

THE PILATES JOURNAL



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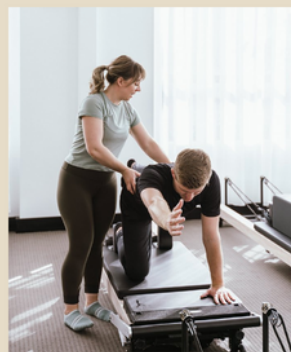
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The Pilates Journal would like to acknowledge and pay respects to the Gadigal people of the EORA nation as the traditional custodians of the place we call home - Sydney - where this journal is produced.

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.

Tell me how much homework do you set for your clients? Perhaps too much or too little? In this month's issue, we hear how US Pilates teacher Rachel Piper sets no homework for her clients and how variations can support our clients better.

While we focus on becoming an effective teacher we also discuss how you get the most out of being a teacher. We talk with Senior Pilates professional and the Co-Founder of Pilates Anytime Kristi Cooper who shares her insights on what truly made her happier as a teacher.

We also take a deeper dive into how we create specific programs to help our clients master the activities they enjoy the most like surfing and get into the science of a Hypertonic pelvic floor with physio and Senior Pilates educator Jen Guest.

CJZarb

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On the Cover

Pilates teachers and student on the Reformer.

A no judgement approach to Pilates

UNDERSTAND YOUR CLIENTS' LEARNING STYLE, HOW VARIATIONS MAKE FOR AN INCLUSIVE CLASS AND WHY STANDARD SPRINGS DON'T MATTER.

by Rachel Piper



@writegirlproblems

How about we start with a bold statement...Teachers are NOT teaching Pilates. We are teaching PEOPLE.

Anyone can pop on YouTube or pop in a DVD or get on an app and “do Pilates”. When people come to us (teachers), they want something other than just ‘the exercises’. They want to be seen, and they need someone to support them on their journey. We are here to listen and give them what they need.

We do this by teaching the person in front of us; wherever they are in their movement practice. Listening and observing our clients during their practice and giving them emotional and body support without pressuring them.

This might sound surprising but **I don't give "homework"** unless my client asks me how they can improve (or work on) something. When a client asks, I say something like “if you want to explore [X], try [exercise or movement] a couple of times while focusing on [Y] to help you do [Z].

Example: If you want to explore using your legs more during your Roll Up, try placing your feet against the wall and focus on actively pushing the heels into the wall as you roll down and roll up. If they come off the wall, scoot forward, and try again. This will help you create connection and strength in the legs for this exercise and others.

In my experience, things that take less than three minutes twice a week can change someone’s practice in either a functional or connected way.

It's also important that you know who you are teaching and how they learn best. Knowing the difference between a visual learner vs an auditory learner vs a tactile learner can help you engage with your clients in a very special way. With a few simple adjustments to your teaching, you can make your sessions more specialised and people will feel seen.

For a visual learner, you’ll notice they’ll be looking at you for help to know what to do next -they may pause and have to look at those around them. If you see a client looking around for what to do next, it will benefit them to see you get into the start position and talk through the movements. Watch that they can do one on their own and move on.

For clients who may have trouble processing auditory cues, using the same simple cue(s) can make a huge difference in their practice. You may think it’s stale to use those same cues or simple cues, but when you do it can help clients process what you are saying quicker and it will help them learn to be autonomous long term. It’s also a great way to ensure you are helping clients who are neurodivergent or who have a processing disorder. As teachers, you may not be able to recognise someone who is in

need unless they tell you, but if you make it a natural part of your teaching style you don't have to overthink anything and it will help more people in general. The bonus is that auditory learners typically pick up quickly when straightforward, simple cues are used.

With tactile learners they need to feel the work in their body and can start in the right place but waver out of position. They will highly benefit from a teacher's tactile cue (*ask before adjusting) or a prop to help them with body awareness.

Keep in mind there is no wrong way to learn Pilates; there are only different ways.

It's important for all teachers to understand what accessibility is and that it can mean or be something different for each client. Understanding what the options are for each exercise is a great start. Props are extremely helpful for the mat work, but knowing why and when to give them to clients comes with personal exploration and getting client feedback. You need both personal exploration and client feedback to increase your knowledge. Not all props are created equal, especially when it comes to body shape and size. It's another instance where one size does not fit all.

Some things to think about as a teacher using props:

- Resistance Bands are an excellent prop to support the body. However, sometimes these are too light to support clients. Even if the band seems heavy and is wider, it might not be enough for a person in a larger body. The heavier the body is the more support it may need, especially at the beginning of their Pilates practice. I recommend a heavy, wide band that is 10ft long, so it can be doubled, or 2 - 5ft long bands used together.
- Exercises like Roll Up/Half Roll Backs and Single Leg Circle may need more support while clients are building strength.
 - Small Ball - a larger bodied person may worry that the small ball won't hold their weight. As a teacher, if you are using a small ball in class be VERY aware of how you are using it. The last thing someone wants is to put too much weight on a small ball and have it pop in front of the whole class.
- Foam Rollers are a fun prop to use and can support the upper body and lower body in various exercises. However, in some cases it may be harder for certain clients to get their hips on top of the roller (same with a barrel, especially if it's a slicker one). Smaller diameter foam rollers or half rollers are more accessible while clients are building strength. Half rollers won't roll away, either! Also be mindful of the density of the rollers you are using. Harder rollers may be more uncomfortable for larger bodied clients because in some positions the pressure will be more intense.

I always have multiple prop options available in sessions and I decide what to use based on the class participants. When you give clients options, they see there are multiple ways the movements can be done and that there is no right or wrong way to practice Pilates. All options are good options - because the goal is to move your body, not to perfect an exercise.

Pro Tip: ALWAYS give the variation that you know EVERYONE in the room can do first and then add complexity as you go, and when appropriate. Make sure you build your clients into the challenging aspects of the exercises at a pace they feel safe, secure, and empowered. By creating options, not requirements, you allow your clients to reflect on their personal practice instead of comparing themselves to others. You allow them to build their own journey.



7 things I'd like other movement teachers to understand about working with people:

1. Your power lies in teaching people, not talking through exercises.
2. If you don't have a personal practice, you should make time for one.
 - a. Your personal practice can be as simple as 15 - 20 minutes a few times a week.
 - b. Aim for consistency and make your practice partially exploratory. Allow yourself the opportunity to learn, focus, reflect, and be creative. You can use all of this in your teaching.
 - c. After you practice - think about these questions: what felt strong? What felt more challenging today than the last time I practiced? What should I take from this and talk to my teacher/mentor about? **Teachers benefit from working with other teachers!
3. It's a scientific fact that it takes more energy to move a larger object. Therefore, larger bodied clients may be working harder than regular size bodies during the same exercises. Ensure you are creating an accessible, yet challenging workout for everyone in the room.
4. Know your props and how all the exercises relate to each other, so you can give substitutions and variations.
5. Standard spring settings are bullshit!
6. Variations are valuable. Variations and props can help clients gain access to more muscles to connect quicker - thereby helping them become stronger. Remember, reducing range of motion is considered a variation and may help a client stabilize and work harder. Variations can be as simple as that.
7. Do not assume people are exercising for weight loss and don't use fatphobic cues or terms related to shrinking body parts or getting your body "ready" for something.



“People need options to be able to build strength in their bodies and positive thoughts in their minds... We want people to learn something new in their bodies within the same exercises, so we can build on those ideas for the future.”

As I said above, variations are valuable and when we leave them out we're leaving someone behind thus creating inaccessibility. People need options to be able to build strength in their bodies and positive thoughts in their minds. We need to build inclusive and accessible workouts. Start with the fundamentals, move on to the basics, relate the movements to each other as you go and give a similar “routine” to the same set of clients. It's harder to become autonomous when you are always learning something new and jumping around. Knowing how to relate the exercises between the mat and equipment will reduce boredom while keeping the basics at the forefront.

