

W E L L N E S S S E R I E S



TOP 10 PILATES

FITNESS TIPS

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Introduction

Pilates was designed by and named after German physical fitness specialist Joseph Pilates in the 1960s. He named the form of exercise and physical fitness he taught Contrology, focusing on the use of your mind to control your muscles, breathing and posture, while strengthening your body and increasing your stamina and flexibility. Minimal equipment is needed, making Pilates a viable form of physical fitness for just about everyone.

Joseph Pilates was at different times in his life a diver, gymnast, professional boxer, bodybuilder, self-defense trainer for Scotland Yard police and even a circus performer. His practice of the the mindful exercises which would later be named after him was what he credited for his ability to excel in so many different physical occupations and endeavors at a very high level. You too can enjoy a strong and healthy body, improved flexibility and posture, and enhanced mental awareness when you practice these Top 10 Pilates fitness tips.

Tip #1 – Don't forget to pause

The number one thing to remember if you are going to reap the maximum mental and physical rewards that Pilates can offer is that going slow is the key. Unlike bodyweight circuit training and many other forms of exercise, Pilates is a focused and mindful practice. It is a marathon, not a sprint. Try not to let your momentum take over, and push you quickly from one form or movement to another. Pauses are deliberately built into Pilates workouts. Do not rush them.

Take a cue from San Francisco group fitness coordinator and certified Pilates mat instructor Jayme Boyle, who reminds us that, "Slower pace means you're turning on stabilizing muscles and you're creating more isometric contractions." Slow down, practice perfect form, and let deliberation overtake momentum.

Tip #2 – Focus on your core

Core strengthening is the foundation of Pilates. A strong and healthy core dictates total body health, alleviates back pain, improves posture and balance, and provides better athletic performance. That is why Pilates focuses around strengthening your core. And that means going deep when you work your transverse abdominals.

When your deep abs are correctly strengthened, all 4 separate layers of your abdominal musculature are exercised. Aside from getting that beautiful six-pack ab, beach body look, this drives total body strength and health. Imagine you are seeing your deep abdominals contracting and crunching. Focus on your core both mentally and physically for the best results.



Tip #3 – Take what you learn into the outside world

Pilates is about strengthening your core and achieving better balance, flexibility and posture. But the mindful side of Pilates, as well as understanding how to breathe properly, can deliver benefits far beyond your mat. You are creating a new body awareness and posture. You are also understanding how to use your mind to control physical aspects of your body, and how it moves.

These lessons can positively impact your life outside Pilates class. So don't turn off that healthy mindset when you leave your class or end your home session. Bicycling, jogging, playing tennis, walking, dancing and even having sex all benefit and reward you in a much more complete manner when you use the lessons you learned in Pilates to accentuate these activities.

Tip #4 – Choose the right fitness mat for your situation

To protect your body, ensure that you do not slip and slide, and minimize injuries, Pilates movements are most often practiced on a fitness mat. So choosing the right mat is very important. Some Pilates mats are designed with illustrations to help you keep perfect alignment for both Pilates and yoga. There are also latex-free, non-toxic fitness mats made by Gaiam that are comfortable, durable and ecologically responsible. As with most things in life you get what you pay for, and spending a little more here can boost your rewards during every session.

Just make sure that you choose a Pilates mat that is thick and not too responsive. You want support, not a mat that gives in easily to your weight and movement. Some mats are easier to clean than others, and many come with Velcro straps and handles for easy portability. Shop depending on your unique situation. You can benefit by checking customer reviews at websites like Amazon to choose the perfect fitness mat to enhance your Pilates workout.



Tip #5 – Stretch and create length

It is easy to focus on keeping all of your movements on your mat. This makes sense for a lot of reasons. This keeps you from contacting the floor, which means a cleaner and safer experience. But that does not mean you shouldn't reach and stretch as far as possible. Imagine someone pulling your arms and legs away from your body as you perform every Pilates exercise or movement.

