

[IMAGE]

Powering Up Your Body With Pilates

Many fitness trends come and go, but one that has stood the test of time is Pilates. The workout known for conditioning the body and helping people be more flexible and fit has been a hit for its focus on spinal and pelvic alignment, two areas that are key in building a strong core.

Pilates is a great complementary workout that can help you not only relieve stress but also allow adequate oxygen flow to your muscles while improving coordination and balance. If you are concerned about keeping lean, this is an ideal workout regimen that may work for you. Like yoga, Pilates helps to bring more awareness to areas in the body that need your attention. Because it is a low intensity workout, you can improve your focus in a range of areas both mental and physical.

Before starting this new workout regimen, read the six Pilates principles:

1. **Centering:** Physically bringing the focus to the center of the body, the powerhouse area between the lower ribs and pubic bone. Energetically, Pilates exercises are sourced from center.
2. **Concentration:** If one brings full attention to the exercise and does it with full commitment, maximum value will be obtained from each movement.
3. **Control:** Every Pilates exercise is done with complete muscular control. No body part is left to its own devices.
4. **Precision:** In Pilates, awareness is sustained throughout each movement. There is an appropriate placement, alignment relative to other body parts, and trajectory for each part of the body.
5. **Breath:** Joseph Pilates emphasized using a very full breath in his exercises. He advocated thinking of the lungs as a bellows -- using them strongly to pump the air fully in and out of the body. Most Pilates exercises coordinate with the breath, and using the breath properly is an integral part of Pilates exercise.
6. **Flow:** Pilates exercise is done in a flowing manner. Fluidity, grace, and ease are goals applied to all exercises. The energy of an exercise connects all body parts and flows through the body in an even way. Pilates equipment, like the reformer, are very good mirrors of one's flow and concentration as they tend to bang around and suddenly become quite "machine-like" if one loses one's control and flow.

Make sure to talk to your doctor of chiropractic before starting any new fitness class.

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