

My Pilates Journal

A GENTLE START TO STRONGER MOVEMENT

WELCOME

You are
exactly
where you
need to be.

This journal is yours — a gentle companion as you begin one of the most rewarding movements of your life.

Welcome to Pilates.

This is a place where you are encouraged to move slowly, breathe deeply, and listen to your body without judgement. There is no competition here — only curiosity.

Pilates is for every body. Whether you are coming from injury, burnout, or simply a desire for something different, this practice will meet you exactly where you are today.

You do not need to be flexible. You do not need to be fit. You only need to show up, and your body will take care of the rest.

"Movement is the song your body knows how to sing — Pilates simply teaches you to listen."

Take your time. Trust the process. And know that every session — no matter how small — is a step towards a stronger, calmer, more connected version of yourself.

What is Pilates?

Developed by Joseph Pilates in the early 20th century, Pilates is a mindful movement practice that builds strength, restores alignment, and reconnects body and mind.

CORE STRENGTH 01

Building deep stabilising muscles around the spine, pelvis, and abdomen — your powerhouse of movement.

ALIGNMENT 02

Restoring the natural curves of your spine and correcting postural imbalances developed over time.

BREATH 03

Every movement is guided by breath. Conscious breathing oxygenates the body and anchors the mind.

CONTROL 04

Quality over quantity. Precision over speed. Every repetition performed with full intention and awareness.

MOBILITY 05

Restoring range of motion through articulation of the spine, joints, and connective tissue.

MIND-BODY 06

The practice of being present within movement — listening, feeling, and responding to your body's signals.

PILATES MYTHS VS. REALITY

MYTH

"You need to be flexible to start."

REALITY

Flexibility is developed through practice. You begin exactly where your body is today.

MYTH

"Pilates is just stretching."

REALITY

Pilates is a full-body strengthening system. The work is subtle, precise, and deeply challenging.

MYTH

"Intensity equals results."

REALITY

In Pilates, control and precision build the deepest, most lasting strength — not effort alone.

The Benefits of Practice

The changes Pilates brings are quiet at first — a little more ease getting out of bed, a little less tension in your shoulders. Then one day you realise your whole relationship with your body has shifted.

These are not promises. These are the natural outcomes of consistent, mindful movement.

WHAT TO EXPECT



Better Posture

Strengthening the muscles that hold you upright, reducing slouch and forward head posture.



Stronger Core

Deep stabilising muscles engage, protecting the spine and improving every movement you make.



Improved Flexibility

Gradual, safe lengthening of muscles that have been held tight for years.



Reduced Tension

Releasing chronic tension held in the neck, shoulders, and lower back through mindful movement.



Body Awareness

Developing a richer, more sensitive relationship with how your body feels and moves.



Stress Relief

The meditative quality of focused breath and movement creates genuine calm in the nervous system.



Injury Prevention

Balanced muscular strength and improved joint stability reduce vulnerability to everyday injury.



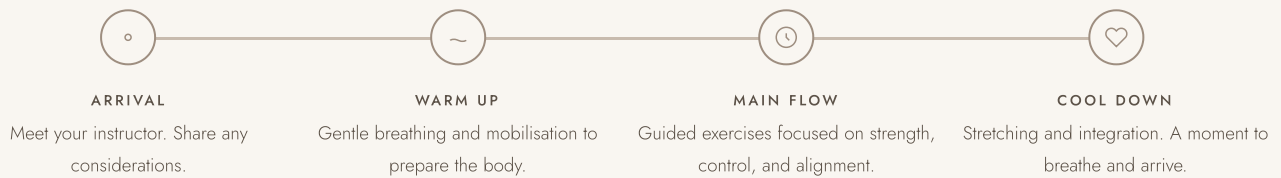
Balanced Strength

Working all sides of the body equally — addressing imbalances that accumulate through daily habits.

Your First Class

Arriving for your first class is the hardest part — and you have already done it. Here is what to expect once you step through the door.

CLASS FLOW



CHOOSING YOUR FORMAT

MAT PILATES

Practised on the floor using only body weight, small props, and gravity as resistance. Accessible, versatile, and excellent for foundational strength.

Great for: home practice, travel, all levels

REFORMER PILATES

Performed on the Reformer machine using adjustable spring resistance. Supports and challenges the body simultaneously, offering a wide range of exercises.

Great for: rehabilitation, variety, precise feedback

A note from your instructor —

There is no perfect in Pilates. Your instructor is here to guide, not to judge. Please speak up if something feels wrong, and know that modifications are always available. This is your practice.

