

by Lauren Young

## Prenatal Pilates

You've probably all heard the myth that women shouldn't exercise during pregnancy. This article has been written in the hope of dispelling this falsehood. Exercise is an important part of a healthy pregnancy. Active women are better able to cope with labour and regain their pre-pregnancy figures faster than those women who aren't active. However with this being said, pregnancy is not a time to start to try and get fit by doing intense workouts. Exercise that works on posture, flexibility, joint stability and breathing are more suitable. This is why Pilates is an appropriate form of exercise during the pre-natal period. Pilates also has the added benefit of not only working on the physical aspects but can enhance the psychological well-being of the mother to be.

### How Can Pilates Help During Pregnancy?

During pregnancy there are many changes that occur within a woman's body. The level of several hormones increase which cause the ligaments and muscles to relax therefore increasing the mobility and flexibility of the joints. If enough joint stability isn't present this can increase the susceptibility to injury because the joints are not as supported as usual. Pilates plays an important role in injury prevention during the pre-natal period. The exercises create joint stability and muscular strength which helps to counteract the increased flexibility in the joints due to the hormonal changes that occur.

The hormonal changes can also weaken some important muscles within the body e.g. the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles. In addition, the weight of the baby moves the centre of gravity forward and therefore increases the curve in the lower back (i.e. hyperlordosis). These two significant changes can cause lower back pain during and following pregnancy. Pilates offsets these changes by increasing the strength and awareness of the pelvic floor muscles and abdominal muscles. Not only does Pilates strengthen certain muscles but it also improves posture and alignment by elongating the lower back muscles, therefore minimising aches and pains in the back.

During pregnancy women also experience an increase in the weight of the breasts which can pull the shoulders forward and change the position of the head. This consequently leads to neck and shoulder pain. The Pilates Method reduces posture related pain such as this by creating muscular balance which improves the overall alignment of the body. Good alignment = less pain!

During the pre-natal period there is an increase in fluid retention which causes oedema (i.e. swelling particularly of the lower limbs). Performing Pilates enhances circulation which will reduce pregnancy related oedema.

Pilates is also beneficial as it prepares the woman for the physical demands of labour. It does this by improving the control of her breathing and strengthening key muscles that are involved in the birthing process.

### When and How Should I Start Pilates?

It is not advisable to commence new forms of exercise during the 1<sup>st</sup> trimester (1 – 12 weeks). Therefore if you have never done Pilates before you may start training at the start of your 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester (13<sup>th</sup> week). However if you were practicing Pilates prior to pregnancy then it is a safe form of exercise to continue. One can continue Pilates up until the 34<sup>th</sup> week, following this it is important to relax in the few weeks leading up to the birth.

The most appropriate types of Pilates classes during pregnancy are private sessions (mat or studio), small group mat classes specifically for pregnancy or small group equipment classes where different exercises are prescribed for each individual. (See page 5 for more information on our Pre & Postnatal Mat Courses)

Before commencing Pilates question the teacher on their qualifications and their experience teaching pre-natal Pilates. It is important that the teacher has had specific training in this area so they can prescribe exercises that are suitable and safe. Equally as important is to find a teacher that you feel comfortable training with and can trust. The teachers of The Pilates Studio Gstaad are qualified to teach women during the pre and post-natal period.

The Pilates Studio has several books for sale if you would like to do further reading on this topic. Please speak to your Pilates teacher as they will be able to recommend the most suitable book title for you.

### References:

Selby, A. (2002) *Pilates for Pregnancy*.  
London: Harper Collins Publishers



## Summertime Studio News

### Opening Hours

The *Gstaad Palace Hotel* will be open from Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June until Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September. During the Summer season, The Pilates Studio will operate from Monday to Saturday.

If you will be in Gstaad during Summer then it is always advisable to book your appointments in advance to avoid disappointment.

