individual's level. My top three tips to help perform this exercise properly is to start from a more basic variation so you can assess the movement and progress clients accordingly, be precise and concise during the set-up phase and make sure that the body is balanced and aligned properly so the movement is performed on the coronal plane, and finally work on the lateral flexion motion ensuring that there is axial elongation and distribution of movement throughout the spine.

Luisa has been a Polestar Teacher Trainer since 2014 and is the owner of [Plank Pilates](#) and co-owner of [Active Pilates](#), both located on the Northern Beaches of Sydney, Australia.



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# Instructor Spotlight: Liv Glen

WE SPEAK WITH PILATES INSTRUCTOR LIV GLEN ABOUT HER PILATES CAREER AND HER TEACHING FOCUS

**Q. Tell us a little about yourself and your Pilates background?**

**A.** I have been in the fitness industry for over six years now! I have worked across five different Pilates studios, two Strength and Conditions gyms, Schools and Fitness Apps. I completed the first-ever STRONG academy in 2019 and then started working at the flagship studio in Elsternwick, Melbourne, Australia. I started assisting with programming in 2021 at STRONG Headquarters. In late 2021 I had the opportunity to become a STRONG Master Trainer and from then on, I began travelling throughout Australia and New Zealand teaching the STRONG method to all up-and-coming STRONG instructors. I am responsible for all things Movement and Programming. You may notice me on the STRONG TV screens too!

**Q. How did you discover Pilates?**

**A.** I first tried pilates in 2016 and fell in love instantly! I was a member for four years before becoming an instructor.

**Q. How do you keep learning? What inspires you in your work?**

**A.** Always upskilling! There are always methods and skills to be learnt.

**Q. The best advice you were ever given as a teacher...**

**A.** This one is brutal but, not every client will be a fan of you and your teaching style. Just try your best and be proud of the teacher you are.

**Q. Is there something you try and instil in each of your clients?**

**A.** Confidence! There are always regressions that can be offered, but I always encourage my clients to try the progression given to challenge themselves.



**Q. The best Pilates course you ever did was...**

**A.** I completed Breathe Education certificate IV in reformer and matwork pilates, followed by CrossFit level 1 and Concept 2 Rower.

**Q. What's your favourite piece of equipment to use with clients in studio and why?**

**A.** I do love the Pilates ring! This magical piece of equipment can add an extra burn to any movement. (Of course, I also love a set of dumbbells).

**Q. How do you stay motivated?**

**A.** Movement is medicine for me! I always know I am going to feel better after a training session. I always say to myself "You will never regret a workout".

**Q. What makes you laugh the most?**

**A.** My friends!



**Q.** What's your favourite way to spend a day off?

**A.** Going for a long walk, listening to a podcast and hanging out with my friends.

**Q.** How many pairs of grip socks do you own?

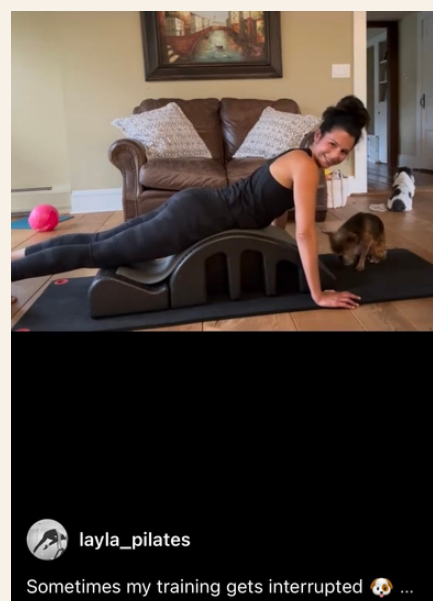
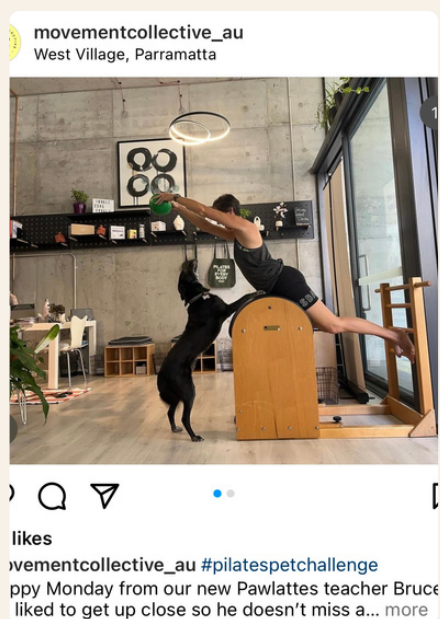
**A.** Too many! I have grip socks in every room of my house, my handbag and my glove box!