What to Wear & Bring

Comfort and ease of movement are the only requirements. You don't need special equipment — just clothing that moves with you.

YOUR CHECKLIST

Comfortable fitted clothing

- Leggings, fitted tops — nothing too loose that may shift during inversions.
-

Grip socks

- Essential for reformer. Non-slip soles keep you safe and grounded.
-

Water bottle

- Stay hydrated before, during, and after class.
-

Hair tie

- Long hair pulled back keeps your neck free and your focus clear.
-

Small towel *(optional)*

- For mat work or warm days.

PLEASE AVOID

- Oversized or baggy clothing
Loose fabric may obstruct your instructor's view of your alignment.

- Jewellery and accessories
Rings, bracelets, and necklaces can scratch equipment and catch during movement.

- Clothing with back zippers
On the reformer, zippers against the carriage can cause discomfort or surface damage.

- Strong perfume
The studio is a shared space — light or fragrance-free is always appreciated.

Most importantly — arrive as you are. This is a judgement-free space, and your comfort is always the priority.

The Six Pilates Principles

Joseph Pilates believed that mind and body must work in complete coordination. These six principles are the foundation of every movement in the practice.

BREATHING

Full, thoracic breathing powers every exercise. Inhale to prepare, exhale to engage and move. The breath is not decoration — it is the engine.

1

CONTROL

Every movement is performed with deliberate muscular control. There is no momentum, no rushing. Slow, intentional movement builds the deepest strength.

2

PRECISION

A few perfectly executed repetitions are worth more than many careless ones. Precision trains the nervous system and corrects imbalance.

3

FLOW

Movements transition seamlessly, with grace and economy. Pilates is not a series of isolated exercises — it is a continuous, elegant sequence.

4

CENTERING

All movement originates from the centre — the deep core of the body. Pilates calls this the "powerhouse": the abdomen, lower back, hips, and pelvis.

5

ALIGNMENT

The natural curves of the spine are honoured and restored. Good alignment isn't just aesthetic — it is the foundation of pain-free movement for life.

6

Key Terms

You will hear these words in your first classes. Knowing them in advance lets you focus on moving, rather than decoding.

Neutral Spine

The natural, unstressed position of your spine — preserving its three gentle curves without flattening or over-arching.

Core Engagement

A gentle, internal drawing-in of the deep abdominal muscles. Think 20% effort — a subtle lift, not a brace.

Pelvic Tilt

A rocking movement of the pelvis — posterior (tucking under) or anterior (arching forward). Used to find neutral and build mobility.

Imprint

Gently pressing the lower back into the mat by engaging the abdominals. Used to stabilise the pelvis during challenging movements.

Reformer Carriage

The sliding platform you lie, sit, or stand on. It moves smoothly along rails in response to your movements and the spring resistance.

Springs

The adjustable coil springs beneath the carriage that create resistance or assistance depending on which and how many are used.

Footbar

The fixed bar at one end of the reformer used for pushing, pressing, and stabilising during exercises. Height is adjustable.

Long Box / Short Box

A small wooden box placed on the carriage for seated or prone exercises. Changes your relationship with gravity.

Straps

Loops connected to the springs via ropes, used for arm and leg exercises. They allow range-of-motion work with spring feedback.

"You will not need to memorise these. Your instructor will always explain each cue in the moment — this is simply a gentle primer."

Six Things Worth Knowing

These are not rules. They are invitations — quiet suggestions that will help you settle into a sustainable, enjoyable practice.

01 Consistency over intensity

Two mindful sessions a week will always outperform one frantic one. Show up regularly, and the results will follow naturally.

02 Progress takes its own time

The deepest changes in Pilates happen below the surface before they become visible. Trust what you cannot yet see — it is still happening.

03 Control the movement

When an exercise feels too difficult, slow it down further. The solution in Pilates is almost always less momentum, not more effort.

04 Listen to your body

There is a meaningful difference between challenge — the productive burn of engaged muscles — and pain, which is always a signal to stop and communicate.

05 Breathing matters more than you think

If you are holding your breath, you are working too hard. The breath is your first guide — when it flows freely, so does the movement.

06 You are not in competition

Not with the person next to you. Not with who you were last week. Pilates is a deeply personal practice — the only measure that matters is how you feel.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Is shaking normal?

Yes — completely. Shaking is a sign that deep, stabilising muscles are working and being challenged, often for the first time. It is a good sign.

