Industrial Strength Pilates

701: Industrial Strength Pilates
Workshop presented by: Christopher & Marena Digby

Saturday 18 July 2015 - 1:45-3:35pm

• IF IT'S EASY
IT'S PROBABLY NOT PILATES
Workshop Outline

Dispelling the misconception that Pilates is a ‘soft workout’, this workshop will explain the origins of Pilates as created by Joseph Pilates and its ability to increase physical strength and mobility. It begins with 15 minutes of background information, followed by a 70-minute practical session.

This session will provide you with valuable, practical tools that can be incorporated into personal training sessions and group fitness classes, delivering a challenging workout that addresses core strength and endurance. Not for the faint hearted, you’ll experience training based on the original workouts designed by Joseph Pilates. By understanding how to execute the original exercises safely, you can challenge your clients with a strengthening and corrective/restorative workout.

As more focus is being placed on core strength, stamina, stability and mobility, the Pilates method is being incorporated into more exercise programs in the clinical setting, the training of elite athletes and everything in between. By the end of the seminar you will understand and have practical experience with the original work demonstrating its relevance to today’s training methods and why it is so powerful in helping clients achieve optimum health and fitness.

Why ‘Industrial Strength’ Pilates?

In the early 1900s Joseph Pilates created the Pilates method. He was a German man, who was a boxer, wrestler and gymnast amongst many other things.

There are numerous reports of him using the cue ‘Strong like bull!’ According to Shari Berkowitz, Mr. Pilates felt dancers ruined his method. Coming from a dance background ourselves, we understand the Pilates method does have some flowing movement and a rhythm to it, however the style of movement should be more like a long, lean muscle man, rather than a dancer.

It is true most things evolve with time as knowledge; understanding and experience are gained. We are sure if Joseph Pilates were alive today, being the inventor and owner of numerous patents, he would continue to create and evolve his method to meet the needs of the human condition.

It should be celebrated that many teachers including ourselves have allowed other influences and current scientific research to enhance the way we teach the Pilates method, however the true essence and intention of Joseph’s work should not be lost.
The Origin of Pilates
Dispelling the misconception that Pilates is a “soft workout”

Joseph Hubertus Pilates was born in Germany on the 10th December 1883.
A family physician gave him a discarded anatomy book.
He studied yoga, Zen, and ancient Greek and Roman regimens.
By the time he was 14 he had mastered sports such as gymnastics, bodybuilding, boxing and skiing just to name a few.
In 1912 Joseph travelled to England where he worked as a boxer, circus performer and a self-defence instructor at Scotland Yard.

After WWI broke out he was interned in a “camp” for enemy aliens where he taught wrestling and self-defence.
After the war Joe returned to Germany and began training the Hamburg Military Police in self-defence and physical conditioning.
Joseph travelled to New York in 1925, and then later in 1926 moved there permanently.
Joseph had met with boxing promoter Nat Fleischer during October 1925 and he inspired him to stay.
Joseph and Clara settled in New York and "took over a boxing gym at 939 Eighth Ave" that he converted into his Pilates Studio.
Joseph had a rough but kindly manner with his clients. Even the New York city slicker of those days could tolerate his "boot camp" exercise approach.
Joseph Pilates passed away in October 1967. He was 83 years old.
By the time of his death he had designed more than 500 specific exercises.

What is Pilates – The Original Intention?

Joseph Pilates never called his system of physical fitness ‘Pilates’. In his original 1934 book ‘Your Health’ Joseph Pilates described his method of achieving ‘health & happiness’ as ‘Contrology’.
A traditional definition could define the suffix ‘ology’ from the Greek root ‘the study of’. Therefore Contrology is:

"Contrology is complete coordination of body, mind, and spirit. Through Contrology you first purposefully acquire complete control of your own body and then through proper repetition of its exercises you gradually and progressively acquire the natural rhythm and coordination associated with all your subconscious activities."

"Ideally, our muscles should obey our will. Our will should not be dominated by the reflex actions of our muscles."