Your focus is to elongate and stretch your muscles. Doing this while contracting your abs delivers core, upper and lower body benefits. This is central to the original Contrology exercises Joseph Pilates practiced and preached, which allowed him to stay fit, flexible and fat-free well into his 60s and 70s.

Tip #6 – Keep your chin up

You are often told to "Keep your chin up" when you find yourself in a difficult situation. This idea of remaining cheerful and positive when things are going wrong may not apply to Pilates, but the phrase is still important to remember. Unless a particular movement or Pilates exercise instructs you to adopt some other type of posture, keep your chin up.

Just as was mentioned in the last step, this helps you stretch and pull your core, your shoulders and your back upward. This is essential to realizing the maximum benefits that Pilates has to offer, and it helps you breathe properly. As a side benefit, this combats the slouching, chin down posture that today's ever-present smartphones, tablets and laptops tend to encourage.



Tip #7 – Remember that every day is different

Life activities, the quality of your sleep, your level of hydration and your mental focus all come into play when you practice Pilates. Your busy life and all that you have to juggle to get through your day means that every Pilates session will be different. Respect and listen to your body, and don't beat yourself up if your exercise is less than perfect. Even professional athletes have off days.

Maybe you had the ideal Pilates experience during your last session. Your form was precise, your breathing was deep and purposeful, and you had total control over your thoughts. That does not guarantee success today. You are not in competition with yourself or anyone else. Calm your mind, focus your breathing and thinking, and move through each form deliberately and slowly. Even if you have a less than perfect workout, pat yourself on your back, because any effort is better than inactivity.



Tip #8 – Wear the right clothing

Just like any other form of exercise or physical fitness, Pilates requires a specific type of clothing. Pilates movements benefit from comfortable and non-binding gear. Focus on a breathable and stretchable material. If you decide to wear form-fitting fashions while practicing Pilates, make sure they do not constrict your body movements, and they allow you to sweat freely.

If you have exercise outfits you use when you perform yoga, these usually make for smart Pilates clothing as well. A quick trip to Amazon or some other online retailer shows that there are plenty of "Pilates tops", "Pilates bottoms" and "Pilates clothing" to choose from. But you do not have to spend a lot of money to get the perfect workout experience. You probably own some clothes that would work well already.

Because of the bending and stretching that involves your upper body, use something with an open neckline and arm holes. And much of Pilates is performed on your back. So you want to avoid tops which have embroidery or embellishments which may feel uncomfortable or painful during your workout. Pilates bottoms can be short or long, fitting your personal preference. Just make sure they are snug but stretchy, and avoid baggy Gaucho style pants.

Tip #9 – Keep your shoulders down and don't force your breathing

Pull your shoulders down and back. This creates the perfect Pilates posture, and enhances deep breathing. This is not possible in every exercise, but when it is, continually focus on keeping your shoulders down and back. A secondary benefit of this type of posture is that it allows you to breathe naturally. This means that you should not force your breathing to meet some particular cadence.

You should never worry about breathing in and out on a particular schedule. Just breathe as your body has to, when it needs to. You also should never hold your breath while exercising, especially with Pilates. Your mental focus

on controlling your physical movements and breathing is important, but it should not restrict your natural respiration.

Tip #10 – Mix up your experience, but be consistent as well

Are you just starting out with Pilates? Maybe you are a seasoned veteran. Either way, you can benefit mentally and physically by keeping your workout fresh and challenging. If you have always worked out on a mat, join a reformer circuit class. Incorporate chairs, Cadillac barrels or maybe join a tower class. There are so many innovative and classical Pilates programs you can enjoy. When you keep your muscles confused by consistently testing them in different ways, you receive the biggest respiratory, strengthening and total body benefits.

Just make sure you are consistent in your effort. You should definitely write down a dedicated schedule for every week and month over the next year. Remember the story of the tortoise and the hare, and keep plugging away. You are not likely to see your intended results after just a couple of Pilates sessions. So keep consistent, stick to your schedule, give this proven total body workout some time, and you will get the results you are looking for.

