



# THE PILATES GAZETTE

## Pilates for the Ageing Population

*by Alaria Parent-Ritchie & Natasha Lutz*

As we age, many things start to change in our bodies physiologically. Muscle that used to be strong can become weak, balance and coordination can be affected, loss of bone density, arthritis, incontinence, range of motion - and the list goes on. However, if you try to incorporate some physical activities, such as Pilates, into your day you can easily improve your longevity, mobility and overall quality of life. Maintaining physical health is of paramount importance in aiding the rest of the systems in the body to also function optimally; such as mental state, your nervous system and respiratory system. The body itself is a whole and we must relate to it as a whole, when one area is affected, other areas are also affected. Striving to include physical fitness into your daily life may seem a daunting task, but it is really 100% the best thing that you can do for your body as it ages. The Pilates Method is one of the best forms of exercise for maintaining or improving decreasing muscle mass, assisting in strengthening and stabilizing, and giving you a balanced approach to keeping your body in the best condition it could possibly be in.

### **Is Pilates Right for Me?**

Many people ask. Am I too fat for Pilates? Am I too old for Pilates? Pilates is just for women, isn't it?

No, everyone can benefit from starting a Pilates program with a certified Pilates professional. Each program is tailored to suit your needs. We always start by teaching you the tools to create a safe and personalized program. By learning the basics of breath technique and proper placement of the body for optimum alignment, safety and ease of movement for your body type, Pilates is as unique to the individual as you are. As you progress, these special modifications may change; they may not, depending on what your specific body issues are. Improving mobility, joint stability and func-

tion, mind and body coordination for improving motor reactions, stretching and strengthening are all wonderful benefits of doing a regular Pilates exercise regimen; on top of all that, improved self esteem as you feel stronger and more stable, leads to increased activity outside of the Pilates studio also.

### **Why does my body hurt? Is this just because I am getting older?**

We often excuse aches and pains as just normal signs that we are getting older, it does not have to be this way. You might think this is normal but it is actually not the case, most often these aches and pains come from improper posture and movement patterns in the body. Repetitive things that we habitually do start to recondition our bodies into poor and incorrect ways of moving. For example, sitting in front of your computer as you may be doing now, are you slouched forward or are you upright sitting at the back of your chair? Are you looking downward or straight ahead? Are your legs crossed or are the feet flat on the floor? These types of incorrect positions can lead to many unnecessary aches and pains. Pilates helps you to improve your posture and reprogram your body into doing the proper movements and muscle patterning.

*Continued on page 2.*



## Spring Studio News

### Spring Opening Hours

From the 11th April - 20th June 2011, The Pilates Studio will open on the following days:

<b>Mondays</b>	<b>9:00 - 14:30</b>
<b>Tuesdays</b>	<b>9:00 - 14:30</b>
<b>Wednesdays</b>	<b>9:00 - 15:30</b>
<b>Thursdays</b>	<b>9:00 - 14:30</b>
<b>Fridays</b>	<b>9:00 - 15:30</b>
<b>Saturdays</b>	<b>9:00 - 14:30</b>
<b>Sundays</b>	<b>CLOSED</b>

### Studio Holidays

The Pilates Studio will be closed from 25th March - 10th April 2011 for annual holidays.

### Instructors

Natasha Lutz continues as the principle Pilates Instructor.

Sadly we say farewell to Alaria Parent-Ritchie whom is returning to Canada after her first successful seasonal contract. Alaria has been an invaluable part of the Pilates Team this Winter and we hope she will return next year.

### Spring Hotel Construction

This Spring the Hotel will be renovating the entrance to the SPA. As such entry to the Pilates Studio will be through the Studio's external fire door. Please see map on page 3.

### *Pilates for the Ageing Population Continued from page 1.*

All of a sudden you will feel more comfortable sitting upright and you will start to correct yourself!

Pilates is also often used in rehabilitative contexts, closely related to the types of exercises done by Physiotherapists. So many people with injuries or who have had surgeries use Pilates for post-rehabilitation to help bring their bodies back to a pain free state. This is also true of people with lower back pain, spinal conditions or serious joint issues. Pilates use of proper muscle function and alignment is very beneficial to those suffering from injury or pain. The central nervous system is directly related to the spine, transmitting signals from the brain to your body. As Pilates is using your mind to control your body, with specific and purposeful movements, we aid the nervous system; strengthen it by utilizing it and promoting proper signal patterns to emerge through repetitive functional movement patterns. Diseases that affect the nervous system such as Alzheimer's and Multiple Sclerosis are both greatly aided with Pilates training, as it not only improves physical conditioning but extends

independent mobility.

### **Pilates Breath: Purpose and Use**

In Pilates breathing is a very important part of the process, many of us take our breathing for granted as it happens subconsciously, but as an integral part of Pilates practice we work towards a deeper laterally (side and back) focused breath. The purpose of this is to help to oxygenate the body, which also detoxifies the body, reduces stress and improves cardiovascular capacity and the ability to relax naturally. When we breathe normally or into the chest, this shorter breath pattern can create tension in our shoulders and neck, when we breathe into the abdomen we lose the ability to focus on deepening our abdominal connection and then these muscles become weak. So the importance of lateral, thoracic breathing is vital in a Pilates practice. We use this deeper breath to help create a mind body connection and to allow us to flow the Pilates movements together with the breath. This is not only pleasant but also allows us to create a deeper connection to ourselves, our muscles and the ultimate fusion of mind and body. The respiratory system is affected when a deeper breath is engaged; it helps to

improve the cardiovascular capacity of the lungs and allows for a more efficient exchange of gasses in the body. Breath is life, and it too requires our attention and development to help preserve our bodies proper functioning.

### **Pilates Is an optimum choice for the ageing population because it helps in maintaining your quality of life.**

I always tell people they can take their Pilates off the mat and into their daily lives to aid in all of their chosen activities. Once you learn how to properly align and stabilize your body, you can do this anytime, anywhere. Pilates gives you knowledge and power to rebuild or remain in great condition. The mental benefits of Pilates are also numerous, when we incorporate the principles of concentration, precision, fluidity and control into our exercise, the body responds, the actual thought process aids in muscle firing, it helps to keep the mind active and in response the body young; in actuality combating the effects of ageing.

I hope that you will also find Pilates to be of benefit in your life. Ask anyone who has been doing Pilates for a while how they feel and the results will speak for themselves.



## Spring Entrance & Parking Map