"My work is 50 years ahead of its time."

- Joseph Pilates

The original intention of Pilates was to provide a strong full body and mind workout, appropriate for the client that focuses on abdominal strength and spinal mobility. Undertaking regular Pilates sessions based on the original work, results in physical strength, core strength, endurance and mobility.
The Original Work is Still Relevant Today

Joseph Pilates felt he was at least 50 years ahead of his time. Despite the amount of research being done in the areas of health and fitness, the vast amount of knowledge and ongoing discoveries being made in medicine, many of Joseph’s techniques and philosophies are still valid today.

One of the major focuses of his work was to keep the spine as mobile as possible as well as being strong. His method emphasises spinal elongation and decompression.

“If your spine is inflexibly stiff at 30, you are old. If it is completely flexible at 60, you are young.” - Joseph Pilates.

Joseph would encourage injured people to do whatever movement they could to aid their recovery, when often the treatment at that time was to stay in bed and not move. His original mat workout addressed the whole body, worked in all planes of movement with and against gravity; lying down, sitting up, kneeling and standing. He was aware of gravity’s effect on the musculoskeletal structure and understood the difference between prime movers as opposed to stabilising muscles of the body and that both needed to be addressed. Whilst many of his exercises were performed on the floor, he always gradually brought you to the upright position and spoke about “functional fitness”, (i.e. how to stand whilst waiting for a bus, etc.).

He placed his exercises in an order and prescribed the amount of repetitions that would optimise muscle sequencing, avoiding overworking or excluding areas of the body.

Most people who begin exercise programs are seeking change and/or improvement to their health. Some of the most common reasons we see and hear from clients are:

• Change the shape of their body.
• Function daily without pain.
• Weight loss.
• Get rid of stress.
• Improve performance for their chosen activity.
• Improve their posture.
• To get “fit” / increase strength.
• To become more flexible.

Change does not come from comfort there is an element of discipline, effort and at times discomfort to effect the change they are seeking. A relatively normal, healthy person ought to be challenged in stamina, strength, stretch and stability. For those who are special cases, their condition must be taken into account but they still need challenge to remain strong and healthy. The Pilates method addresses all of these issues.

2004 Olympic Gold Medalist Andre Ward integrated Pilates in his training, “I use Pilates to strengthen my core, which creates balance and leads to velocity”.

Lindsay began to put MMA fighters through an intense Pilates regimen, preparing them for their competitions, using Pilates to improve their strength and mobility. With her help, MMA fighters are able to kick higher and harder, maintain difficult holds longer, and transition from fighting on their feet to fighting on the ground more quickly.
The Original Pilates Workout

In his 1945 book, ‘Return To Life Through Contrology’, Joseph Pilates outlined his original 34 Mat exercises.

“Contrology is not a system of haphazard exercises designed to produce only bulging muscles. … Nor does Contrology err either by over-developing a few muscles at the expense of all others with resulting loss of grace and suppleness, or a sacrifice of the heart or lungs. Rather, it was conceived to limber and stretch muscles and ligaments so that your body will be as supple as that of a cat and not muscular like that of the body of a brewery-truck horse.”

“A few well-designed movements, properly performed in a balanced sequence, are worth hours of doing sloppy calisthenics or forced contortion.”

- Joseph Pilates

1. The Hundred
2. The Roll Up
3. The Roll Over
4. The One Leg Circle
5. Rolling Back
6. The One Leg Stretch
7. The Double Leg Stretch
   7a. Single Straight Leg Stretch*
   7b. Double Straight Leg Stretch*
   7c. Criss Cross
8. The Spine Stretch
9. The Spine Twist
10. The Jack-Knife
11. The Cork-Screw
12. The Swan Dive
13. The One Leg Kick
14. The Double Kick
15. The Neck Pull
16. The Scissors
17. The Bicycle
18. The Shoulder Bridge
19. The Spine Twist
20. The Side Kick
21. The Cork-Screw
22. The Teaser
23. The Hip Twist With Stretched Arms
24. Swimming
25. The Leg Pull – Front
26. The Leg Pull
27. The Side Kick – Kneeling
28. The Side Bend
29. The Boomerang
30. The Seal
31. The Crab
32. The Rocking
33. The Control Balance
34. The Push Up

