

AlternativelyFIT

# PILATES...

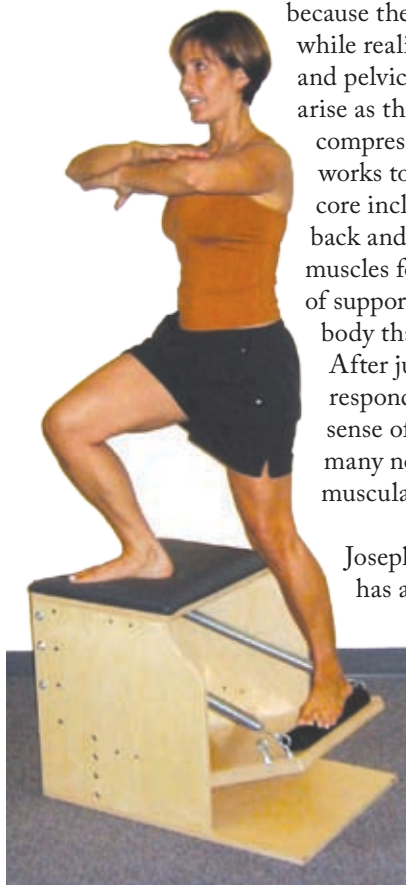
## ties it all together

By Beth Downey

**G**ina Nostrant came to Pilates six years ago to try a different kind of exercise. A former college athlete and currently an avid fitness enthusiast and runner, Gina found her muscles often felt tight and short. She was seeking another way to continue enjoying her current activities while maintaining a healthy body. Gina found that by increasing her core strength and developing other overlooked muscles, she achieved greater ease in movement and a longer, leaner look.

"Pilates has strengthened and balanced my entire body resulting in a much more productive training program," says Nostrant.

Gina works on hamstring strengthening on the low chair



Pilates benefits so many different individuals because the exercises strengthen your body while realigning and balancing the spine and pelvic girdle. Because most pain issues arise as the result of joint misalignment and compression, Pilates' focus on core strength works to correct those imbalances. The core includes the abdominal muscles, lower back and pelvic area. Developing the core muscles forms a stable yet flexible cylinder of support around the spine, leading to a body that moves with grace and fluidity. After just a few sessions, the body usually responds with better posture, a greater sense of body awareness, and after awhile, many notice a height increase due to muscular strengthening along the spine.

Joseph Pilates emphasized that the body has a difficult time remaining healthy in the modern world. This was more than 75 years ago - before the days of computers in every home and cars in every driveway. Today, our time is often spent with a phone cradled to our ear or seated in a car for long periods of time. These behaviors contribute to poor

Pilates improves posture by working the deep upper back muscles 1 of 2



postural habits and our bodies adapt to the position by constantly slumping forward or tilting the head to the side.

Similarly, repetitive athletic pursuits such as running, biking, racquet sports or golf overly develop one side of the body or just the larger muscles. The deeper, smaller muscles are neglected. Continual overuse or underuse of muscles has a far-reaching impact on the body's structural integrity that affects the individual's movement. Fortunately, just as the body can learn bad habits through its way of moving, so can it learn good ones. Pilates is a series of precise movements that work from the inside out. The movements seek to introduce new ways to strengthen the body by utilizing the smaller muscles in conjunction with the larger. This re-patterning balances the musculature breaking "old" habits or compensations.

### CROSS-TRAIN FOR GREATER PERFORMANCE

In Gina's case, her quadriceps were highly developed and overused in her training regimen. Conversely, her hamstring muscles were underdeveloped and overpowered by her quads. Through Pilates exercises, Gina learned how to strengthen her hamstrings and lengthen her quadriceps resulting in better leg balance. This combined with deep abdominal strengthening helped prevent additional impact on her hip and knee joints.

"I can now run farther with less stress on my joints. Pilates has provided the perfect balance to my Platoon workout," states Nostrant.

### BALANCE IN DAILY LIFE

Daily tasks that involve desk, phone and computer work can lead to fatigue in the neck and upper back. Over time this leads to tight chest and shoulder muscles and overstretched weak upper back muscles.

## Index of advertisers

### Healthclubs

The Health & Wellness Center, Inside Front Cover  
 Conshohocken Health and Fitness, pg. 4  
 Main Line Health & Fitness, pg. 17  
 The Delaware Valley Alliance, pg. 19  
 The Aquatic and Fitness Centers, pg. 20  
 LA Fitness, pg. 55  
 The Ellis Athletic Center, pg. 63  
 Spring Mill Athletic, pg. 20  
 FitLife Aquatic, pg. 26

### Personal Training

Optimum Health, pg. 49  
 Intense Training online, pg. 58  
 Doylestown Sports Medicine, pg. 71  
 Body Challenge, pg. 77

