

Excerpt from Integrative Healing

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INTEGRATIVE HEALING

Developing
Wellness in the
Mind and Body

Z ALTUG PT, DPT, MS, CSCS



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CHAPTER 9

PILATES FOR HEALTH

This chapter was completed with the assistance of Mavis Rode, PT, DPT, CSCS. Dr. Rode developed an interest in functional movement and rehabilitation during her years as a modern dancer. After graduating with a degree in physical therapy, she began her investigation and study of the Pilates method of training for use with her patients. She now maintains a private practice (www.mrodept.com) specializing in orthopedic physical therapy, health and wellness, and dance rehabilitation and injury prevention. Her work with patients, Pilates clients, and fitness clients combines her knowledge and skills as a physical therapist with her experience in Pilates, dance, and other forms of movement re-education.

In addition to her private practice, Dr. Rode is a physical therapist and instructor of kinesiology for the Dance Program at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles (2005 to the present).

Dr. Rode earned degrees in biology and in physical therapy from California State University, Northridge, and her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Utica College, New York. She is a Certified Sports & Conditioning Specialist (CSCS) with the National Strength and Conditioning Association and an AASDN (American Academy of Sports Dietitians and Nutritionists) Nutrition Specialist.

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*“Change happens through movement
and movement heals.”*

—Joseph Pilates

German-born Joseph H. Pilates (1883-1967) is the creator of the Pilates system, a form of bodywork that uses controlled movements to improve strength, flexibility, balance, and mental concentration. Throughout his career, Pilates developed many original exercise machines (such as the Reformer, Cadillac, Wunda Chair, and Ladder Barrel), created a mat exercise series, wrote two books (Pilates 1934; Pilates et al. 1945), and formulated unique exercise theories.

Z ALTUG'S PERSPECTIVE FOR DOING PILATES

In my clinical practice as a physical therapist, I typically recommend Pilates to patients and clients who need to improve core stability and strength and work on posture, balance, and mobility. Other general reasons to try Pilates include:

- Relieve stress and tension
- Improve overall health
- Improve flexibility
- Improve breathing
- Improve circulation
- Help manage weight

DR. MAVIS RODE'S PERSPECTIVE FOR DOING PILATES

I've been practicing and teaching Pilates for 17 years and I plan to continue until I can't any longer—hopefully, until my last day on this planet. That's how much I love Pilates! Pilates is kind to everybody and I know that you, too, can benefit from Pilates exercises as much as I have and as much as has every one of my patients and clients.

Today there are many variations of the original mat exercises as taught by Joseph Pilates. Exercises can be modified to accommodate those with pain and/or injury and to challenge the most skilled athlete. When using Pilates's apparatus, varying levels of assistance or resistance can be achieved by changing the spring tension and placement. This makes Pilates accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels.

My Pilates patients and clients come to me for all sorts of reasons: examples include dancers who want to improve their performance, who need rehabilitation from an injury, or who want to prevent future injuries; women with osteoporosis who want to stand taller; people with Parkinson's disease who want to improve their ability to walk or climb stairs. With practice, each of these can develop more efficient movement without excess expenditure of energy. This is because Pilates's instruction focuses on postural alignment and balanced use of muscles in a coordinated manner. My greatest joy in teaching Pilates is witnessing the transformation of body and spirit that is possible with committed practice.

LET'S SEE WHAT RESEARCH SAYS . . .

- Pilates exercise “improved postural sway and dynamic balance in young adults with non-specific low back pain” (Lopes et al. 2017).

- Pilates-inspired exercises can improve balance and strength in older women (Vieira et al. 2017).
- Pilates exercise may benefit postmenopausal women with chronic low back pain (Cruz-Diaz et al. 2016).
- Clinical Pilates may improve cognitive functions and quality of life compared with standard exercises in individuals with multiple sclerosis (Kucuk et al. 2016).
- Flexibility and balance can also be improved through Pilates (Valenza et al. 2016), as well as muscular endurance (Kloubec 2010) and abdominal strength and upper-spine posture (Emery et al. 2010).
- Equipment-based Pilates may be superior to mat Pilates for disability and kinesiophobia (fear of movement) in individuals suffering from chronic lower-back pain (da Luz et al. 2014).
- Pilates may lead to decreased fall risk (Stivala et al. 2014).
- Pilates may help improve non-structural scoliosis, and improve flexibility and pain in female college students (Alves de Araújo et al. 2012).
- Pilates can improve abdominal wall muscles (Dorado et al. 2012).
- Pilates can enhance functional capacity in individuals with heart failure when combined with standard medical therapy (Guimarães et al. 2012).
- Pilates can be beneficial for disability, pain, function, and health-related quality of life (Wajswelner et al. 2012).
- Pilates improves mindfulness (changes in mood and perceived stress) (Caldwell et al. 2010).
- Pilates is effective and safe for female breast-cancer patients (Eyigor et al. 2010).
- Pilates is an effective and safe physical activity for individuals with fibromyalgia (Altan et al. 2009).
- Pilates improves thoracic kyphosis (Kuo et al. 2009), or what is commonly known as a hump or a hunchback.
- Pilates improves chronic low back pain in physically active individuals between the ages of 20 and 55 years old (Rydeard et al. 2006).
- Pilates improves the leaping ability of elite rhythmic gymnasts (Hutchinson et al. 1998).



PRACTICAL PILATES ROUTINE

The following basic Pilates routine was designed by Dr. Mavis Rode for you to use in the comfort of your home or at a local park.

A WORD BEFORE BEGINNING . . .

Pilates is best with guided instruction from a knowledgeable and skilled instructor. However, the following are beginning versions or preparations for more