

Pilates - a historical look at the man behind the method

by *Simonne Smiles*



Part One:

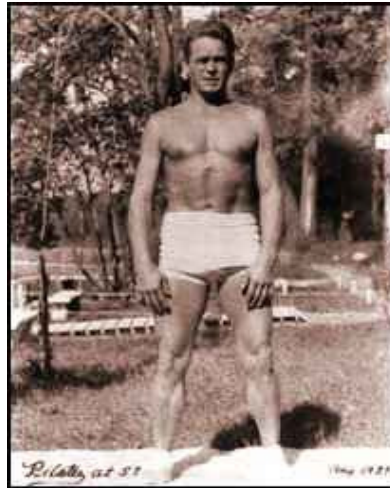
Many people are intrigued to know where the Pilates Method originated and who devised this system that is so widely popular in the world today. German born Joseph Pilates was the genius behind this wonderful holistic approach to exercise involving the mind, body and spirit.

Pilates was born near Dusseldorf, Germany in 1880.

His father was a prize-winning gymnast, of Greek origin, and his German mother was a naturopath. No doubt his mother's belief in stimulating the body to heal itself, influenced Pilates own philosophies and approach to therapeutic exercises.

The family name was originally spelt "Pilatu", apparently causing him much turmoil at school being called "Pontius Pilate, Killer of Christ".

Joseph was a skinny, sickly child who was said to have suffered from asthma, rickets, rheumatic fever and was prone to tuberculosis. These ailments, along with the taunting he suffered at school



*Joseph Hubertus Pilates
(1880-1967)*

led him to begin his journey to a life devoted to fitness and health - by the age of 14 he was fit enough to be posing for Anatomical charts.

A family physician gave Joseph a discarded anatomy book. It is said that he learned every page; as a child "I would lie in the woods for hours, hiding and watching animals move, how the mother taught the young."

He later began studying body-building and gymnastics, and became an expert in many sports including diving, skiing, boxing, self-defence, and gymnastics.

Joseph studied both Western and Eastern philosophies, including Yoga, Zen Meditation and ancient Greek and Roman regimes.

In 1912 he moved to England for further training as a boxer. There he earned a living as a self-defence instructor for detectives at Scotland Yard. He was also employed as a circus performer, becoming quite a star touring England.

At the outbreak of the first World War, Joe was interned as an "alien enemy" with other German Nationals. During his internment on the Isle of Man he refined his ideas and devised his system of exercises by training other internees.

He believed that his regime alone could properly counter many of the ill-effects of today's modern lifestyle, such as bad posture, inefficient breathing, bad diet and both physical and mental strain.

A testament to the effectiveness of his method is the fact that during England's influenza epidemic of 1918, not one of Joe's trainees died.

.....*Continued in
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Instructor Training

We are pleased to announce that as of the 15th September 2008 The Pilates Studio Gstaad will be running it's first fully comprehensive *Pilates Instructor Training Program*.

Requests for training, and the shortage of fully qualified instructors in Switzerland, has prompted Natasha Lutz to develop this training program.

The training program offers comprehensive training in the principles of the Pilates Method, covering both the

mat-work and equipment based repertoire.

The program will be run by Natasha over two years and approximately 1200 training hours will be covered.

Training will take place during two semesters per year:

September - December

April - July

The course is limited to two trainees whom have been selected after undergoing a detailed application and interview process.

This year's successful applicants are; Leanne (from the UK) and Thomas (from Bern). At certain times, Leanne and Thomas will be apprenticing within the Studio; participating in classes, observing, assisting, handling reservations, retail sales etc.

Natasha's aim is to continue to provide the highest quality of Pilates Instruction to the residents of the Saanenland region and to our international guests by building a local network of professionally qualified instructors.

Frequently Asked Questions

by Lauren Young

Q1 How many Pilates classes do I need to take to feel and see an improvement?

Pilates is like any other form of exercise, the more regularly you practice then the faster the improvement. Try to schedule two to four sessions per week for optimum results. How quickly you will see and feel an improvement is variable. This is because everybody responds differently to exercise and improvements are also dependent on your individual goals. We would recommend trying at least 10 Pilates sessions and by then you will start to feel and see the difference.

Q2 Will I lose weight doing Pilates?

The focus of the Pilates method is not primarily about weight loss. However, Pilates can support weight loss as it gives the body a streamlined appearance by elongating the muscles and improving posture.

- Pilates is a form of resistance exercise which increases lean muscle mass. Muscle is an active tissue in the body which therefore increases your body's metabolic rate whereas fat is a non-active tissue. A metabolic increase will allow your body to burn more kilojoules which makes it easier to maintain a steady weight or lose weight.
- Pilates improves muscle definition through resistance. It creates firmer, longer muscles without promoting bulk. It is the elongation of the muscles and the improvement in posture which can also improve your appearance.

- Practicing Pilates improves self confidence which can subsequently improve your intrinsic motivation levels. Motivation is extremely important to help you adhere to a healthy eating and exercise plan. Pilates also increases energy levels which will assist you in performing cardiovascular exercise which is essential for weight loss.

With any form of exercise it is impossible to decrease body fat in one particular area of the body (e.g. arms, thighs etc). Where our body distributes body fat is partly due to our genetic structure and hormones. When our body fat decreases it lowers in all parts of the body (i.e. face, thighs, back, abdominal area, arms, legs etc.). Spot reduction is impossible.

The most effective way to decrease body weight is to combine cardiovascular exercise (e.g. walking, swimming, cycling) with resistance exercise (e.g. Pilates) and a healthy eating plan.

Q3 How much does a Pilates session cost?

The fees for apparatus classes (i.e. private, shared and group equipment classes) at The Pilates Studio Gstaad accurately reflect the extensive training that the instructors have completed in order to be qualified in the Pilates Method. The fee covers a personalised session where the instructor provides variety and gives a high level of individual attention. The class is specifically catered to meet your physical needs and goals.

A group mat-work class is less expensive than an apparatus session because it is generalised, doesn't require a dedicated space and doesn't use highly specialised Pilates equipment.

The fees at The Pilates Studio Gstaad are consistent across the Pilates industry in other studios, with the same standard of teaching and facilities, in Switzerland and internationally.

Q4 Why does the Pilates Studio have a 48 hour cancellation policy?

Firstly, if there are clients on the Studio waiting list the 48 hours notice gives the Studio sufficient time to contact them. Out of respect for the waiting client it is also important to give them as much notice as possible in order for them to organise their schedule so that they can attend the class.

Secondly, the Studio Manager must give the Pilates instructors at least 48 hours notice for a change to their roster. This is due to the instructors' own personal commitments outside of work.

Thirdly, the Pilates Studio is a business and there must be policies like this in place to ensure its success. This policy is consistent across the Pilates industry in other studios, with the same standard of teaching, in Switzerland and internationally.

Finally, adhering to this policy demonstrates a level of respect for the extensive training that the instructors have undergone and the professional conduct of the business.



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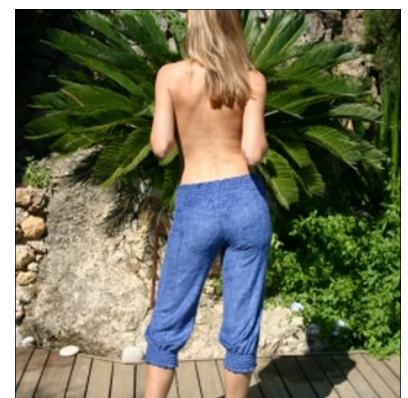
off our Summer Collection of fitness and loungewear

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....*jump start your Christmas shopping*



For more information on any of the articles in this issue please contact:

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