

A Beginners Guide To Starting Pilates

With Body Restoration Pilates Studio

Thank you for booking into class, and we hope you enjoy your Pilates journey. Any problems or queries at all please don't hesitate to contact us on info@bodyrestoration.co.uk or tel 07738 200030.

Initial Private Sessions

We try very hard to make sure everyone is allocated a space in the right class for them, but the best way to ensure this is to have a one hour private session with one of our teachers prior to starting classes. During this session our teacher can assess your posture, identify your own specific needs, teach you the basics at your own pace and formulate a plan for you, which will be shared with the teacher taking your class. Private Sessions normally take place at our home studio in Redruth, and cost £40 for one hour.

Pilates Takes Time!

Pilates is unlike other disciplines. As well as learning 'the moves', it's about learning to engage and control muscles you may not have known you have. Learning the terminology and learning about these new muscles can take a surprising amount of mental effort. Most people find it takes 3-6 weeks to understand the new terminology. After these initial weeks you will then start to feel you can work your body harder, as your brain understands what is required of the new muscles.

Pilates Post Injury/Rehabilitation

If you are doing Pilates for rehabilitation post injury, it's essential you have the all clear from your Dr or Physio to attend class. We would strongly recommend everyone does a 1:1 with one of our teachers before starting class, but especially so if you wish to do Pilates for rehabilitation.

Gentle vs Beginners Class

Not all beginners are the same! Some beginners are very fit and may be used to running 50 miles a week, whereas some beginners haven't exercised in 10 years. Therefore, our approach is to start everyone in what we call a 'Gentle' class and move people out of the class as they progress. Some may find they only need a few weeks in a Gentle class, whereas some may find the Gentle level is right for them, and they choose to stay for years...

All our clients start off in a Gentle Class, unless they have done Pilates before. This is a class where the most basic 'pre Pilates' exercises are taught – exercises that are often chosen by Physios for their patients who need rehabilitation post injury. These exercises are ideal for beginners as the load they place on the spine is very low. The nature of the exercises is that they are performed slowly, deliberately and mindfully. Therefore the pace is ideal for a beginners, but it will still take a few weeks for the average person to feel they fully understand how to do the exercise. Some progressions are given, and you should expect to work up towards the harder variations over time. This does mean that when you start you might be the only 'real beginner' in the class when you start, but the advantage of this is the teacher will be able to give you a little more attention as you learn the basics.

Breathing!

A lot of Pilates exercises are taught with a breath pattern. This is supposed to help you, but as a beginner this can make it more confusing... The breath is the last thing to worry about; in your first few sessions focus on the moves and trying to locate the right muscles. The right breathing pattern will come with time, and if in doubt just breathe!

Terminology

There may be some new words and muscles to learn. A few are listed below. If you wish to read further we recommend *The Pilates Bible*, by Lynne Robinson.

Pelvic Floor – Most women who have had a baby will be familiar with this muscle, but if you are a man or have not had a baby then this may be a new muscle. It's located at the bottom of your pelvis as the name implies

Transversus Abdominus – The deepest of the four abdominal muscles. You can find it by going onto all fours as if you were going to crawl. Then keeping your spine flat, let your belly go completely. Then very gently (you only need to put 30% effort into this one) draw your lower tummy upwards towards your spine.

Glutes – Short for gluteus maximus. They are found at the bottom of your back and are essentially your bottom muscles. They are a very strong big muscle, and their job is to take the legs behind your body (so are used in running) and to rotate the thigh bone outwards. They work best in functional moves, rather than being squeezed.

Learning to listen to your body

'No pain no gain' is **not** something we go by in Pilates! If you feel pain at all during a session you must stop and tell your teacher immediately. Think of pain as the bodies warning system, that something is being placed under too much strain. If you feel comfortable during a session but feel some mild discomfort or stiffness the next day, it's likely this is a normal response to exercise called DOMS or delayed onset muscles soreness. Imagine if you went for a 10 mile run (if you don't usually do this sort of thing!) you would expect your muscles to feel stiff and a little sore the next day. Listening to your body is something we do have learn, and with time and practise will improve.

Everyone has been a beginner

We have all been there. New experiences can affect people in different ways. If you find yourself wondering what on Earth is going on or why does everyone else seem to know what they're doing then please don't worry. Speak to your teacher, ask questions and you'll soon be up to speed. Everyone has been a beginner at some point!

Hannah Lloyd-King