We want people to learn something new in their bodies within the same exercises, so we can build on those ideas for the future.

Here's another myth I want to bust: Everyone should use the spring settings listed in their manual.

I call Bullshit! Standard spring settings are complete bullshit. There is a misconception that everyone should either start or “eventually” be able to use the prescribed spring settings that they learned in their teacher training manual. False. It all comes down to the body and equipment in front of you.

Using the Reformer as an example:

- If you gear in or out, it changes the tension.
- If you have ropes instead of leather straps, it changes how the equipment feels.
- Where your handles or loops line up with your shoulder blocks changes the tension.
- If your straps are coming from below the frame or above the frame, it changes how the equipment feels.

I could go on, but the main point here is that no two reformers are 100% identical or set up 100% the same. Even the parts that go into the same set of reformers being manufactured will have +/-

specifications on the parts. AND no two bodies are identical. Ergo, standard spring settings are complete bullshit.

Two key things to remember about springs:

1 - People know their bodies. People should be able to experiment with the exercises and springs to find different connections and challenges in their practices.

It's also a fact that some bodies will need heavier springs for support while other bodies will need lighter springs to keep them from injury (and vice versa).

2 - Mr. Pilates didn't list the number of springs or the weight of the springs for people that I know of and if he did - the springs of “today” are not the same as they were back then.

I've chatted with no less than two practitioners that have visited studios who either told them they had to skip an exercise if they couldn't do it according to the manual, or they were told they'd have to stay at a certain “class level” until they could use the spring setting they were given. This is a critical gap in understanding the equipment, the purpose of the exercises, and the human body.

Remember our goal is to empower clients while making them more autonomous. How are you giving your clients the tools they need to be empowered?

Rachel has been teaching Pilates for four and a half years and has been a trainer in the Biotech industry for over 20 years. She owns her own virtual studio @sizediversepilates, teaches at a local studio Rivercity Pilates in Iowa, and teaches at OnlinePilatesClasses.com. She offers Mat, Mat + Reformer, and Comprehensive Pilates Teacher Training Programs which are classical Pilates infused with accessibility and creativity.

Moving closer to joy

FIND YOUR BIG PICTURE

by *Kristi Cooper*

When I reflect back over the last few years I realise that the pandemic taught us a lot. It jolted us out of the everyday, “I can do it all” mentality. It also gave us the gift of realising that we are all good at adapting. And as things have gone back to normal we’ve tried to stop ourselves from simply jumping back on the treadmill. Remember that we made it work. You’ve learned how to be still and how to work differently. The world is different and it might never go back to the old way.

We also need to remember our truth. I’m a firm believer that we always try and do the absolute best for our clients, but if your client hasn’t progressed it is important to remember that hour by hour you are helping them. I’ve always had to let go of the idea of the notion of not doing enough. The big picture is in recognising and allowing us as instructors and as people to fully be ourselves. If you are getting too caught up, you need to do whatever the opposite is. We’re not doing this to teach the method perfectly. It’s more than just that. If I can get my client to leave the studio feeling better than when they arrived and it makes them more joyful, then my job is done.

It’s important that a client leaves feeling great and it’s also important that you find your own joy. I’ve had moments when I was doing too much. For many years I was fortunate enough to be teaching for BASI Pilates® Founder Rael Isacowitz on the weekends, while still working 35 hours a week teaching at the Santa Barbara Athletic Club. From here I started working as an independent contractor at a small gym called Beach Club Athletics, which would end up becoming the place where we shoot content for the Pilates-based platform Pilates Anytime (PA) with the support of my two business partners.

As you can imagine, it was a crazy time and something had to give. I couldn’t keep working out at 2am, I had no downtime and never had enough time for my friends. I was burning the candle at both ends and dreading giving up teaching full-time. It was all I had ever known!

I’m now at a stage in my life where I know the importance of living by this mantra - Am I moving closer to joy or further away from it? When you are in alignment with what you are doing, everything feels better. Don’t get me wrong, for me responsibility is important to me too. I’m responsible for teams but when the responsibility outweighs the things I enjoy I need to hit the reset button.

Think about it. What are the list of things you do and like to do and the reason you are not doing it is because ‘I just can’t. Can you call upon someone else or can you pause? If I can’t pause I’m in trouble. If I’m too busy running my business then I need to reassess.



When I was launching PA I realised I wasn’t always being very present. I was thinking too much about all the things I had to do.

I needed to take the time to workout or take the dog for a walk. If there’s one thing I have learnt across my career it’s that you need to practise what you preach. I could name so many wonderful teachers who live by this. One great example is Amy Taylor Alpers and her sister Rachel. You see them working out and being taught by others. They have truly integrated Pilates into their lives. They truly get the depth of this work. They take me closer to the point of the method by example. It’s the way they show up and they are constantly teaching other teachers. Even though they have a busy business. Rael is another, he would teach all weekend and still make time for his own practise. It comes down to prioritising yourself. It’s a constant battle.

As the years have progressed I’ve also realised what gives me joy as a teacher. It’s always been important that my clients have curiosity when it comes to learning about their bodies. I love to put the puzzle together. However the day I gave up trying to solve everything for every client I became happier.

I now understand that my joy comes from working with clients who say things to me like ‘why can’t I exhale?’. It’s what happens from these conversations and that’s where transformation comes. I believe that the more people believe in themselves, the system has a way of working itself out. I always say you know more than I do!

“I’ve also realised what gives me joy as a teacher. It’s always been important that my clients have curiosity when it comes to learning about their bodies [but it was]..the day I gave up trying to solve everything for every client I became happier.”



I’ve also found more joy in the letting go and saying no. Letting go and trusting it. When we started PA I was there for every filming, we filmed every single day. There were so many times I couldn’t workout and I was living above the studio. But now I let our teams do what they are so capable of doing and it frees me to get more joy from all the projects we do.

So the question I pose to you is where do you seek joy? Is it from your clients? Your studio? Your time away from the studio? Whatever it is go do that! We all need to move closer to joy and that means living better and by your example, the people next to you can do the same.

Kristi Cooper is a highly experienced Pilates teacher and the co-founder of [Pilates Anytime](#), an online platform that offers a wide range of Pilates classes and workshops. With her expertise and passion for Pilates, Kristi has helped countless individuals improve their strength, flexibility, and overall well-being.

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Blending the art of surfing with the science of Pilates

HEAR HOW A PILATES INSTRUCTOR COMBINED HER LOVE FOR THE OCEAN, BIOLOGY AND PILATES TO HELP SURFERS IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS WHEN RIDING WAVES

by Cie'Jai Zarb

Growing up in a small village surrounded by a surf community, Karin-Anne had always been drawn to the water. In March 2020, she finally embraced surfing as a sport and was pleasantly surprised by how quickly she progressed. She credits her success in Pilates to her unwavering passion and her strong mindset. Along her journey, she received valuable guidance from Matt Grainger who owns The Surfers Gym and many others who not only improved her surf technique but also became part of her supportive surf community.

For those of you unfamiliar with the surfing industry there are many surfing legends who use Pilates as part of their toolkit when getting ready for global competitions. Some include:

- Kelly Slater - the most famous and accomplished professional surfer in history. Slater is an advocate of Pilates for improving core strength, flexibility, and overall body awareness, which are crucial elements for surfing.
- Stephanie Gilmore - a seven-time world champion who uses Pilates to build strength, stability, and improve her surfing technique.
- Sally Fitzgibbons another professional surfer known for her

competitive drive and athleticism uses Pilates to improve her strength, flexibility and balance.