### Upcoming Courses/Workshops

#### FOOT PILATES WORKSHOP:

On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July, Lauren will be running a *FOOT PILATES* workshop designed to improve the strength and alignment of your feet and legs. (see page 4 for more details)

#### PREGNANCY MATWORK COURSE:

We are currently running our first 6 week *Pre & Postnatal Pregnancy Matwork* course, and are now registering the names of those interested in participating in a summer course. (See page 5 for more details)

#### EARLY BIRD MATWORK COURSE:

We are also taking names of those interested in participating in a new 5 week course - *Early Bird Matwork*. It is planned

that this course will be a small (maximum 5 participants) general level course to run on either Mondays 8:30-9:20 or Tuesdays 8:45-9:35, starting the last week in June. (See page 6 for more details)

If you would like to register, or require any further information about any of the above courses or workshop please contact the Studio on 033 744 1081.

### Summer Clothing, Books and DVDs

When you visit us for your next lesson, don't forget to check out our great range of Dimensione Danza and Lounge Lover clothing. We stock a fashionable line of Summer clothing including tank tops (spaghetti straps or racer back), t-shirts, shorts, hot pants and free flowing, comfortable workout gear.

A new range of books and DVDs can now be found in the Studio. Our extensive range includes pre and post pregnancy books for the expectant or new mother, a portable Pilates book and CD lead work out kit which is ideal for frequent travellers and Pilates books and DVDs specifically for men.

## Happy Feet

Our feet are vital to our existence because they are our foundation. Without our feet we wouldn't be able to stand, walk, run, dance or balance. However it seems that unless we have some type of foot pain we give our feet little thought. People may take the time to have a pedicure but that is normally the extent of our foot care. Since the feet are so important in our lives, why don't we pay them more attention?

The foot and ankle contain 26 bones. Therefore one quarter of the bones in the human body are located in the feet. There are also 33 joints and more than 100 muscles, tendons and ligaments present within the feet and ankle. The reality is that our feet need to last a lifetime because they do a lot of work. If there is an imbalance present and the feet are not functioning properly, then there will be misalignment of the ankles, knees, hips, lower back, neck



etc which will consequently cause pain or injury.

So take your shoes and socks off and check whether you have some of these common problems associated with the feet:

#### **Bunions**

Bunions form when the big toe bends

towards the second toe and changes the alignment of the bones in the front of the foot. A large, red lump becomes prominent at the base and side of the big toe. Bunions progressively worsen and can cause pain, inflammation, corns and difficulty walking.

Bunions are caused by several reasons. Firstly, the inherited shape of your foot may cause you to be more prone to developing bunions. Bunions are also caused by shoes that crowd the toes (e.g. high heels), which explains why women get bunions much more than men. Flat feet also cause bunions because the inside of the foot has to bear more weight. This leads to muscular imbalance in the foot which causes the bunions.

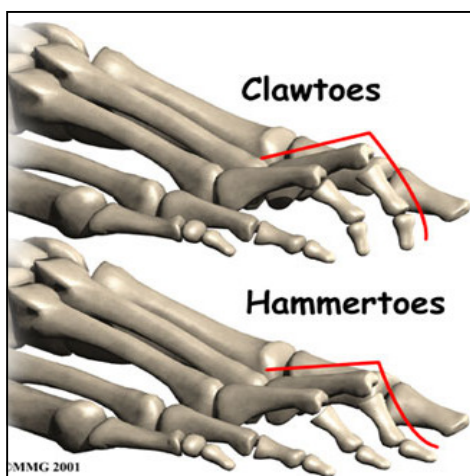
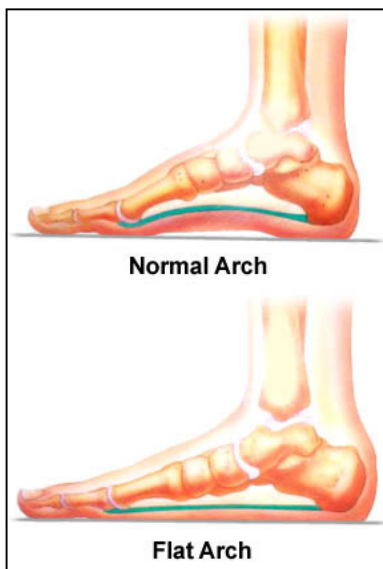
#### **Hammer & Claw Toes**

A hammer toe is a deformity of the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> toe where the toe is bent at the middle toe joint.

