



Traditional Pilates

an opportunity that the fitness industry ignores at its peril



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Pilates Solutions

an overview

Pilates Solutions Limited is your exclusive STOTT PILATES® partner for both instructor training and Pilates equipment in the UK.

In addition, Pilates Solutions is your source of the most comprehensive range of Pilates retail products such as 'at home' DVDs and Power Packs, which contain Pilates accessories and the appropriate DVD programming.

Worldwide there are more than 50 organisations similar to Pilates Solutions, which in many cases have been training Pilates students for over a decade. As an organisation we hold a series of forums where we all meet and share best practice and as a result can help our customers to avoid the learning curve in relation to best practice that others have gone through.

Joseph Pilates

use of equipment and the fitness industry today

The story of Joseph Pilates is now well known: a German-born citizen living in the UK, interned in a POW camp in WW2 where he used his fitness knowledge and nursing skills to rehabilitate German prisoners of war.

What is less well known is that Joseph Pilates made equipment with springs and frames, commonly found in the dormitories of the prisoner of war camps to start the rehabilitation process going. The help given by springs and handles, working with or against gravity, allowed patients who would otherwise be incapable of performing the required movement patterns, to gain the strength and control needed over time. Only once this strength and control was gained did Joseph Pilates work with patients away from equipment.

Pilates as a therapy and exercise form has been in existence for more than eight decades and has, until recently, been used by niche groups such as dancers, actors and sports people to prevent injury and to rehabilitate after injury. All of these groups have followed the Joseph Pilates principles of working out in Pilates equipment studios, gaining strength and control on machines and then working unaided once musculature and fitness levels allow.

The rise in popularity of Pilates in the UK has the publicity surrounding the media and sports celebrities to thank, who raved at the benefits that they had gained from the Pilates method.

The list of stars below is just scratching the surface of celebrities who are committed advocates of the Pilates method:

Jennifer Aniston

Catherine Bell

Pat Cash

Kim Cattrall

Kim Coles

Joan Collins

Courtney Cox

Cindy Crawford

Michael Crawford

Jamie Lee Curtis

Susan Dey

Minnie Driver

Daisy Fuentes

Danny Glover

Hugh Grant

Shalom Harlow

Cleveland Indians

Jessica Lange

Lucy Lawless

Madonna

Carrie-Anne Moss

Martina Navratilova

Gwyneth Paltrow

Sarah Jessica Parker

Stefanie Powers

San Francisco 49ers

Martha Stewart

Rod Stewart

Sharon Stone

Patrick Swayze

Uma Therman

Charlize Theron

Tina Turner

Vanessa Williams

Kristi Yamaguchi

The sports performance and therapy industries were led by and understood the Pilates progression through equipment and accessories, finally ending in matwork, once conditioning and technique allowed. However, the fitness industry has instead capitalised on the publicity and saw an opportunity to fill group exercise studios with matwork classes called Pilates. Poorly qualified instructors who often lacked the understanding of Pilates principles, together with large numbers in classes, could not have been more different from the teachings of Joseph Pilates. Yet fitness club members loyally attended these sessions named Pilates in the misbelief that they were similar to those attended by their celebrity role models. Here are some of the differences:

Traditional Pilates

Fitness Industry Pilates

Clients would have a full review of their body shape (postural analysis) to identify muscular or skeletal imbalances and then a personal programme would be put together of specifically chosen exercises to correct those imbalances.

No postural analysis – instead a general exercise class similar to 'Legs, Bums and Tums' but with some newly named exercises within the class called Pilates.

Equipment sessions to learn the new movement patterns leading on to no equipment (matwork) as the most difficult stage in progression.

Matwork is cheap and more people can do it at once, so no equipment with a few accessories to add interest.

Thorough training of instructors to include observation, physical review and supervised practice teaching with full training taking between two and three years.

Initially weekend courses, arrive on Friday as an aerobics instructor return on Monday as a Pilates instructor, or pay a little more and arrive on Monday as a Yoga and Pilates instructor.

This has since moved on with the adoption of industry standards set for Pilates matwork teachers. However, the standard is still much lower than is needed to work effectively with individuals and there is no recognition in the fitness industry standards of equipment Pilates as the standards are purely for matwork.

Beginners to start in small highly supervised sessions with hands-on attention from instructors moving to small groups of 6-12 for more advanced clients who have a clear understanding of the movement patterns and the cues required to achieve these.

Large groups from the start no hands on teaching with the instructor leading the class from the front.



The future

of pilates within the fitness industry

Pilates participation in the UK is estimated to have grown over 500% since 2002 whilst in the USA it has grown 602% since 2001. In the UK more than 70% of health clubs have Pilates matwork in their programming, exposing millions of participants each year, to some form of Pilates exercise.

However whilst 70% of clubs may offer Pilates, less than 1% of clubs offer equipment-based Pilates sessions, yet this is the area that in the latest IDEA survey that is predicted to have the highest demand from customers in the next five years.

According to IDEA Fitness the top 10 programmes with the highest expected growth potential has in first place one-on-one training in Pilates. In addition, Pilates made the number one spot among the top 10 types of equipment expected to show a large increase in usage.

In today's economic climate the fitness industry is bracing itself for tougher times ahead and needs to focus on getting more new prospects through the door by finding new avenues to generate revenue as well as increasing the spend of existing customers.

At the same time the movement towards a wellness approach, as opposed to a traditional fitness-only approach, is leading to exciting changes in health club provision. Perhaps the most extreme example of this is the purchase of Cannons Health Clubs by Nuffield – an organisation focussed on wellness.

Traditional Pilates focussed upon the individual or small groups, engages all areas of the population that the fitness market is looking to attract, including the young and seniors, sports performance and back care.

In the STOTT PILATES Licensed Training Centre in Oxfordshire, 20% of all instructor trainees are existing medical practitioners including physiotherapists, chiropractors, osteopaths, physical therapists, remedial instructors and nurses/occupational therapists.

It is this adoption of Pilates principles, by the medical world, which gives the biggest confidence that Pilates is not a trend but is entrenching itself in the thinking of the modern physician. It explains, why increasingly, GPs and doctors are recommending traditional Pilates to their clients as a means of solving postural and chronic problems such as lower back pain and poor flexibility.

The very fact that traditional Pilates, whilst focussing on posture, mobility, stabilisation, physical strength and muscular conditioning does not address weight loss or cardiovascular fitness, should be seen as a massive opportunity for fitness facilities, to draw Pilates clients into full gym memberships.

At Pilates Solutions, we see our job as helping you to manage some of the challenges that non-Pilates oriented managers of clubs face in implementing a successful, traditional Pilates programme.