- Brazilian pro surfer Tatiana Weston-Webb uses Pilates to maintain physical and mental well-being, and
- Hawaiian pro surfer Malia Manuel does Pilates to help prevent injuries and maintain a strong foundation for surfing.

"The surfing community is quite special. It's a community bonded through water, waves and conversation, surfing brings together communities of people much like Pilates," said Karin-Anne.

With a sporty background and a passion for biology, Karin-Anne studied Pilates in 2010 where she developed a profound sense of self-awareness, connecting her deeply to her breath and presence.

With a solid foundation in proper body biomechanics and control over her own body, Karin-Anne quickly grasped the nuances of surfing. "It was the balance of femininity and masculinity inherent in the sport that empowered me as a woman, breaking the barriers of what was once perceived as a male-dominated activity. Surfing, with its ever-changing energy and connection to nature,

became a profound experience for me, and I couldn't resist the urge to blend my love for surfing with my expertise in Pilates," said Karin-Anne.

Karin-Anne offers Pilates sessions for all sorts of clients but is also able to tailor Studio Pilates sessions specifically for surfers. "My approach emphasises proper body biomechanics, creating body awareness, and addressing individual strengths and weaknesses. Surfers often require work on ankle, knee, hip, scapular, and core stability, along with increased hip, shoulder, and thoracic mobility and breath control. These are areas that I focus on to help surfers enhance their surfing performance," she explained.

In her studio, Karin-Anne dedicates a significant portion of her sessions to exercises that improve hip and thoracic spine mobility. "This sort of mobility is essential for executing smooth bottom and top turns while surfing. Her repertoire of exercises targets rotation and extension in these areas, enabling surfers to navigate their boards more efficiently," she said. Besides enhancing surfing skills, Karin-Anne also places great emphasis on injury prevention. Several key issues are commonly observed in surfers, and that is where her Pilates expertise comes to the rescue.

"I've often seen...

- Poor mobility in the upper back can lead to compensation in the neck, shoulders, and lower back.
- Repetitive paddling movements can create imbalances in the upper body, affecting the positioning of the shoulder joint.
- Overpronation of the back foot can stress the inside of the knee, requiring better hip mobility.
- Overextension of the neck and insufficient mobility in the upper spine can lead to poor shoulder positioning and tension in the neck and shoulders," she said.

"My approach to conditioning involves training the body to rely on smaller, intrinsic muscles close to the joints rather than solely depending on larger, global muscles. For instance, understanding how to engage the core muscles properly can alleviate the load on the lower back, reducing the risk of injuries and providing a stable base for a stronger paddling force. Proper breathing techniques also play a crucial role in connecting the core muscles and enhancing a surfers overall performance," said Karin-Anne.

One of Karin-Anne's clients sums up this work the best.

"Pilates is body control. When we go surfing, there's so much out of our control; the swell, the tide, the wind, the crowds. The best tool we have isn't our board, it's our body and the more control we can have over that, the more fun we can have!" local surfer Patrick Bell.

So what are some of the types of exercises you might work with a surfer on. Karin-Anne's shares some ideas with The Pilates Journal.

Here are some exercise examples for each apparatus:

Pilates Reformer: a. Footwork: Improves leg strength and alignment, similar to a surfing stance. b. Long Stretch Series: Works on shoulder stability and core strength, important for paddling. c. Short Box Series: Enhances core control and



Sonja Tye Photography

flexibility, useful for riding waves. d. Elephant: Develops hamstring and hip strength, aiding in pop-up movements.

1.Cadillac: a. Leg Springs: Builds leg strength and hip stability, mimicking surfing movements. b. Roll Back Bar: Works on abdominal strength and control, essential for balance. c. Flying Eagle: Challenges balance and coordination, benefiting surfing skills. d. Leg Circles: Improves hip mobility and flexibility, crucial for fluid surfing motions.

2.Wunda Chair: a. Step Up: Strengthens legs and enhances stability, useful for maintaining balance on the board. b. Teaser: Develops core strength and control, assisting in dynamic movements. c. Side Sit-ups: Targets obliques and lateral stability, beneficial for turning on the wave.

3.Pilates Barrels: a. Spine Corrector: Improves spinal mobility and flexibility, essential for fluid movements. b. Small Barrel Backbend: Works on thoracic extension, aiding in paddling and arching on the board.

4.Pilates Mat: a. The Hundred: Builds core strength and endurance, helpful for overall stability. b. Single Leg Stretch: Targets hip flexors and abdominal control, essential for surfing maneuvers. c. Saw: Increases spinal rotation and flexibility, useful for turns and twists while surfing.

It's clear that Karin-Anne's style has truly created a unique haven for surfers. Through her teachings as she helps surfers not only achieve their best performance but also forge a deeper connection with themselves and the natural elements around them. Again one of her clients sums it up for her...

"There is no coincidence the most connected surfers in the water are mindful and connected to their bodies on land. Balancing holistic movement exercises, Pilates and meditation gives ourselves the best preparation to evolve as surfers." - top local surfer Matt Chojnacki.



Sonja Tye Photography

Karin-Anne Abercrombie is the passionate and adventurous soul and owner behind Pilates Boutik, a renowned Pilates studio located in the picturesque Northern Beaches of Monavale. Karin-Anne offers a surf Pilates circuit for surfers as part of her Pilates programming but also caters to all types of clients and their needs.

APEI Conference in Sydney

Join the upcoming APEI Conference and learn from world-leading Classical Pilates thinkers at an event that is for all schools of Pilates.

Over three jam packed days, delve even deeper into the Classical work with the likes of international presenters Miguel Silva and Eric Carlovich.

Attendees will learn how to teach Classical work to a first-time client, to those advanced on the reformer and more. They'll also learn archival work taught to Gay Grimes and Romana Kryzanowska during their years working with Joe Pilates. With 12 workshops over three days, there's something for everyone!

APEI conference organiser Olga Tamara said "this conference is about sharing the work. We can all learn from each other." The APEI Conference runs 13-15 October in Sydney, Australia. Find out more [@apei_sydney](https://www.apei_sydney.com)

A promotional graphic for the APEI Pilates Conference 2023. It features a teal header with the text "JOIN US FOR THREE DAYS OF FUN AND LEARNING 13-14-15 OCT 2023 IN SYDNEY NSW." Below this is a group photo of attendees and two portraits of speakers: Eric Carlovich and Miguel Silva. The APEI logo (Authentic Pilates Education International) is prominently displayed, along with the event title "PILATES CONFERENCE 2023" and the location "3 Darks Street Waterloo NSW". Contact information "info@authenticpilates.com.au - 0419802601" is at the bottom left, and the speakers' names are at the bottom right.

R U O.k.?

THIS MONTH MARKS R U OK DAY, WHICH REMINDS US OF THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR MENTAL HEALTH, AND TO CHECK IN ON THOSE AROUND US

by **Arwen McCutcheon**

In July 2022 I unfortunately contacted Covid which meant two weeks without teaching Pilates. It was several weeks later that I noticed increasing pain in my muscles and joints which became almost debilitating. Over time my body only got worse. I became very wary and 'careful' as to how I moved. Being in my 70s I told myself it was part of the ageing process but not to the extent I took it to. Quite quickly I became old. I stopped working. I fell over several times. Forgot many things.

Experiencing this myself made me realise how important our clients' mental health is and how interlinked it is to our bodies capabilities. By being in a state of fear, I wasn't able to unlock or access parts of my body much like my clients. In this article, I'm going to talk about how I support clients through their mental health battles and how we as Pilates professionals can aid them in this journey to better movement.

