



Colleen's Corner

Hi. Back to school, back to the routine, back to the “normal” rhythm and flow. Sometimes it’s just this kind of rhythm of your routine that helps you keep to your commitment - to yourself; to eat well and keep to your fitness program. Commit to the routine, and the routine takes care of itself. It becomes a “good” habit, and all the excuses that use to steal your thunder fall to the wayside.

To support the spirit of your commitment, for the next few months I’m offering the deepest package discounts for private and semi-private lessons to any student enrolled in a 10 week Pilates Mat session. You’re motivated, so I’m making it possible to take advantage of everything the Pilates system has to offer. There’s so much more to Pilates than just the floor exercises. The whole remarkable system utilizes apparatus and expertise that can open doors to health you never knew you had. Now you can save even more on these private and semi-private lessons, one lesson at a time.

Still, most people prefer to buy the packages for their convenience, but the offer still stands.

Just got back from the Highlands Festival here in Ringwood where I spent a gorgeous day meeting people and answering questions about Pilates. Although so many have heard of Pilates, there are so many misconceptions out there, that I decided to write the following article to help novices to select a qualified teacher. As you know - it can make all the difference. Please share it with your friends.

Accepting the Pilates Challenge....the Smart Way

"In 10 sessions you'll feel the difference, in 20 sessions you'll see the difference, and in 30 sessions you'll have a whole new body"

- Joseph Pilates

I read this quote in an article over 15 years ago when I was recovering from yet another pulled muscle from participating in an exercise class. "No way." I thought. How could an exercise system developed over 80 years ago surpass the results of current methods offered in 'modern' times. Still, even though modern fitness wisdom had helped me with weight loss, calf strains and back pulls and sore knees continued to plague my workouts. I decided to give it a shot, and fortunately for me I found one of the rare teachers who were classically trained in authentic Pilates.

It was so different from what I was use to. Instead of being in pain and exhausted after exercising, I felt strong and energized. With approving looks, people began asking me how much weight I'd lost when I hadn't lost a pound. My back pain made it's appearances less and less frequently until it seemed to disappear - for years. It seemed I indeed had "a whole new body".

I was more than sold. I decided to train to become a certified Pilates instructor. I entered into one of the very few programs offered in the world at that time, and apprenticed with Romana Kryzanowska, who had trained directly with Joseph Pilates and to whom he'd left his school. 8 months and over 700 intensive hours later I received my certificate. Even going to nursing school for my R.N. was not as grueling.

Unfortunately, at around the same time, other 'certification' programs had popped up, virtually overnight, promising proficiency after as little as a weekend of training. In fact, my friend Karen, who had suffered back problems at about the same time as I, had the misfortune to try a group class who's well-meaning but misinformed teacher had been trained in one of these mini-certifications. Karen's doctor had recommended Pilates, but without knowing the difference, she found herself unable to complete her first class without stopping because of her worsening pain.

Karen's story seems more the norm than the exception. With celebrities endorsing Pilates there was money to be made, and health clubs, gyms and video makers jumped on the band wagon, positioning themselves to offer Pilates as soon as they could - which frequently meant hiring from the inferior certification pool.

Whole Pilates of Ringwood stands by the recommendations made by the Pilates Method Alliance for people looking for qualified trainers:

Is the instructor certified from a comprehensive training program? Programs should require a minimum of 400 hours apprentice time and extensive written and practical exams. Continuing education should also be required.

Does the instructor have any other movement related teaching experience, and or come from a profession that requires a strong foundation in anatomy and physiology? Learning a list of exercises is not enough. Be sure your instructor is knowledgeable enough to modify any exercise for you, and knows enough when to refer a problem elsewhere.

How long has the instructor been teaching? Bodies are complicated. Look for years of experience.

Does the instructor teach the full repertoire of exercises on all pieces of apparatus? Joseph Pilates developed well over 500 exercises and created many pieces of apparatus precisely because each person is unique with different physical issues, strengths and goals. Your instructor should be versatile in all of the Pilates work.

It's a big, competitive fitness world out there, all vying for your dollar. As valuable as your dollar is, you only have one body. Use these guidelines to be sure you put yours in the right hands.

Contacts and Credits:

To include yourself on my email list, or if you have questions or comments, write me at : colleen@wholepilates.com

Please go to my website, <http://www.WholePilates.com> to see what I've been working on, or to get the link for the Biofeedback game.

To install Adobe Acrobat, go to: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Good Mat Pilates book: Pilates Body in Motion by Alicia Ungaro, DK Publishing

Colleen Wenrich, RN, has been teaching wellness & fitness for over 20 years and is Certified Authentic Pilates, ACSM, AFAA, ACE and BCIA.