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*by Lauren Young*

A claw toe bends upward from the joint at the ball of the foot and then bends downward at the middle toe joint into a claw-like position. In both of these conditions, the pronounced downward bending of the toe can cause pain and irritation as the top of the toe will often rub against the shoes, therefore causing corns. The toe can also become very immobile and may lead to other problems such as arthritis. Hammer and claw toes are caused by muscular imbalance in the foot, wearing inappropriate footwear, flat feet and neurological disorders.



**Flat Foot**

Flat foot (also known as a fallen arch) is a condition that occurs when the arch of the foot collapses and causes the foot to roll inward excessively. There are three arches of the foot and they distribute weight evenly across the feet and up the legs. Individuals with low arches or flat feet are unable to stand, walk or run as they should because the foot's ligaments, muscles and bones don't maintain the arch. This creates biomechanical faults in the lower leg which can be the cause of ankle, knee,

hip and lower back pain. Flat foot can develop from childhood or can be acquired as an adult due to the aging process, injury, faulty biomechanics, weight gain or pregnancy (due to increased elasticity).

**High Heel Shoes: part of the problem**

We all know that high heel shoes look fantastic but the reality is that our feet weren't designed to be propped up in stilettos. High heels slant the foot forward and down which bends the toes upward. This puts an immense amount of pressure on the ball of the foot increasing the feet's susceptibility to injury. Many high heeled shoes also compress the toes because of the toe box. Toe-boxes which are too narrow force the toes to be "crammed" too close together. This leads to permanent problems such as bunions, hammer toes and corns. High heels also throw off the natural weight balance of the body which can cause the calf muscles to shorten and put a lot of pressure on the lower back muscles and vertebrae.

**What You Can Do**

If you suffer from foot pain then you should ensure that you are wearing appropriate footwear. Secondly, don't forget that the feet need to be exercised just like the arms, legs and abdominals.

In July, The Pilates Studio Gstaad will be running a **"FOOT PILATES"** workshop designed to strengthen your feet and legs. During the class you will be doing exercises, be taught exercises that you can continue at home and you will also learn the appropriate way to walk. If you suffer from any of the following then this class is designed for you; general foot pain, bunions, hammer toes, claw toes, flat foot, neuropathy, Achilles tendon problems (e.g. tendinitis, previous rupture), previous ankle sprains, previous foot/toe fractures, plantar fasciitis, corns, high arches, circulation problems, diabetes or ankle, knee or hip problems. If you are genuinely interested in improving your feet then this class is highly recommended.

- DATE:** Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009
- TIME:** 16:30 – 17:30
- PRICE:** CHF 50.00
- REGISTER:** +41 (0)33 744 10 81  
[lauren@pilatesgstaad.ch](mailto:lauren@pilatesgstaad.ch)

If you take away our ability to walk, due to foot pain or misalignment, then people's lives can deteriorate. Walking is such an important part of our life and walking is more enjoyable when our feet are healthy and happy. So do something about it today and register for **"FOOT PILATES"**

*(See page 4 for more workshop details)*

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

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Gstaad Palace SPA/Chalet Bärbeli  
CH-3780 GSTAAD  
+41 (0)33 744 10 81  
[info@pilatesgstaad.ch](mailto:info@pilatesgstaad.ch)

# THE PILATES STUDIO GSTAAD



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- general foot pain, bunions, hammer toes, claw toes, flat foot, neuropathy, Achilles tendon problems (e.g. tendinitis, previous rupture), previous ankle sprains, previous foot/ toe fractures, plantar fasciitis, corns, high arches, circulation problems, diabetes or ankle, knee or hip problems, or if you are genuinely interested in improving your feet then this class is highly recommended.