**Q.** Does your family 'really know' what's involved in your job?

**A.** Mostly, yes! My sisters and friends often come to my classes and see how much love and energy I put into them.

Liv works for **STRONG Pilates** Headquarters and their Elsternwick studio in Melbourne.

## Some winners from our Pilates Pet Challenge



# Upcoming courses

## BASI AUSTRALIA

Mat and Reformer Program - Sunshine Coast - 1-3 Mar and 15 Apr.

Comprehensive Global Program - Brisbane - 16 Feb (commenced) - 16 June, Perth - 15 March - 23 June and Sydney 5 Apr- 28 July.

Find out more [basipilates.com.au/education/](https://basipilates.com.au/education/)

## BODY ORGANICS EDUCATION

Springing this joint - Brisbane - 24-25 May, Canberra 22-23 Jun. Melbourne TBC. Sydney - Aug/Sept.

Programming - Brisbane - 23-24 March and Sydney 18-19 May.

Towering - Brisbane - 17 May (2 hours) and online as part of the Movers and Shakers series with @movementalityeducation

A full event calendar can be found [here](#).

The Pilates Vibe are now running Body Organics Mat, Reformer and Comprehensive Courses in Melbourne.

Find out more [www.bodyorganicseducation.com](http://www.bodyorganicseducation.com) or contact [info@bodyorganicseducation.com](mailto:info@bodyorganicseducation.com)

## REACH MOVEMENT HEALTH

Further your education with one of Reach's online masterclass sessions.

Join Sally Anderson between Feb-Nov 2024 on the first Saturday of each month for a live online Reformer and Matwork class followed by Q&A. Courses also available in Pilates for Pregnancy, Visceral Mobilisation, LumboPelvic Rhythm with Lisa Jackson and or Pilates for Multi-Dimensional Posture and more.

Find out more [reachmovementhealth.com/continuing-education-programs-2023/](https://reachmovementhealth.com/continuing-education-programs-2023/)

## PILATES ITC

(10838NAT) Diploma of Pilates Instruction, Matwork and Reformer + Small Apparatus Pathway, Reformer and Small Apparatus Pathway, Matwork and Small Apparatus Pathway, Studio Instruction Pathway, Anatomy + Physiology (Online only), (10839NAT) Advanced Diploma of the Pilates Method.

Upcoming Blended Entry Points:

WA and NSW: Enrol now for Matwork starting in February.  
BALLINA (NEW): Enrol now for Matwork starting in March.  
WA and TAS and SA: Enrol now for Reformer in April.  
NSW: Enrol for Reformer in July.  
QLD: Enrol for Matwork in June.  
TAS: Enrol for Matwork in September.  
All States: Advanced Diploma – enrol and start any time.

Continuing Education: Scolio-Pilates® Modules 1 & 2 of the Scolio-Pilates Professional Certification Program in Perth, Brisbane and Sydney in 2024.

Give the Pilates ITC Careers Team a call on (08) 9330 4570 to secure your place - [pilatesitc.edu.au/](https://pilatesitc.edu.au/)



## POLESTAR PILATES

Upcoming Continuing Education Courses include:

Polestar Pilates Australia (RTO 91620) offers the government accredited (10828NAT) Diploma of Polestar Pilates Comprehensive Instruction Method.