The problem of healing and restoring physical, mental and/or emotional health is dependent on what is accepted and considered appropriate functioning by the society in which the individual lives (Bartenieff: 1990, p151). Whether it be for pure physical exercise, dance, Pilates or some other form of movement it is a function of expression. I would suggest to you that in more recent times there's definitely a paradigm shift but we still, in some circles, expect exercise to "burn" before it is effective.

World-respected pioneers in trauma research such as Bessel Van der Klok, Babette Rothschild and many others, have worked for many years to help bridge the gap between verbal and body-oriented therapies. By verbal therapy I mean sitting and talking through things versus body-oriented therapies such as massages, osteopathy, chiropractic and dance-related therapies. All have an important place and generally do quite well for most people. However, trauma and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is another level. For most people, symptoms don't go away but we learn to quieten difficult reactions to certain events. By being aware of our bodies' response, our self-talk and how we can shift the physical and emotional reactions we have, we are then on the way to gaining greater control. So, movement, exercise and living in the body helps to support verbal and body-orientated therapies.

With a background in Dance Movement therapy and awareness of Laban analysis training (a tool for analysing kinetic movement and kinaesthetic (i.e. the act of sensing) aspects of movement), I



decided many years ago that I needed to give my clients both movement therapy and Pilates work in order to help them work to heal injuries, stroke or fear.

So, how does this work with mental health and Pilates? It goes back to the fundamentals developed by Joseph Pilates. Let's start with breathing.

We all have problems at times even breathing conscientiously, let alone being relaxed while moving.

Every motor action of the body relates to some change in feeling or interest which influences the expenditure of energy and the timing of the action. Where an individual suffers from a physical or mental blockage, inner confusion and/or mental restraints, the various psychological mechanisms involved will impair the free flow of emotional dynamism. In other words, movement effects behaviour and behaviour effects movement. A block in one will effect the other. The dynamic feelings or energy is also reduced and therefore the expression of personality. Spontaneity is lost and the self-awareness and self-identity of the person is impaired and incomplete. (McCutcheon: 1992).

Through life experiences, lifestyles, genetic makeup, accidents or tense situations, our breathing alters, muscles contract or are not used at all and joint movement/mobility becomes restricted. As we grow these repeated habitual patterns mould the bones as well as the muscular envelope and fewer joints are moved and a repression of the body takes place. Muscular contraction not only shortens the limb, which is what it is meant to do, but through lifestyle, tension or trauma the skeletal body, joints and cartilage between the joints become worn and suffer damage. The way our

body takes shape is produced by anatomical structure. All body movements arise from bending, stretching and twisting. Deep breathing replenishes the bloodstream, and by being more conscious of the breath, it helps to diminish the fear or the pain of moving. Pain however, is also a response to what the brain considers a threatening situation. Noticing our annoyance, nervousness or anxiety puts us in touch with our inner world. The conscious awareness of breathing is therefore an extremely important part of the Pilates exercise.

So, take trauma for instance, what does it do to our bodies as well as the social person?

We know that the threat of pain whether that be emotional or physical, contributes directly to the pain experience. By helping people to understand what is actually happening to their bodies (because of the fear or pain) we can assist in reducing it. A further step along the way is to be mindful and observe the interplay of physical sensations and how particular thoughts are registered in the body. It is interesting to note how the body organises particular emotions or memories which opens up the possibility of releasing sensations that were once blocked or ignored, in order to survive.

“Mindfulness has been shown to have a positive effect on numerous psychiatric, psychosomatic and stress-related symptoms, including depression and chronic pain. It has broad effects on physical health, including improvements in immune response, blood pressure and cortisol levels. It has also been known to activate the brain regions involved in emotional regulation and leads to changes in the regions related to body awareness and fear.”(Bessel Van Der Klok, p.209. 2014).

To be clear Pilates is not meditation but it is a by product of mindfulness by encouraging people to be aware of what is happening in different parts of the body. For instance, “push the spring with the ball of your foot, not your knee”. Then, “how does that feel?”. Sometimes there is a response, other times just an “OK”. “Over time the response will be more helpful, as muscle tone is better able to tolerate hyperarousal than those with lesser tone. For instance, a greater degree of muscle tone increases self-confidence and reduces feelings of vulnerability and/or helplessness.” (Rothschild , p137. 2000)

The Pilates exercises themselves also have a sensory as well as a motor experience. The sensory stimulation is in response to



the rhythm and the movement releases inner tension which in turn signals the nervous system for muscles to contract and the body to move freely. (McCutcheon, 1992) This is why we often hear clients say “I felt so good after the last Pilates session.” The client is now feeling strong, confident and paying attention to how the body feels in space.

My goal in these sessions is to bring someone out of a state of fear when moving. It really depends on the client and the willingness to learn to beat the challenges they face.

So with assistance from a very understanding Osteopath and an enthusiastic owner of a pilates studio, I am back working. Even though I am still stiff and quite sore to some degree, I can apply experience to help the healing process. I have to acknowledge that at 78, I am ageing rapidly and I can't expect my body to do the stuff I could do at even 68. But I now understand more about myself and therefore the process.

So some advice in supporting these clients...

- Make sure there is a counselling and psychology training degree before you start working with clients in this capacity
 - Listen carefully to what the client is telling you
 - Are they in physical pain? Are they not sleeping? Is their persistent self-talk? - Where are they in the life cycle?
 - Never assume you know what is going on for them
 - Be with your client at all stages, don't just impose an exercise
- And finally, remember we need to be gentle, listen and be patient.

Arwen has been teaching Pilates for 25 years. She previously owned her own studio for 15 years and now works at [Arc Pilates](#) in Melbourne and thoroughly enjoys it.



What happens with a Hypertonic Pelvic Floor

GOT A CLIENT WITH INCONTINENCE OR PAIN DOWN THERE? UNDERSTAND THE RIGHT KIND OF QUESTIONS TO ASK AND GET TOOLS FOR YOUR EXERCISE PROGRAMMING

by Jennifer Guest

When we consider issues with the Pelvic Floor Muscles (PFM), we commonly think of the female population and the issue of urinary incontinence. To be truthful, most of the commercial literature describes this condition only. Dysfunction in PFM Muscle tone can be described as hypotonic or hypertonic.

A hypotonic PFM describes the weakness in the actual muscle fibre contractility, stretching of the fascia of the PFM or a neural deficit resulting in a lack of muscle firing. Often, we see a combination of at least two of these factors. This weakness could be represented as urge incontinence where one feels the need to urinate and lacks the endurance to hold on. The other is stress incontinence, where the PFM lack contractility (strength) to support the sphincters under load, resulting in a leak with a cough or a jump. I'm confident that we all understand that cueing of the PFM contraction to engage strength, is prescribed in these cases.

Incontinence can refer to both urinary and/or faecal leakage, occurring in 30% of the female population and 3-11% of males, according to the National Institute of Health Australia.

A dysfunctional PFM is not confined to weakness or instability.

There also exists the hypertonic PFM. This refers to increased tone in the myofascia or tightness and shortening of the myofibrils. The PFM can be seen to be contracted at rest. If hypertonicity exists in the presence of a perfectly aligned bony pelvic ring, the sphincters will line up and close and we will be unlikely to see any incontinence. But we may see the lack of ability to relax the sphincter and allow urination. This will present the need to go to the toilet but once seated, they are unable to relax enough to allow flow. In this case, we would suggest that the client sits forward on the toilet seat with their pelvis tilted anteriorly. This acts to widen the Ischial tuberosities at the base of the pelvic ring, while stretching and opening the sphincters of the PFM.