DATE/TIME:	Saturday 25th July 2009 16.30-17.30
LOCATION:	<u>The Pilates Studio Gstaad</u> The Gstaad Palace Hotel SPA 3780 Gstaad
PRICE:	CHF 50.00 (Includes Foot Information Handout)
REGISTRATION:	Required by Thursday 23rd July 2009
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This course is limited to 7 participants. This ensures each participant receives personalised attention</li><li>• Basic English language skills are required as instruction is given in English</li></ul>

To register or for more information please contact:

The Pilates Studio Gstaad  
Gstaad Palace Hotel SPA Telephone: +41 (0)33 744 10 81 Email: [info@pilatesgstaad.ch](mailto:info@pilatesgstaad.ch)

# THE PILATES STUDIO GSTAAD



## PRE & POSTNATAL 6 WEEK PILATES MAT COURSE

The Pilates Method is a safe form of exercise for women during pregnancy and following the birth of their child. Pilates aims to improve the alignment, strength and flexibility of the body which helps to restore muscular balance and the pre-pregnancy figure.

Pilates offers the following benefits specifically during the pre and postnatal period:

- Improves posture which can eliminate neck and back pain
- Increases energy levels and relieves stress
- Increases the strength and awareness of the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles
- Strengthens and mobilises the body
- Enhances circulation and flexibility
- Is a great way to meet other women who have shared the same experiences

**COURSE DATES:** Saturdays 15.30-16.20  
27 June 2009—1 August 2009

**LOCATION:** The Pilates Studio Gstaad  
The Gstaad Palace Hotel SPA  
3780 Gstaad

**PRICE:** CHF 165.00

**REGISTRATION:** Required by Thursday 25 June 2009

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

- This course requires, and is limited to, 5 participants. This ensures each participant receives personalised attention
- This course is suitable for:
  - Prenatal women during the 12-36th weeks of pregnancy
  - Postnatal women after their doctors clearance check-up; normally 6 weeks post delivery for natural births, 12 weeks post delivery for caesarean births
- Basic English language skills are required as instruction is given in English

To register or for more information please contact:

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Gstaad Palace Hotel SPA Telephone: +41 (0)33 744 10 81 Email: [info@pilatesgstaad.ch](mailto:info@pilatesgstaad.ch)

# THE PILATES STUDIO GSTAAD



## EARLY BIRD PILATES 5 WEEK MAT COURSE

Kick start your day and metabolism with an invigorating and refreshing Pilates mat class. Whether you are a beginner or experienced Pilates student, this 5 week course has something to offer everyone. Limited to 5 participants means the instructor can give appropriate exercises and modifications to suit the needs and requirements of all those participating.

**COURSE DATES:** Starting last week in June on either  
Mondays 8.30-9.20  
or  
Tuesdays 8.45-9.35  
*(Final day/time will be dependant on the most popular choice by those participating, and will be finalised 1 week prior to the course commencement date)*  
Finishing the last week in July

**LOCATION:** The Pilates Studio Gstaad  
The Gstaad Palace Hotel SPA  
3780 Gstaad

**PRICE:** CHF 140.00 for complete course  
CHF 30.00 per class if not attending complete course

**REGISTRATION:** Required by Friday 26th June 2009

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- This course is limited to 5 participants. This ensures each participant receives personalised attention
- We will accept drop in clients only if space is available, and to avoid disappointment we would recommend reserving a space at least 24 hours prior to the class.
- This course is suitable for:
  - All levels including beginners (limited participants means the instructor can give exercise variations for all levels at the same time)
- Basic English language skills are required as instruction is given in English

To register or for more information please contact:

The Pilates Studio Gstaad  
Gstaad Palace Hotel SPA Telephone: +41 (0)33 744 10 81 Email: [info@pilatesgstaad.ch](mailto:info@pilatesgstaad.ch)