



By Lesley Mahoney

Pilates' *Endless Possibility*



This versatile core-building discipline can accommodate nearly any niche

PILATES is becoming increasingly popular among people looking for a low-impact regimen that strengthens their core and improves their physique. In response, industry professionals are tailoring this discipline to specific niches, such as men, teens, and people with cancer.

Real Men Do Pilates

At John Garey Pilates in Long Beach, California, getting men interested in Pilates is largely about marketing. While this STOTT PILATES studio doesn't offer classes exclusively for men, the sessions' names—such as Reformer for Golfers and Athletic Conditioning on the Reformer—imply that they are geared toward male clients. “The classes don't necessarily have to have the word ‘men’ in the title, but they should be strong titles,” advises Garey, president and program director, who has co-owned the studio for seven years. He is also a STOTT master instructor trainer. →

Pilates' Endless Possibility

As men become more comfortable with Pilates training, the names of the classes become secondary to the content, prompting them to try additional classes as well. Since Garey began implementing this marketing approach about two-and-a-half years ago, male participation in Pilates has jumped from 5%-10% to 25%-35%.

He suggests giving men a taste of Pilates by easing them into exercises that work their core muscles and hit target areas. The payoff? Men have shown extraordinary loyalty to these classes. "If they see that they're making progress with their golf game as a result of Reformer for Golfers, for example, they will stick with that class forever," Garey says.

In general, male clients prefer to first try Pilates through private sessions. "Then, when we add the targeted classes, they'll jump into those," notes Garey.

While Pilates exercises are gender neutral, in some cases it's necessary to adjust female-oriented vocabulary during sessions. For example, instead of referring to a move known as "the mermaid," instructors call it "the side bend;" and, rather than instructing male clients to "put on their high heels" for the high half toe, they'll tell them to "stand on their tip-toes as if they're trying to reach the top shelf."

The bottom line? Thanks, in part, to his targeted marketing strategy, Garey has seen a 30% increase in revenues.

Terrific for Teens, Too

At Spectrum Athletic Clubs, Pilates knows no age limitations. Over the last several years, the facilities—serving Greater Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and San Antonio—have witnessed enormous growth in the number of teens, ages 13 to 18, seeking Pilates training.

From Spectrum's perspective, "everyone should be doing Pilates," insists Heather Stevens, Spectrum's director of special projects. In addition to building confidence and improving posture, by focusing on smaller muscles and the whole body, Pilates helps counter the wear and tear of sports activities that use one's large muscles repetitively. As a result, the discipline can help prevent sports-related injuries, which is especially important for growing teens.

At Spectrum Athletic Clubs, teenaged clients work one-on-one or in semi-private sessions with Pilates instructors. The intensity and duration times vary from 30 to 60 minutes, depending on the client's physical ability and attention span.

"Every session is tailored to the individual client," Stevens says. And because of the way Pilates equip-



'Pilates-sage' at Trinity Fitness + Spa

PILATES ON ICE!

Two years ago, when competitive figure skater Mary Grace Baldo, 15, learned that she had fractured her L5 and pedicle from repeated rotational stress and spirals, she thought her skating days were over.

She had been taking Pilates group classes at Spectrum Athletic Clubs with trainer Gerard Hinderlich, but then, following her diagnosis, began working with him one-on-one, three times a week.

"I started simply with the core principle of the breath," Hinderlich says. From there, he worked

to build Baldo's strength, breaking down the components of the exercises in accordance with her capability. Baldo was healed within three months and ultimately progressed to advanced-level Pilates.

"He brought a whole new light to Pilates for me," Baldo says of Hinderlich.

Today, thanks to Pilates, the 17-year-old has overcome her injury and is now the national figure skating champion for the Philippines. She hopes to compete in the 2010 Winter Olympics. —

ment is engineered, it can be easily adjusted to one's size and strength. Indeed, sessions with teenagers incorporate the same equipment as adult classes: the chair, barrel, Cadillac, Reformer, and mat work.

Based on the success of its teen Pilates programming, Spectrum is looking to expand its offerings to an even younger set; Stevens says the kids club director is considering adding Pilates mat classes for 6-12-year-old children.

Pilates for kids, notes Moira Merrithew, cofounder and executive director of education for STOTT PILATES, is a relevant and promising niche. In fact, the company is so convinced of the future of children's Pilates that it has targeted the children's market through its recent programming and training. "Depending on their age, you need to take bone density into account, and the fact that [kids] are doing other sports."

Caring for Cancer

At Trinity Fitness + Spa, people undergoing treatment for cancer can enjoy the fitness and therapeutic benefits of Pilates, along with the restorative and healing properties of massage, through an original program called Pilates-sage.