Another symptom of PFM hypertonicity is pain arising from the contracted soft tissue structures. Pain may be felt during urination, defecation and during intercourse. In significant cases, pain may be felt on movement, walking and stretching the legs.

The PFM spans across the bony pelvic outlet and the fibers are multi-directional. Hypertonicity may occur through some planes of myofibers causing a soft tissue imbalance. This would effectively pull the bony pelvic outlet out of alignment. A mal-aligned pelvis

“The PFM contraction does not need to be cued in the healthy individual, it should not be cued in a hypertonic pelvic floor and therefore only needs cueing in a state of accurately diagnosed weakness.”

can also cause secondary issues with the lumbosacral joint, the pelvic-hip joint or the sacroiliac joint.

Considerations of PFM Hypertonicity in the Pilates Environment

Over the past decade, we have seen a movement away from cueing the PFM whilst engaging the core. Why is this so?

In the normal state, the PFM will intrinsically contract and lift when one activates their core. The PFM sit as the base of the core, with the Transversus Abdominus being the circumferential wall and the diaphragm the lid. In a healthy human, these muscles act in unison and do not require supratentorial cognition.

Secondly, we may not know whether the client's PFM is related to hypotonicity (too weak) or hypertonicity (too contracted). This can only be diagnosed by a specialist doctor, chiropractor, physio or osteopath.

The PFM contraction does not need to be cued in the healthy individual, it should not be cued in a hypertonic pelvic floor and therefore only needs cueing in a state of accurately diagnosed weakness.

What can we do when working in the Studio?

If you're in a one-on-one session, you will have the privacy to ask your client...

1. Do you have any problems going to the bathroom?
2. Do you have any pain on going to the toilet?
3. Do you have pain during sex?

4. Do you have difficulty relaxing and being able to go to the toilet despite the sensation of needing to go?
5. Do you occasionally leak or dribble urine?

From these questions, you can gain an idea as to whether the issue one of hypotonicity or hypertonicity.

Ultimately, we will always refer our client on to a specialist in the area for complete assessment and diagnosis.

What if you are referred a hypertonic PFM client?

1. Do not cue them to contract their PFM during exercise
2. Focus on exhaling on effort to promote relaxation
3. Avoid overworking the adductors. The myofascial connection of adductors and PFM will act to pull and shorten the fibers further
4. Work on lengthening the hamstring group to allow the Ischial Tuberosities to widen, stretching the PFM
5. Avoid any movements that could result in a Valsalva contraction
6. Focus on stretching through the deep hip muscles, adductors and hamstrings
7. Enhance all stretches with an exhale
8. Choose to work with the legs in an abducted stance to open the lower pelvic ring.
9. Working into a slight anterior pelvic tilt (as long as not contraindicated) can also work to open the Ischial Tuberosities
10. Home exercises would include Foam Rolling or Spikey Balling of the leg muscles indicated. Sitting cross-legged with a small Ball, such as a Franklin Ball, positioned under the Perineum (the Pelvic Floor diamond)

Matwork Exercises indicated include...

1. The Bridge with TheraBand tied around the thighs to promote gluteal activation
2. Prone extension / Swan 1 with the legs abducted
3. Bent Knee Opening
4. Spine Twist
5. The Saw
6. Spine Stretch with the legs abducted wide
7. Rocking
8. Open leg Rocker
9. Rolling like a Ball/Seal
10. Mermaid
11. Standing Roll Down in a wider stance
12. Hamstring Stretch
13. Gluteal Stretch
14. Adductor Stretch.

So, when you next have a client tell you they have some incontinence or pain down there, ask them some further questions to help you understand whether they have a hypotonic or hypertonic PFM Dysfunction. If you have any concerns at all, refer them for assessment and correct exercise advice. If you are ever referred a Hypotonic PFM client, you now have some tools to assist in your exercise programming.

Jennifer Guest is a Senior Educator Polestar Pilates Australasia and Senior Physiotherapist [Smart Health](#), South Australia.

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HEAR HOW PILATES STUDIO SOUL ATHLETIC GOT THE SUPPORT THEY NEEDED WHEN CHOOSING THEIR REFORMER EQUIPMENT

by Cie'Jai Zarb



Eleesha Nesci-Dixon and Chris Dixon had a plan to create their own business or perhaps you'd call it an empire both intentionally and by accident, all at the same time. After travelling to the US for a holiday where they saw nutrition and movement concepts fused together, the duo wanted to bring this unique offering back to Australia.

"Eight or so years ago, we started with the creation of a wholefoods café and less than six months later we created our first Yoga and Pilates studio. Soon after we realised what everyone wanted was a Pilates studio so that's what we soon became! It so happened that our property was both a residential and business-zoned property at Parkdale in Victoria's South East so we decided to move out of our home to make it a studio, in turn making ourselves homeless with a one year old in tow while we built a space to make our first studio," said Eleesha.

"Then for five or so years we focused on growing our first business and then Covid hit. For us it made us stop and reassess what we truly wanted. We had no experience in hospitality so we

decided to sell that part of the business and focus on growing our Reformer-based studio. At the time we had a goal to open more than one studio.

"In November 2020 we decided to open our second studio a short eight kilometres away at Black Rock. We knew it was going to be risky, we didn't know what business was going to look like coming out of Covid. At the same time, we like taking risks so we decided it's a time when a lot of people wouldn't be taking risks so it was the perfect time for us. It was a really successful risk.

"Three months later just down the road, we opened Beaumaris – another accident! Our neighbours owned commercial property in Beaumaris and they needed new tenants so Chris said we'll take it. We always do our own fit-outs and we gave ourselves a deadline of 30 days and we did it! We had to open this studio because we had an overflow problem we needed to solve. We had lots of clients but not enough space for all so opening this studio was a great solution.

22 "Six months later we found our fourth studio and soon we open

our latest location to take us to five studios and 53 Reformers. It's clear that we've always been driven, we're our biggest competitors, our harshest critiques, and we've got each other's backs.

"Our clients are a broad mix of 30-65-year-olds, many had never been on a reformer or had done Pilates before. We run both Reformer starter classes which are the majority of our classes and active classes. One thing that contributes to our success with our clients is the equipment we use and the Merrithew SPX Max Reformer creates a great experience. Our clients love the smooth ride and our Instructors love the longer platform. It means clients can get their whole foot on the platform which means you can do lots of standing series work. It's much more supportive for my clients who need more support and I would have to leave out this work if it wasn't for this important design feature.

"Another big part of our success is how we've created our studio to be so welcoming from the first time you walk in. I never forget a new client of ours telling us just how much she felt welcomed in our studio and how it gave her the confidence to keep coming back to class. Our clients are real bodies and we treat everyone equally. For us customer service always comes first and I got the same feeling from the guys at Leisure Concepts who supplied us with our Reformers.

"The team at Leisure Concepts have been great from the start. They've always been responsive from a service and maintenance perspective, I feel like they are there to support you. They've got the products ready in the event you need to replace something (which rarely happens), but it's nice to know it can be fixed right away. They are really proactive in making sure our reformers are always perfect.

"It's this extra support that matters. They also recently sent us a service repair kit with different spare pieces in it just in case the studios need it while we go on holidays. It's a proactive approach and these are the things that make a world of difference.

"With this extra support from Leisure Concepts it means we can continue to grow our business and continue to support our clients in the best way possible which is what we love the most," said Eleesha.

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](#).



A wrap up of a Pilates Conference in Australia

THE RECENT PILATES ALLIANCE AUSTRALIA CONFERENCE INTRODUCED US TO A NUMBER OF TALENTED PROFESSIONALS

by *Cie'Jai Zarb*

In late August, Pilates instructors and Studio Owners from across Australia got together at the Pilates Alliance Australia Conference in Melbourne.