### Personal Training School

National Personal Training Inst., pg. 72

### Job Opportunity

Launch Your Life, pg. 59

### Sports Specific Training

Lightning Fast Training Systems, pg. 46  
 Summit Sports Training Center, pg. 64

### Pilates

The Gravity Center, pg. 20  
 Pilates by Linda, pg. 57  
 This is Pilates, pg. 77

### Massage

Kneady Muscles Inc., pg. 49  
 Joanne Freedman, pg. 54  
 Massage by Pete, pg. 59  
 Healing Kneads, pg. 64  
 Ridley Park Muscle Therapy, pg. 68

Bensalem Muscle Therapy, pg. 72  
 Charles Peebles, pg. 28  
 Back in Balance, pg. 80

### Jewelry

Amigaz, pg. 28

### Food Delivery Service

Good to Go, pg. 17

### Integrative Health Care

Medical Healing Arts Center, pg. 25

### Dating Services

It's Just Lunch, pg. 61  
 Minidate.com, pg. 77

### Plastic/Cosmetic Surgery/Skin Care/ Laser Hair Removal

Dr. Robert J. Mirabile, pg. 3  
 Dr. Sherman Leis, pg. 41  
 Abington Aesthetic & Laser, pg. 45  
 Julia H. cohen, MD, pg. 55  
 Timothy Rodgers, MD, pg. 28  
 Chestnut Hill Aesthetics Center, pg. 63  
 PA Centre for Plast. Surg., pg. 67 & pg. 80

### CPR

Rich Goldsmith, pg. 81

### Motorcycles/Auto

Proven Performance, pg. 62  
 Custom Spray, pg. 65

### Supplements

Isagenix, pg. 29  
 Champ Nutrition, pg. 35  
 Fitness Exchange, pg. 54  
 Tahitian Noni, pg. 73

### Permanent Makeup

Kat Spence, pg. 57

### Alternative Medicine

Natural Health Alternative, pg. 35  
 Gorman Optimal Health, pg. 74

### Hair Salons/Day Spas/Cosmetics

BLue Salon, pg. 5  
 Pierre & Carlo, pg. 14  
 Fresh Hair Studio, pg. 21  
 Level II Salon, pg. 21  
 Studio di Estetica, pg. 46  
 Shanti Medi Spa, pg. 49  
 David Joseph's Salon, pg. 74  
 Salon L'etoile, Inside Back Cover  
 Saa Regime, Inside Back Cover

### Clothing

PhillyFIT Pro Shop, pg. 34

### Martial Arts

Hatboro's Sanuces Ryu, pg. 33  
 Red Tiger Tae Kwon Do, pg. 63

### Fitness Equipment

Gym Source, pg. 11  
 Fitness Exchange, pg. 54

### Podiatry

A Foot Above Podiatry, pg. 12  
 Natural foot, pg. 43  
 Highpoint Foot and Ankle, pg. 73  
 NE Family Foot Care, pg. 80

### Bike Shops

Bicycle Therapy, pg. 35

### Dentistry

Smile By Design, pg. 45  
 Berson Dental, pg. 51  
 King Of Prussia Dental, pg. 68

### Chiropractic/Back-Neck Pain

Back & Neck Pain Relief, pg. 69  
 Tri County Pain Mgmt., Back cover & pg. 75

### Body Fat Testing

Fitness Wave, pg. 45

### Hair Replacement

Ferrari Hair Center, pg. 31  
 The Gallagher Medical Inst., pg. 57

### Cellulite Reduction

Cellulite Reduction Center, pg. 49  
 NE Rehab, pg. 67

### Accounting Services

Acct. Plus Services of Yardley, pg. 59

### Colon Hydrotherapy

NE Rehab, pg. 67

### Dry Cleaners

\$1.89 Garment, pg. 77

### Graphic Design

King Design, pg. 59

*Why not Pilates? Continued from page 10...*

This "bad habit" usually causes nagging discomfort. Through extension or arching exercises, Pilates provides relief by opening the chest while strengthening the deep back muscles. Again, the result is a taller, more supported posture with better balance and the ability to perform daily tasks with greater ease.

As the body becomes stronger and more symmetrical, even minor tasks such as carrying groceries in and out of the car or reaching for objects in difficult places become easier.

Why Pilates?

- \* Realignment of the body to promote injury healing and prevention
- \* Creation of a powerful, flexible body able to perform tasks and activities with efficiency and grace
- \* Improved posture for a taller leaner look
- \* Cross-training to help balance the body for athletes and fitness enthusiasts looking to increase performance
- \* Core strengthening to support the body for all different types of people of any shape, size or age

The question should be...Why not Pilates?



Beth Downey is the owner of Body Precision Pilates Studio in Rosemont, PA and the director of the nationally recognized Body Precision Teacher Certification Program for traditional Pilates. Beth has been teaching Pilates for over 10 years and specializes in working with clients with back and neck issues. Body Precision is an educational member of the Pilates Method Alliance. You can reach Beth at Beth@phillyfitmagazine.com