Ongoing Advice and Support

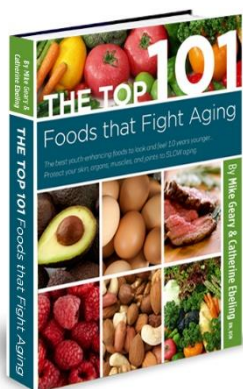
Still need to get in touch with me?

Here's how:

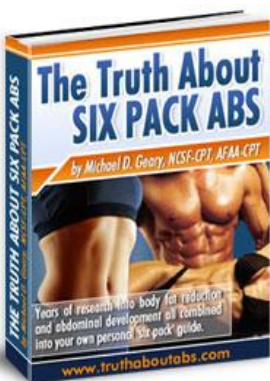
1. Head over to my [Google+ profile](#);
2. Send me a private message and I'll get back to you;
3. I'll also get back with you if you leave a comment on any blog post at [My Fitness Galaxy](#).

Recommended Resources

Want to read more? Then I'd recommend you these:



Brand new anti-aging NATURAL foods manual. Please take 2 minutes to [read this page](#) and discover the exciting (and SIMPLE) ways the foods you eat can turn back the hands of time to help you look and feel YEARS younger! Click [here](#).



7 odd foods that KILL your abdominal fat (surprising fat-fighters). You'll [discover in this cool video](#):

- * At least 2 foods that you thought were "healthy" that are silently packing on more stomach fat
- * 7 surprising foods you probably thought were unhealthy that can actually HELP you to burn off stubborn abdominal fat

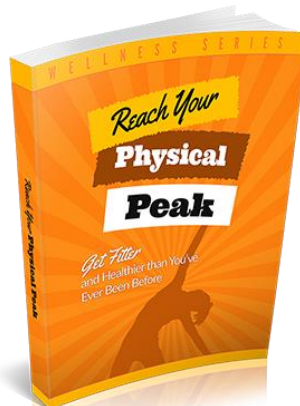
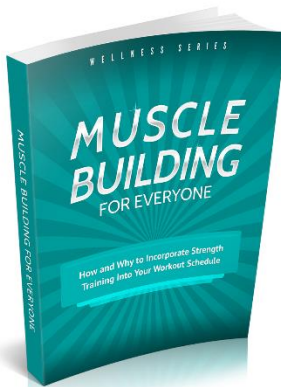
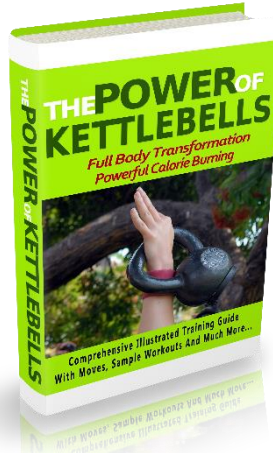
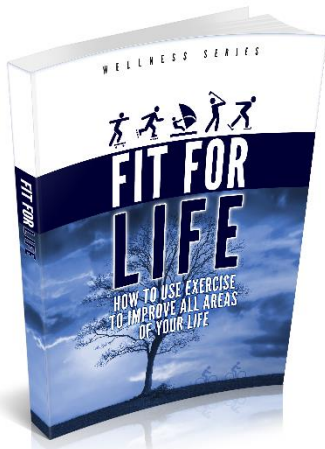
* Unique combinations of exercises that are MUCH more effective for fat loss compared to traditional "cardio".

[Watch this cool video now!](#)

Other Fitness Publications

You can get my fitness publication for free, click the image to visit the download page:

1)



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- 2) [Know Your Body Type To Build Muscle Quickly](#)
- 3) [Shed Fat and Find Your Six Pack Abs](#)
- 4) [Having Difficulty Achieving a Flat Stomach and Six Pack Abs](#)
- 5) [5 Ways to Overcome Dieting Depression](#)
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- 7) [Eating Foods That Burn Fat](#)
- 8) [Fat Loss Starts With a Healthy Liver](#)

- 9) [Fat Loss Through Safe Fasting](#)
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