Will Pilates help my posture?

Yes. Strengthening the deep postural muscles and increasing body awareness are among the most consistent benefits clients report, often within weeks.

Can I start on the Reformer straight away?

Absolutely. The Reformer's spring system can be set to assist movement, making it accessible and often a comfortable introduction to the practice.

How often should I practise?

Two to three sessions per week is ideal for steady progress. Even once a week will bring noticeable benefit over time — consistency always wins.

MORE QUESTIONS

Frequently Asked

When will I notice results?

Joseph Pilates said: "In 10 sessions you'll feel the difference, in 20 you'll see it, and in 30 others will notice." Many clients feel better after their very first session.

Is Pilates good for back pain?

Pilates is one of the most widely recommended practices for back pain management. It strengthens the muscles that support and decompress the spine. Always inform your instructor of any history.

What if I cannot do an exercise?

Every exercise has a modification. Your instructor will always offer an alternative. Never push through discomfort — simply say so and a gentler version will be provided.

Do I need to warm up before class?

No — the class begins with a warm-up built in. Simply arrive a few minutes early, breathe, and let yourself arrive fully before the session begins.

Safety & Wellness

Pilates is a safe, low-impact practice — but moving with awareness and open communication makes it even more so.

INFORM YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Before your first session — and before any class — let your instructor know about any injuries, surgeries, chronic conditions, or areas of sensitivity. This allows them to personalise your experience safely.

PREGNANCY CONSIDERATIONS

Pilates can be practised safely during pregnancy with appropriate modifications. Always inform your instructor and consult your healthcare provider. Many exercises will be adapted throughout each trimester.

DISCOMFORT VS. PAIN

Understanding the difference is essential:

DISCOMFORT

Muscular fatigue, gentle burning, mild challenge. This is the productive sensation of growth — it is expected and welcome.

PAIN

Sharp, shooting, or joint pain is always a signal to stop. Never push through pain — immediately inform your instructor.

MOVE MINDFULLY

Pilates rewards those who go slowly and pay attention. The moment your form deteriorates, rest. A brief pause followed by a correct repetition is always more valuable than ten sloppy ones.

"The body whispers before it shouts. Pilates teaches you to listen to the whisper."

Your Mini Home Routine

Six gentle exercises you can practise anywhere — no equipment needed. 10–15 minutes is enough to maintain connection between your studio sessions.

1 Mindful Breathing

8 BREATHS

Inhale 4 · Exhale 6

Lie on your back, knees bent. Place hands on your ribcage. Inhale for 4 counts expanding the ribs laterally, exhale for 6 counts drawing the navel gently in.

2 Pelvic Tilt

10 REPS

Exhale to flatten

Lying on your back with knees bent. Gently rock your pelvis — flatten the lower back on the exhale, release on the inhale. Find and explore your neutral spine position.

3 Bridge

8 REPS

Exhale to lift

From neutral spine, exhale and peel the spine off the mat one vertebra at a time — tailbone, lower back, mid back. Hold briefly at the top. Inhale. Exhale to roll back down with control.

4 Cat–Cow

10 REPS

Inhale arch · Exhale round

On hands and knees, wrists under shoulders, knees under hips. Inhale to arch (cow: chest lifts, tailbone rises). Exhale to round (cat: spine curves, chin draws in). Move slowly and continuously.

5 Dead Bug

6 EACH SIDE

Exhale to extend

On your back, arms raised to ceiling, knees bent at 90°. Exhale and slowly lower the opposite arm and leg toward the floor — back stays imprinted. Inhale to return. Alternate sides.

6 Supine Spine Twist

5 EACH SIDE

Exhale to rotate

On your back, arms wide, knees bent together. Inhale to prepare. Exhale and lower both knees to one side — keeping shoulders grounded. Inhale to return to centre. Alternate.

Session Journal

DATE

INSTRUCTOR

SESSION TYPE

ENERGY BEFORE CLASS

Low → High

ENERGY AFTER CLASS

Low → High

TODAY'S SESSION — HOW IT FELT

WHAT FELT STRONG TODAY

WHAT I WANT TO IMPROVE

NOTES FROM MY INSTRUCTOR

THIS WEEK'S INTENTION

My Progress

SESSIONS THIS WEEK

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat Sun

WHAT I NOTICED IN MY BODY THIS WEEK

MY FOCUS FOR NEXT WEEK

ONE THING I AM PROUD OF THIS WEEK
