

choosing a pilates instructor

Pilates is a mind-body exercise technique that provides many mental and physical benefits. As Joseph Pilates, creator of the method, said, “Pilates develops the body uniformly, corrects wrong postures, restores physical vitality, invigorates the mind and elevates the spirit.”

If you are new to Pilates, what are some general guidelines for doing this type of exercise? What criteria can you use to select a qualified instructor? Use the insights below from the Pilates Method Alliance® (PMA™), an international, not-for-profit, professional association that aims to protect the public by establishing certification and continuing education standards for Pilates professionals.

1 What Is Pilates?

Pilates is an exercise technique that seeks to actively engage the mind and the body together.

The three overlying principles of Pilates are whole-body health, whole-body commitment and breath. These overlying principles, along with the other fundamentals and ideas that are commonly taught by Pilates professionals, provide focus, depth and layers of learning in the technique. The other fundamentals and ideas are

- mental concentration
- control
- precision of movement
- balanced muscle development
- centering
- rhythm
- flowing movement

2 Practicing Pilates

For best results, practice Pilates 2–3 times weekly in approximately 1-hour-long sessions. You may practice Pilates in a group or private setting, based on your financial and physi-

cal needs. Prices range from approximately \$10–\$15 for a group mat session to upward of \$65–\$75 for 1 hour of private

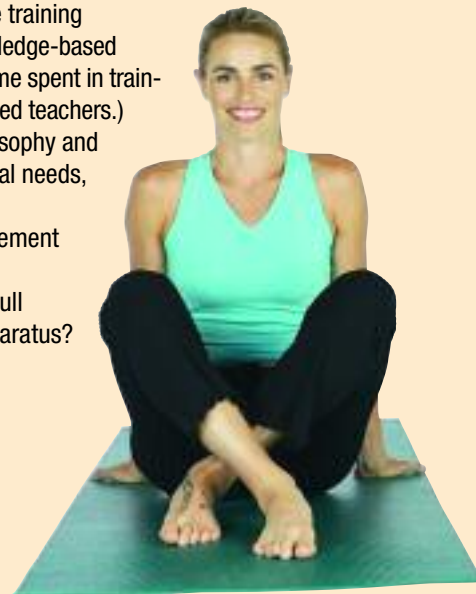
method of exercise should be experienced first through participation in classes or private sessions with a comprehensively

guidelines for selecting an instructor

The Pilates method is an exercise/movement technique that integrates the use of mind and body and creates overall positive physical benefits. Comprehensive training of instructors is necessary to maintain the efficacy and safety of the Pilates method. Use the following questions to search for a qualified Pilates teacher:

1. How long has the instructor been teaching Pilates?
2. Is the instructor trained through a comprehensive training program?
3. Did that training program require a written and practical test, as well as lecture, observation, practice and apprentice hours?
4. How many total hours were spent in the training program? (The Pilates method is a knowledge-based method of exercise and training. More time spent in training and education produces more-qualified teachers.)
5. What is the instructor's or studio's philosophy and specialty? Are they able to handle special needs, injuries or postrehabilitation?
6. Does the instructor have any other movement or fitness-related teaching experience?
7. Does the instructor or studio teach the full repertoire of Pilates on all pieces of apparatus?
8. Does the instructor or studio have the proper equipment?
9. Does the instructor or studio maintain a commitment to continuing education?

For more information, contact the Pilates Method Alliance, www.pilatesmethodalliance.org, (305) 573-4946 or, toll free, (866) 573-4945.



instruction. You can perform Pilates at home, but proper instruction and quality equipment are essential to your success. PMA recommends that group classes be limited to 10–12 participants for mat-based programs and six participants for equipment-based programs.

trained Pilates instructor. Pilates requires feedback on technique, form and body placement. Videos should be used only as a supplement if you are unable to attend a class or private lesson. ■

3 Using Videos

You may have heard about Pilates videos. PMA does not recommend videos to the general public as a first-time exposure to Pilates. The Pilates

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