"We wanted to provide a way for cancer patients to still be able to experience the proven benefits of exercise during cancer treatment, but also address the fact that the side effects from treatment make that extremely challenging for most individuals," says Amy Kelly, CEO of the all-women facility in Dulles, Virginia.

These one-on-one Pilates sessions take into account these side effects, which include nausea, fatigue, and depression. For example, it doesn't put stress on the bones, a concern for those undergoing radiation. Clients experiencing nausea can avoid Pilates exercises that involve lowering the head, and those suffering from fatigue can alternate challenging exercises, such as supine arm circles, with "feel good" exercises, such as chest expansion.

Pilates-sage was launched in July 2007 as an outgrowth of the club's Lois Membership for women undergoing cancer treatment, named in honor of Kelly's late mom; the benefits include complimentary membership and 10% discounts on other services, such as the \$200 (each) Pilates/massage sessions.

Since the beginning, close to 60 people have participated in Pilates-sage, which requires a doctor's release. About 50% of the participants have been cancer patients, while the other half includes people with multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, or other chronic conditions. The program is also open to people who are free from illness.

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"Pilates-sage is for anyone who wants to improve their body and their life," Kelly asserts.

The two-hour individualized session begins with a consultation between the client, massage therapist, and Pilates instructor to assess the client's health on that particular day, followed by a Pilates workout that runs for 50 minutes or less, depending on the client's needs, and concluding with a 55-minute massage.

Pilates-sage and the Lois Membership have helped to increase revenue and retention; for every Lois member, Trinity has gained one new client. —



Pilates for teens at Spectrum Athletic

The Ubiquitous Power of

Pilates

Pilates is finding its way into virtually every demographic with a wider variety of workouts. As a result, providers are reaching out to different populations and creating programs for varying needs and niches. Consider this sampling of Pilates products and programs from IHRSA associate members:

Balanced Body



The EXO Chair from Balanced Body is a unique Pilates chair that's designed to provide a full-body workout in a club setting. In addition to its workout benefits, the EXO Chair features durability, easy portability, and convenient storage. To help facilities easily launch or expand a profitable Pilates group-fitness or personal training program, the company offers customized EXO Chair training/equipment packages. Training can be offered on-site at a club or at a local host site. The programs are modular to meet individual instructors' needs.

Contact: www.pilates.com, 800-745-2837
See our ad on page 67.

GRAVITY by efi Sports Medicine



efi Sports Medicine's interdisciplinary GTS body resistance equipment delivers mat and reformer-based Pilates through its GRAVITY by efi Sports Medicine Program. The GTS uses body weight on an inclined glideboard as the constant resistive force against gravity. The incline assists by reducing lever lengths without modifying exercises. Users maintain balance through core control and receive a stretch within every movement, especially during unilateral and bilateral and multiplanar cable exercises. GRAVITY Programming also features group strength training, personal training, and post-rehab programs.

Contact: www.efisportsmedicine.com/commercial, 800-541-4900
See our ad on page 53.

OPTP



OPTP's Pro-Roller is a functional Pilates tool for the whole body. In Pilates and yoga applications, this exercise tool can be used to stretch and strengthen; relieve tension; restore postural alignment; and develop neurological awareness of the musculoskeletal system. The Pro-Roller is constructed of high-quality, textured, closed-cell foam, making it comfortable, attractive,

and durable. "The Pro-Roller helps to develop balance, postural alignment, and flexibility, and plays a vital role in helping to keep muscles relaxed and pliable when it's used as a massage tool," says Donna Gambino, PT, certified Pilates instructor and author of *Age Perfected Pilates*.

Contact: www.optp.com, 800-367-7393
See our ad on page 101.

Peak Pilates



The Peak Pilates MVe Fitness Chair offers an integration of multi-level resistance and sleek, stackable design. The patented unit features more than 100 core strengthening exercises, and accommodates all ages and skill levels. It can be used for music-driven group exercise, personal training, or individual applications. Combined with turnkey instructor training

and marketing packages, MVe can help clubs boost class size, ramp up retention, and attract new members.

Contact: www.peakpilates.com, 800-925-3674
See our ad on the inside back cover.

STOTT PILATES

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The STOTT PILATES curriculum, equipment, and video lines are continually evaluated and updated to ensure that they comply with modern exercise science and meet the needs of today's fitness professionals, facility operators, and retail clients. The result is education, equipment, and video programs that are innovative, versatile, and effective. "Our Full Solutions team has consolidated years of know-how into a comprehensive business program that can benefit facilities of any size," says Lindsay G. Merrithew, president and CEO.

Contact: www.stottpilates.com, 800-910-0001
See our ad on page 31. —