It was a weekend full of insights, discoveries and connections made. Some highlights from the weekend included:

– A workshop with a focus on techniques to build adaptable and supple wrists. This advanced masterclass run by Stephanie Sibel from Armature Pilates took instructors through how you slowly and steadily condition clients to work in more challenging ranges of upper body movements. She talked about wrist loading as part of a larger chain and how it connects to the scapulae and provided a checklist to work clients up to a plank position. Her energetically

styled workshop kept all instructors on their toes and found many using their shoulders in different ways.

– Meanwhile, Jennifer Guest presented on the Pelvic Floor highlighting its role as the base of support and how it affects the whole spine. Talking through both Hypotonic and Hypertonic conditions and how you work with these clients, Jen's conversational style kept everybody engaged and understanding pelvic floor conditions on a deeper level.

– Kimi Broadbent from The Pilates Vibe and Ash Berry from Movementality held a great workshop on best ways to support pre-natal women. With both of them drawing on their past experience during pregnancy, they shared insights and the latest research in this area. They talked about avoiding limiting language and focusing on encouraging clients to experience movements in their own bodies. Ash spoke about allowing pregnant clients to be the authority in the room. She talked about shifting the dynamic between the clients and the teacher so the client was also in control of their experience. While Kimi talked about the importance of teaching pregnant clients breathing techniques, helping them prepare for the final 6 weeks and other strategies.

– Julia Frankish from Evolved Pilates' session on hip and pelvis tightness and pain was an extremely busy session. So many instructors had 'ah-ha' moments as Julia explained just how much you could tell about the hips and pelvis just from your clients performing a squat. She also shared some ideas she had to work specific muscle groups including the hamstrings and glutes.

– Carla Mullins from Body Organics taught a wonderful masterclass in spirals, rotations, while adjusting to the instructor's needs in the room. It was a fun evening session with lots of giggles and laughs.

– Brent Howard's session on Finding Balance had a full session talking about even weight distribution while Alexander Bohligher ran an effective session called Push and Pulls on the mat. It was a very physical session where Ali was pushing and pulling instructors to get them to feel the exercises like Joseph Pilates, Romana Kryzanowska and her own techniques would make them feel. She wanted them to find the work and talked about how this push-and-pull technique required the instructor to be physically in top shape to do the work too. In her words "if you haven't broken a sweat, you should as a teacher".

It was a full three days with so many great sessions leaving many inspired for the months ahead.



Build speciality classes that make great returns for your business

YOU ARE DOING A DISSERVICE TO YOUR CLIENTS WHEN YOU KEEP THEM FROM EXPERIENCING THE CHALLENGE OF A GROUP CLASS

by Jenna Zaffino

I was sitting on the hotel bed as my conference roommate spoke these words to me. We had been speaking about how I, a seasoned teacher and studio owner, was working with ALL of the special consideration clients in our community. I loved creating movement strategies that helped these folks realise they were more than their diagnosis, but my teaching dance card was past full and I was exhausted.

My staff was still in the “green stage” of teaching, where they would see a client with an injury or condition, but they’d rather see the clients’ who were there for a workout. And I don’t blame them. Movement, in many cases, involves a bit of bodily discomfort and when you’re just getting your “teaching legs” underneath you, it can be intimidating to think about working with someone who has limitations. Within a year, they would realise that everyone has a special consideration and that their skills would translate beautifully towards whichever human they worked with. But for now, it felt all up to me.

My conference roommate had a great deal more experience running a studio than me and suggested point blank that I form a class for my “special clients” and offer it in lieu of some of the private sessions that were draining me. My gut reaction was “NO WAY.” I couldn’t imagine my highly dependent clients willingly giving up their private time with me, but at the same time, I was curious about how life might be if they gave it a shot.

I decided to go for it with a class called “Healthy Backs.” With scoliosis, disc issues and kyphosis, one could argue that the students in attendance had anything but. However, I’ve always taught from the perspective of working to support the function one has and used this premise to entice them in. Reluctantly, they agreed to try it out.

I know that some instructors will feel beads of sweat forming on their brow with the thought of managing so many different conditions in one room and on paper, it definitely looks daunting. However, when you start to lay out the mechanics, support systems, mobility needs, and comprehension that benefit all of the conditions, as well as the contraindications for each, you start to see that there is much overlap. I chose to focus on global systems of support, balance, and joint mobility, as well as frequent options



for participants to make choices as to how they would execute an exercise. I knew that building up their agency surrounding movement would be the BEST possible tool I could offer them.

As you might expect, the beginning was shaky. We all had to learn how to work together to get our needs met. But after just a few months, the class had developed a bond. They enjoyed the autonomy of the experience and trusted me to guide them throughout. The pacing and group motivation helped them gain strength that we hadn’t been able to access in private sessions. The way I approach group equipment classes is much like group exercise. There is a rhythm to the movement that holds a steady beat for each exercise. Sometimes I shift the pacing to encourage quick movement into a muscular contraction and sometimes I slow it down to offer time to strategise or work on endurance. Having to self-monitor their movement helped them recognise their limits in the best of ways. They soon reported back that they felt more able than ever and were grateful for their new community.

We knew we were on to something special with this group and wondered if we could recreate the magic for other groups in the studio. We started this great experiment with a sort of matchmaking process of noticing which clients had similar needs, personality types and goals. We used the success of the first Healthy Backs program as a template for additional programs, making tweaks to the model as the classes grew. This shift not only allowed for ease in many teacher’s schedules, but also opened the door for a new revenue model in my studio.

We learned how to anticipate needs, create outcome-based programming for each session and serve our clientele at a high level of specificity, the likes of which they couldn’t find anywhere

“We learned how to anticipate needs, create outcome-based programming for each session and serve our clientele at a high level of specificity, the likes of which they couldn’t find anywhere else”



else. Here are a few lessons we learned:

1. It’s always important to gather information from your current clientele. This can be through regular surveys or simple conversation. In our case, we kept a running tab of client interests at the front desk. This was not only helpful in pairing couples together for semi-private sessions, but it also helped us develop additional classes for special considerations. The best part was that we took the guessing out of our offerings. We knew we could run our classes because we had qualified the interest before we communicated the offer. Wins all around.

2. Our specialty classes evolved to run successfully as time-based, pre-paid registration offerings. Drop-ins are convenient, but not special. We wanted these offerings to be high-value, therefore it was pre-registration for the win. In addition to having full classes, the timed sessions offered both a beginning and an end to each iteration of the experience. This allowed us to get specific with each session and bake in the goals that were important to our clients. By offering them a tangible experience, we gave them something specific that they could share about with others. Ex: “I worked for 6 weeks on my balance and now I am confident going up and down stairs.”

3. We instilled meaning and purpose through attending to the wants, needs and desires of our clientele. We were able to maintain our expertise and use it to offer them programming that mattered to their lives. Recently, I met a former client of the studio in a pizza parlor. She recognized me and said “I want you to know that I never felt more important than when I was at your studio and I have yet to find a space that does it with the same level of focus and care as you did.”

From where I sit in my Chicago studio, I am surrounded by 10 other Pilates studios. Suffice to say, the market is saturated. As a Career and Small Business Coach, I counsel my clients regularly to stand out to their communities by listening to them and creating offers that speak directly to their needs. Considering the ways in which you can offer unexpected quality to your services can mean the difference between a moving experience and an experience that MOVES them through their life.

If you’re ready to develop your own specialty program, check out my online course: [Build Your Specialty Program](#). This three month immersion program will offer you everything you need to support the building of specialty classes, courses and the like in your studio.

