

What is Pilates?

A way of moving that uses specific principles to guide action. The principles are:

- Concentration
- Alignment Breathing
- Centring
- Control
- Isolation
- Precision
- Flowing Movement
- Integration
- Routine

Think A B C D

A = Alignment

B = Breathing

C = Centring

D = Dynamic phase (moving)

How does science develop our understanding of these principles?

Concentration – using conscious awareness to control movement to create healthy movement patterns that use correct muscle sequencing (and correct faulty alignment, muscle use)

Alignment – Posture position of bones and joints (focus on Pelvis, Ribcage, Scapula, Head/Neck). Bony placement into neutral; develop joint awareness

Breathing – Using breath to support corset control and using breath to oxygenate lungs, calm mind and stimulate parasympathetic (healing) nervous system. Lateral thoracic breathing is recommended where we maintain slight corset contraction during both the in and out breath phase. A stronger contraction is available on the out breath, and that is why we breathe out on the harder phase of the Pilates exercise. When the levers move away from the midline of the body, the corset has to contract more strongly to prevent movement

Centring – We hold our alignment by using muscles. Stabilisation muscles are commonly called Local, and movement muscles are commonly called Global. Stabilise in neutral before movement, before engaging global muscles

- Every big movement muscle has a smaller stabilisation muscle
- We need to switch on the stabilisers prior to movement

Control – Smooth, fluid movements within

Isolation – Having awareness of all parts, engaging in isolation as necessary to ensure correct muscle sequencing and stability

Precision – As close to perfect movement as possible

Flowing Movement – No speed bumps, appreciating the dynamic state of movement without a specific beginning or ending

Integration – Principles applied to all activities

Routine – It is necessary to do exercises regularly in order to gain full benefit

What are the exercises?

- Modified original Pilates moves that have been passed down primarily from his past students (commonly with dance background)
- Movements that challenge our alignment in Supine, Prone, Seated, Side and All fours movements
- Movements that challenge mobility, stability and strength to lead to good static and dynamic posture