*Exercises 7a, 7b & 7c are not original Joseph Pilates’ moves. They are a series of moves designed by Romana (a protégé of Joseph Pilates, who carried on his work after his death). She felt people needed more stomach work early on. She also believed, dancers especially, needed more core work and less stretching when using the mat work as a warm-up for ballet. (Galliano 2012)

For this reason, exercises 7a, 7b & 7c are generally considered as Authentic Pilates moves.
Blending the Original Method with Today’s Training
Practical Component of Workshop

The practical session will be delivered in a way that it can easily be assimilated with training methodology and language used by personal trainers and group fitness instructors.

Setting up the Foundations

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<th>Standing</th>
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<th>3 Points of Contact – Parallel and External Rotation</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Legs</td>
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<td>The Rib-Pelvic Connection</td>
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<td>Rib/Pelvis</td>
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<td>The Hundred Arms</td>
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<td>Connecting to the Back of the Body</td>
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<td>Abs/Spine</td>
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<td>4 Bands of Strength</td>
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<th>Standing</th>
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<th>Lower Back ‘C’ Curve</th>
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<td>Pelvis Articulation</td>
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<td>Rolling Back (Rolling like a Ball)</td>
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<td>Full Spinal ‘C’ Curve/Rectus Abdominal Contraction</td>
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<th>Standing</th>
<th>Standing</th>
<th>Hip Lift / Roll Down (Hands on Thighs)</th>
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<td>Neutral Pelvis/Spine Against Gravity</td>
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<td>Spinal Rotation</td>
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<td>Supine Spine Twist</td>
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<td>Cervical/Thoracic Flexion with Neutral Pelvis</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standing</th>
<th>Standing</th>
<th>Quadruped Spinal Articulation</th>
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<td>Shoulder/Rib/Pelvic Stability &amp; Mobility</td>
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<td>Front &amp; Side Support</td>
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Incorporating ‘Industrial Strength’ Pilates techniques into the everyday personal training and group exercise sessions

The list provided for this component is an overview; after completing the practical workshop you will have the tools for how to integrate the original work with current training methods.

The workout format presented is designed so that it can be used in its entirety or specific exercises can be chosen to incorporate into your sessions.

It is based on the original mat work with various modifications appropriate for the fitness setting and to accommodate the different backgrounds and experience clients typically have in this environment.
Blending the Original Method with Today’s Training  
Practical Component of Workshop (cont.)

ยอม Not part of the original method but widely used and accepted in authentic/traditional Pilates training today.

1. The Hundred
2. The Roll Up / Assisted Roll Up
3. Reverse Ab Curl (The Roll Over)
4. The One Leg Circle
5. Rolling Back
6. The One Leg Stretch
7. The Double Leg Stretch
   7a. Single Straight Leg Stretch*
   7b. Double Straight Leg Stretch*
   7c. Criss Cross
8. Pelvic Bridge / Single Leg (arms o/h)
19. The Spine Twist
   • Prone Tricep Press
   • Reverse 100s
12. Swan Dive Prep
21. The Side Kick Series (R & L)
24. Swimming Prep
   • Heel Taps
   • Grasshopper
   • Childs Pose
22. The Teaser
25. The Leg Pull – Front (Prep & Full)
26. The Leg Pull (Prep & Full)
27. The Side Kick – Kneeling
28. The Side Bend
30. The Seal
32. The Rocking Prep
34. The Push Up

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Thank you for attending ‘Industrial Strength Pilates’. We hope it has been informative and fun, as well as providing you with useful tools to apply to your very next training session.

Your feedback and questions are always welcomed.

Stay happy & healthy!

A more detailed set of notes can be downloaded from our web site,

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