With over two decades of experience in movement instruction, [Jenna Zaffino](#) is a powerhouse entrepreneur, movement educator, speaker, and coach based in Chicago. She specialises in breaking down complex movement science into easily accessible forms and has helped thousands of clients shift their mindsets, increase their physical resilience, and find their own individual wellness practices. When she’s not inspiring her clients at her North Center studio, Jenna loves to spend time with her family creating “movement mischief.” You can find her [website here](#).

Instructor Spotlight: Robin Renee

WE SPEAK WITH PILATES INSTRUCTOR ROBIN RENEE ABOUT HER PILATES CAREER AND HER TEACHING FOCUS

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

A. My name is Robin R. Rutledge-Taylor, to my clients, I am Coach Robin Renee. Since 2020, I have been teaching Mat Pilates in my virtual studio; in-person at lululemon and Boxville in Chicago, USA. I've been teaching Pilates since 2016. I started teaching group fitness in 2008. My friends would describe me as adventurous, creative, reliable, no-nonsense.

I initially studied Pilates in 2014 with SCW Fitness with Pilates teacher, Abbie Appel of Equinox in South Beach. Most recently I completed my Mat and Reformer Teacher Certification in 2021 with Club Pilates with Master Trainer Lencola Green from California Pilates.

Currently, I teach my own classes virtually three days a week and in-person pop-up classes on weekends for Lululemon and Boxville in Chicago.

Q. How did you discover Pilates?

A. I was at a conference, fulfilling continuing education credits for my fitness certification; Pilates was on the schedule. The description looked interesting, so I decided to try it.

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

A. I keep learning from doing my own research, as well as taking continuing education courses. I'm inspired in my work by witnessing the joy of accomplishment in my classes, especially when people achieve a goal that they've struggled with. I also get inspiration from other dynamic teachers who are refreshing and equipped with optimism and positivity. They have unique approaches to making the learning process accessible across various learning styles. Some of the dynamic teachers that I've got the most inspiration from include Alexa Idama from Low Impact Fit, Danica Kalemdaroglu from Somaphyx by Pilates 804, Kim Carruthers from The Kim Carruthers Method, Micki Price Havard from MickiPhit Method, Mychele Sims from Get 2 Werk, Misty Lynne Cauthen, from Dragonfly Pilates, Nicky Taylor Steward Grayson from One Body Studio, Paula Marie from Black Girls Do Pilates 2, Sonja Herbert from Black Girl Pilates and Tasha Edwards from See Her Healthy to name a few.



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

A. Be able to cue well enough that people can execute the exercises without me demonstrating them. This advice came from my Club Pilates Master Trainer, Lencola Green.

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

A. I encourage people to work at their own pace and give themselves the grace to learn.

My favourite type of client is one who is open to learning more about their own body and willing to do the work without being so harsh on themselves. They understand that learning is a process and remaining teachable will help them reach their goals.

It's important to me that I curate safe wellness spaces for Black women to freely breathe, move and celebrate all shapes and body sizes. Allies are welcome to join us as long as they're respectful of the space without disrupting the positive energy flow.

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

A. The best Pilates experience I've had would be my first class with Nicky Taylor Steward-Grayson in her studio. Her precision and focus on details showed me that she is indeed a masterful teacher. During the pandemic lockdown, I took virtual classes with Nicky. She named them 'Easy Like Sunday Morning', but they were not 'easy'!

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

A. The mat, because it provides opportunities for people to tap into their own abilities, without assistance from other equipment.

Q. How do you stay motivated?

A. I stay motivated by the desire to live a long healthy life.

Q. What makes you laugh the most?

A. Recently, TikTok has been making me laugh the most.

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

A. Spending time near blue space/water, watching the sunrise and going for walks. I also enjoy riding my bike and hanging out in my hammock reading or napping.

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

A. I own eight to 10 pairs of grip socks. I love a stretch band.

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

A. My family has a pretty good idea of what's involved in my job.

Robin Renee does pop-up classes for lululemon and works at Boxville in Chicago.



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Master Manipulators of Movement

PILATES IS MOVEMENT. PILATES IS EXERCISE. BUT WHAT IS OUR POINT OF DIFFERENCE?

by Kath Banks

In this story, we hear from Kath Banks, Principal Pilates practitioner from Aligned Pilates, Moonee Ponds, Melbourne. Kath is doing a workshop on Enhancing Movement Potential: Centred to the Core for Pain, Performance, and Postural Control with Reach Health Movement on 3rd May 2024. She talks about how a focus on centring, can allow for better integration of all Pilates principles and helps with the creation of positive movement experiences for all clients.

Joseph Pilates created Contrology as a corrective system of exercise to provide complete coordination of the mind, body, and spirit, supporting a holistic approach to health, fitness, and happiness. We are now amid a Pilates evolution, making this an opportune time to reflect on what sets us apart from other exercise modalities.

In addition to our unique apparatus and specific Pilates repertoire, our guiding principles are our main point of difference. Centring, Breath, Control, Concentration, Flow and Precision.

When integrated with the concepts of movement and the tools of progression and regression, we have the ability to manipulate repertoire and our environment to create optimal and positive movement experiences for all clients.

We achieve our ultimate goal when clients leave the Pilates studio feeling invigorated both physically and mentally, lifting their spirit.

When considering all concepts, principles and movement variables and the fact they slide up and down a continuum, we have endless movement opportunities available to us. This provides the ability to create exercises and programs for clients that are not too easy, not too hard, but 'just right'. Strategic application allows movement to be broken down into its most simple form to unload, enhance alignment and motor control, then progressively build back to functional movement with renewed control and efficiency – often all in the one session.

This sounds simple in theory, but in practise is very challenging.

We need knowledge of all the variables, an understanding of how they affect movement and be able to integrate this into teaching clients effectively.

Our own self-mastery is key to developing this skill set. Once mastered, movement is guided by knowledge and purpose, rather than by a strict set of rules. We must also be keen observers, identifying when clients are under or overworking, and differentiate between negative compensatory movement patterns and positive adaptations.

The challenge is also what makes the Pilates method so interesting and rewarding for all involved.

It's a never-ending journey of movement exploration, continuously layering our knowledge, skills and understanding.

With a focus on centring, we can explore how the integration of all Pilates principles supports the creation of positive movement experiences for all clients.

In terms of a definition, being 'centred' means being in a state of balance and equilibrium. It's not a static state, but a place to continually return to. Centring relates to the way we control movement in relation to our centre of gravity, the centre of our joints, as well as our state of mind.

The ability to control movement from and around our centre of gravity allows us to move efficiently and safely.

This is directly related to pelvic and torso control, creating an equilibrium between associated muscles, that work in unison when moving and/or reacting to external forces. Our centre of

gravity is constantly shifting with breath and movement. By keeping it within a 'neutral zone' we protect our body as a whole and conserve energy.

This is vital for all clients whether they have musculoskeletal conditions requiring specific movement control or whether they push their bodies to the limit through sport and performance. Maintaining our centre of gravity within our base of support is what keeps us balanced, so we don't fall over. This is essential for sports requiring fast efficient changes of direction, but also for life in general so we can move with ease and be able to react to any mishaps.

Creating proprioception and awareness is essential for all clients. This starts with breathing and providing an opportunity to assess their position of body in space when still and when moving.

Once aware, clients can analyse movement patterns and play a more pivotal role in increasing their own motor control.

As precision and self-mastery increase, continuous manipulation of the appropriate variables provides progressive challenge, based on individual needs and goals. For clients with lower back pain or diastasis recti we need to ensure we don't exacerbate pain or overload already stretched tissue, but still build capacity to support regaining optimal function. For more athletic clients we need to ensure we provide sufficient load and dynamic movement specific to their environment, while still reinforcing an equilibrium between muscles and joints.

