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RE-INVENTING THE GROUP CLASS

By Sandy Gardner

The formula is easy and there's no thinking required. Simply by offering Pilates group classes with the right equipment, you'll attract and retain clients like never before.

Pilates is, without a doubt, an exercise with history. But the compelling draw to Pilates is not because of its legacy - it's due to the continued innovation of equipment and programming that keep clients coming back for more. Adding equipment such as reformers and chairs to your Pilates group classes will make a big impact.

SOME THINGS ARE BETTER IN A GROUP!

There is something to be said about working out in a group. It's a fun, social, collective experience that your clients cannot get anywhere else. At home workouts or sessions with a personal trainer are also great to fit into the fitness equation, but they do not compare to the challenge and dynamic pace of a group class. With the delicate air of competition, each class member works to perform the exercises to their best ability - often pushing themselves more than they would on an individual basis. It's this type of "feel good" experience that has made group exercise classes an overwhelmingly popular fitness choice over the years.

Group classes also save the client money while increasing revenue for the studio. In other words, the cost per class goes down for each participant while the profits increase for the fitness facility or studio. It's a win, win situation!

REFORM YOUR PILATES GROUP CLASS

Besides Matwork, Reformers are the leading equipment choice for

Pilates group classes. With a wide selection of models to choose from and a range of exciting accessories, studios can select the right machine for them, based on studio space, client type, and price - it's now easier than ever to set-up a Reformer studio, whatever your budget. With more and more facilities offering Pilates classes to their clients, spaces are commonly shared and have become multi-purpose. For example, after an aerobic step class, boxing or Yoga class, it may be time to roll out the Reformers and offer a Pilates group class.

Reformer accessories are ideal for the group class environment as instructors can add interest to their programming simply by incorporating a new apparatus. Clients feel empowered when trying new things, even if their body is already familiar with the movement - a new accessory will diversify the class and make things new and slightly more challenging. For a more beginner level class, Reformer accessories can also help to modify the original exercise enabling the class participants to perform without unnecessary tension or strain.

SO WHAT IS A REFORMER ANYWAY?

If you're used to standard gym equipment, you may not be familiar with the Pilates Reformer. In short, it's a studio essential. Facilitating effective full-body exercise by means of spring resistance, a moving carriage and rope system, this machine has proven to be a client and fitness professional favorite because of its comfort and efficiency. And with its popularity, comes demand for both manufacturers and facilities alike. In order to meet this demand, leading Pilates organizations have evolved their standard model to incorporate many of the features that gyms and facilities require to accommodate various exercise options under one roof. Some models are completely versatile. In addition to the basic Reformer, these

multi-purpose units also perform as a raised Matwork surface and offer the functionality of the Cadillac Trapeze Table (another Pilates mainstay). Plus, when not in use, they can easily stack on top of one another and roll away into the nearest corner or storage closet.

In a Pilates group class, each client is assigned or claims a Reformer for the hour and often starts by setting the machine to their own personal settings, based on height and comfort. These are usually determined in an introductory session, where instructors teach new clients the Reformer basics before entering the group class. After a brief overview of the Reformer, clients are ready to join in on group classes and often become dedicated Reformer users for life. Many devoted clients have expressed that the machine is more than just a platform for contemporary mind-body exercise, but that their bodies have drastically changed and that the tranquil gliding sensation of the carriage encourages concentration and mental focus before and after their workout.

Reformers are ideal for the group class environment because whether lying down, standing or kneeling on the machine, clients are contained within their own personal space and can easily transition from one exercise to another without delaying the class or interrupting another participant's workout. Finally, because the machine is user-friendly, clients can easily follow the instructor's cues and commands without straining to listen or pausing to understand the direction. All in all, stackable Reformers are the way to go for flexible and adaptable studios that want to break into the in-demand Pilates market but do not have the resources to dedicate a room solely for Pilates Reformer classes. And after one glide, your clients will thank you for it and your facility will be booming!



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NOT YOUR AVERAGE CHAIR

When you think of a “workout chair,” you’re probably thinking of a machine that’s gentle, tame and effortless – but the Chair is nothing of the kind. Group classes of every level, from beginner to more advanced, can all depend on this Pilates machine to rebalance their muscles and deliver a full-body workout. It also facilitates high-performance exercises for athletes and fitness enthusiasts as well as physical therapy routines for rehab patients. And because it’s user-friendly, instructors can cue their clients easily and effectively in the group class atmosphere without leaving anyone behind.

This compact yet sturdy piece of equipment helps the exerciser achieve upper and lower-body strength and conditioning, enhance stability and improve body control. And when the class is over, clients can easily wheel the chairs away for storage or clear the space for the next Matwork class. With all of these options, instructors can expand programming options and clients will experience Pilates in a whole new way. As a result, your facility will reap the benefits.

MORE THAN JUST MATWORK

Just because it’s called “Matwork” doesn’t mean you are limited strictly to Mats. Consider adding vibrancy and color to your facility’s equipment offerings with some of the latest Pilates props and accessories. **OSF**

<p>Platforms that provide stability challenges are an ideal tool for establishing and reinforcing balance, stability and body awareness while gaining core strength. Great to use with everyone from rehab clients to professional athletes.</p>	<p>Balls are an ever-popular soft-weighted resistance tool that fit comfortably into the palm of the hand. Increases intensity and brings awareness to shoulder girdle stability and target desired muscle groups. Use lighter weighted balls such as 1, 2 or 3 pounds.</p>	<p>Simulate the moves performed on a Reformer with bands. Light and economical, these resistance bands are available in a variety of tensions to challenge the muscles.</p>
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For more information on Pilates group class essentials, visit www.stottpilates.com.

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