The following pathways are available face-to-face throughout Australia and enrolling now:

Complete Matwork Series: Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Brisbane, Online (Global)  
Comprehensive Studio/Rehab Series: Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Lismore/ByronBay, Canberra, Hobart/Launceston, Noosa, Darwin.  
Ultimate Reformer: Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth, Noosa, Lismore  
Anatomy: Online (anytime)

For a complete list of courses see the Polestar website: <https://www.polestarpilates.edu.au/courses-ps/>

Upcoming Continuing Education Courses include

Online Masterclass series - available anytime  
Womens Health 2 days – NSW Sydney 29-30 June, SA Adelaide 27-28 July  
Wundarful Chair WS Part 1 – NSW Sydney 01 June  
Wundarful Chair WS Part 2 – NSW Sydney 06 July  
Reformer Masterclass – NT Darwin 02 May  
Mat Masterclass – NT Darwin 20 June

For a complete list of courses see the Polestar website: [polestarpilates.edu.au/pilates-continuing-education/](https://polestarpilates.edu.au/pilates-continuing-education/)

# Upcoming courses

## NATIONAL PILATES TRAINING

National Pilates Training (21719) offers the following government-accredited skill sets and qualifications

Groupfit professional pilates Instruction  
Professional pilates matwork Instruction  
Professional pilates reformer instruction  
Diploma of professional pilates instruction (10838NAT)  
Advanced Diploma of the pilates method (10839NAT)

Our government-accredited courses are available in person - Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Hervey Bay, Morisset- NSW, Ballarat- Victoria, online only – global.

2024 intakes include:

- Melbourne, 24 Feb
- Canberra, 1 Mar
- NSW - Hunters Hill, 9 Mar
- VIC - Greensborough, 5 Apr and more dates on the website.

National Pilates Training has courses starting each month, in person, in a location near you and all courses are available online wherever you are. Find out more [www.nationalpilates.com.au/](http://www.nationalpilates.com.au/)

## STOTT PILATES

STOTT PILATES® Intensive Matwork and Intensive Reformer Courses to be held in 2024 at Innaessence studio in Queensland, Australia.

Contact Innaessence [here](#).

## STUDIO PILATES

Studio Pilates offers a number of different courses including:

Matwork Course, Reformer Course, Matwork Programming and Progressions, Platinum Instructing Course, Anatomy Course, Wunda Chair Course, Ball, Circle and Band Course and more.

Those in the USA and UK can join one of their online courses via zoom.

For a complete list of dates in other states see the Studio Pilates website [studiopilates.com/education/book-a-course/](http://studiopilates.com/education/book-a-course/)

## TENSEGRITY TRAINING

Cert IV in Contemporary Pilates and Teaching Methodology  
Cert IV of Contemporary Pilates and Teaching Methodology (52855WA) with Reformer (Cert IV and Reformer)  
Integrated Diploma of Contemporary Pilates and Teaching Methodology  
Pilates Group Reformer Instructor Training (PGR)

Tensegrity offers training in NSW, QLD, VIC, SA and TAS.

For a full list of dates in all states visit [tensegritytraining.com.au/accredited-training/](http://tensegritytraining.com.au/accredited-training/)



## BODYLOVE ACADEMY

Autumn 2024 Reformer Pilates Course Dates

May 3 (Fri) Anatomy Course \*Separate Enrolment, May 4-5 (Sat-Sun), May 11-12 (Sat-Sun), May 25-26 (Sat-Sun) and June 1-2 (Sat-Sun), SYD.

Both part-time and intensive courses are available throughout the year. Accredited with Fitness Australia and ESSA.

Find out more <https://bodylove.academy/>

## Evolution of Pilates Part 1 : Development and Diversification

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