Being centred within our joints is closely related to our centre of gravity. When we are centred within our joints (including our pelvic and spinal joints) we create optimal skeletal alignment to support safe, efficient, flowing movement.

Again, our muscles work in unison and are reactive to external forces applied to the body.

This is influenced by the type and direction of movement, as well as the magnitude and direction of the forces acting on the joint.

Staying centred within our joint's supports joint stability. This is defined as the joints ability to withstand forces and avoid becoming, displaced, dislocated and/or injured. This relies on the optimal and constantly changing relationship between alignment, strength, stiffness, mobility, and flexibility of all structures and tissue, required for the activity. Once again being centred is not a static state and relies on the joint having a buffer/neutral zone and an ability to act like a shock absorber. This is achieved through the maintenance of equal and opposite forces within the joints.

Consolidating an understanding of neutral pelvis, neutral spine and neutral joint alignment assists proprioception and the development of more efficient movement patterns.

Like centring, neutral joint alignment is not generally a static state, but rather a starting or reference point where all directions of movement are available to the joint.

It's a place to move from and return to and/or a zone to work within, due to it being a place of balance and equilibrium.

Providing clients with the opportunity to concentrate on movement, creates a mind-body connection and allows clients to become centred in their mind. Being centre of mind provides an



“If you understand your client’s movement capabilities, you can manipulate the environment appropriately (i.e. exercise choice..load) and the client understands the task and goal, verbal cues can be minimised.”



inner calm, drawing attention away from the peripheral world and into themselves. Pilates becomes a form of meditation and stress relief when used to switch off from work, chores, and the constant information overload of life. This is most effective when we allow clients to zone in on their own body and focus on the execution of repertoire, rather than listening to constant instruction. This requires us to be efficient teachers through succinct cueing.

Pilates is the perfect environment to integrate constraint-based learning.

This is achieved through understanding your client, your environment, and the repertoire to again provide ‘just right’ exercises. This allows clients to self-manage and enhance their own movement quality, without relying on ongoing instruction. This coupled with strategic programming and incremental progressions, leads our clients to successful execution of repertoire.

If you understand your client’s movement capabilities, you can manipulate the environment appropriately (exercise choice, equipment, load, range of movement etc) and the client understands the task and goal, verbal cues can be minimised. Clients can then focus on their own execution of repertoire, providing an opportunity to self-analyse and elicit positive adaptation.

With practise and repetition, movement competency is demonstrated through precision and flow with enhanced alignment and motor control stored in the client’s neuromuscular memory.

This leads to clients executing repertoire with decreased conscious control, indicating they are ready for the next layer of focus and/or challenge. Transferring movement into our unconscious neuromuscular memory is a vital step in making what we do in the Pilates studio relevant to everyday activity.

We no longer think about the way we move; we just move better for our life.

Kath is the owner of [Aligned for Life Pilates – Moonee Ponds](#) and faculty educator for [National Pilates Training](#). As an [Accredited Exercise Physiologist](#), she also works as a [Rehabilitation Coordinator](#) at [Maribyrnong Sports Academy](#) as part of a multidisciplinary team of allied health and sports performance specialists.

Kath is presenting a workshop on [Enhancing your Movement Potential - Centred to the Core for Posture, Pain and Performance with Reach Movement Health](#) - 3 May 2024 in Melbourne, Australia.

Subscribe to The Pilates Journal today
pilatesjournal.com

Upcoming courses

BASI AUSTRALIA

The Mat Program , Mat and Reformer Program and Comprehensive Global Program are now offered in
 Brisbane- BASI Pilates Academy Australia - 8 Sept - 3rd Dec and 23 Feb to 16 June 2024, 3rd Feb- 5 May Manly, Sydney and 1 Mar- 23 Jun - Sunshine Coast.
 Perth - Rig Pilates - 1 Sept- 10 Dec
 2024 - Canberra coming soon!

Find out more basipilates.com.au/education/.

BODY ORGANICS EDUCATION

The Tower of Power - Brisbane - 9-11 September
Springing this joint - Sydney - 13 October, Wamberal - 14 October and Brisbane - 4 November
Hashimoto's Disease - Bondi, Sydney - 15 October
 Springing this Joint and Hashimoto's Disease - Canberra - 29 October

The Pilates Vibe will also be running Body Organics Mat, Reformer and Comprehensive Courses in Melbourne - commencing 23-24 September

Is offered as an online course. There will be follow-up face-to-face courses in QLD, NSW and VIC, other states to follow.
 A full event calendar can be found [here](#).

Find out more www.bodyorganicseducation.com or contact info@bodyorganicseducation.com

REACH MOVEMENT HEALTH

Further your education with one of Reach's online or in-person workshops.

Online workshops include Zoom Masterclasses with Reach Experts on 9 September in Sydney, Healthy Bones and Hips with Lisa Jackson in Brisbane. Enhancing Movement Potential: Centred to the Core for Pain, Performance, and Postural Control with Kath Banks in Melbourne and more.

Find out more reachmovementhealth.com/continuing-education-programs-2023/

PILATES ITC

Blended (Online + In-Person) or Online (start anytime) options available.

(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:

All States: QLD, NSW, WA – Enrol now for September (starting with Matwork).

Enrol and start your online Coursework at any time ahead of your first in-Studio session!

Give the Pilates ITC Careers Team a call on (08) 9330 4570 to secure your place - pilatestitc.edu.au/



POLESTAR PILATES

Upcoming Continuing Education Courses include:

Neurogenic tremors for Mind Body Connection - 23 Sept - Sydney.
Wundarful Chair Workshop - 18 November - Sydney.

Pilates for Chronic Lower Back Pain Online Course - available anytime
 Online Masterclass series - available anytime

For a complete list of courses see the Polestar website 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

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/



STUDIO PILATES

- Matwork Course - 5-8 Oct - VIC, 19-22 Oct - NSW, 19-22 Oct - QLD
- Reformer Course - 12-15 Oct - VIC, 15-19 Nov - QLD and 30 Nov - 3 Dec - NSW.
- Platinum Instructing Course - 13-18 Nov - VIC, 14-19 Nov - NSW and QLD.

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/

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/

POWER IN MOTION

BALANCE
BREATH
BIOFEEDBACK
20-21-22nd of October 2023

Dav Cohen
Darren Stojanovic
Kimberley Garlick
Maddison Garlick

northern rivers
PILATES

MOTION IS MOVEMENT AND MOVEMENT IS HAVING COMPLETE POWER OVER HOW YOU MOVE

Join us in this 3 day mini retreat where you will find new ways to promote and explore MORE movement.

We will challenge breath, find our balance and play with the concept of biofeedback with some of Pilates industries experts.

This workshop is designed for Pilates Enthusiasts, Pilates Practitioners and Clients.

FRIDAY 20th OCT

- 4pm Welcome
- 4.30pm Beginner Breathwork
- 5.45pm Level one and two Breathwork

SATURDAY 21st OCT

- 9am Mat class
- 10am Introductory to Breathwork - Level 1
- 11am Brunch
- 11.45am WORKSHOP 1 and 2 (split into two groups)
- 1.45pm Tea break
- 2pm Breathwork & Energy Work - Level 2
- 3pm Finish

SUNDAY 22nd OCT

- 9am Morning Movement classes with NRP instructors (BOOKING ESSENTIAL)
- 10.15am WORKSHOP 1 and 2 (Split into two groups)
- Mid Day Finish

TOTAL COST \$850.00
DEPOSIT \$425.00

POWER IN MOTION

BALANCE
BREATH
BIOFEEDBACK

October 20th- 22nd 2023

Brunch and Morning tea will be included
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