

# THE PILATES JOURNAL



## CREATE A SELF SUSTAINING BUSINESS

Learn how to make your business financially self supporting

## WHAT SETS YOU APART AS A TEACHER

Elevate your teaching by putting your clients needs and goals first

## Pilates for everybody

### SUPPORTING YOUR CLIENTS' WRISTS

Understand the importance of wrist strengthening work



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The Pilates Journal would like to acknowledge and pay respects to the Gadigal people of the EORA nation as the traditional custodians of the place we call home - Sydney - where this journal is produced.

The Pilates Journal pays respects to their elders, past, present and emerging, and acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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# Note from the Editor



## *Welcome to the latest issue of The Pilates Journal.*

In this issue, we talk about creating inclusivity in the Pilates studio space. This involves identifying ways you can make your studio more accessible and inclusive in both thought and practice, including leaving space for our clients to truly tell us what they need from us.

We also hear from Polestar Vice President Shelly Power on what can set you apart as a teacher and delve into hip work, wrist loading and the power of stretching.

For Studio Owners, we discuss the benefits of running regular workshops that cater to all types of clients so you can engage with your studio community and look at how you can create a self-sustaining business.

As always, we want to hear your thoughts and suggestions and are always looking for ways to bring you the most relevant and engaging article so make sure you get in touch and tell us what you think at [hello@pilatesjournal.com](mailto:hello@pilatesjournal.com)

Thank you for being a part of our community.

**CJZarb**

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### On the Cover

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# Making Pilates truly for everybody

IMAGINE THE BENEFITS IF WE SHIFT OUR TEACHING TO FOCUS ON MAKING PILATES ACCESSIBLE FOR ALL

*by Ivy Baron*



"I could never try Pilates, it's too intimidating."  
 "My core doesn't exist, don't you have to be really strong to do Pilates?"  
 "Isn't Pilates for skinny dancer types?"  
 "Those machines look scary."  
 "I tried Pilates once and my back and neck hurt so bad afterwards that I never went back."  
 "I didn't like it, the instructor got really frustrated with me because I couldn't follow her cues, and I felt really lost."

Sound familiar? These comments are just a sampling of what I hear from people when I tell them that I'm a Pilates Instructor. Unfortunately, our industry as a whole doesn't do enough to combat these misconceptions and experiences. We, as instructors, can get so caught up in our lineage and idolization of certain long-time teachers, or who can do the best circus trick on the Cadillac, that we too often lose sight (and sadly repel) the folks we are there to serve. Pilates, in my opinion, has the potential to be the best movement modality for people who want to be in less pain, or practice their daily activities with more ease. Unfortunately, the folks who would benefit the most are the same ones who often feel too afraid to try. The message we often send, both intentionally and unintentionally, is that the client's ability or body size or illness is the problem. What if, instead of forcing the person

to fit the exercises or classical order, we focus on making a shift in how we teach to include more folks? If we want to shift the general perception of our work, I believe that the Pilates industry, which includes most of us reading this article, needs to move towards more accessibility and inclusivity both in thought, and in practice. Folks need to know that instructors are here to support them in their goals, not shame them or scare them away.

Before we move into concrete, actionable ways in which we can become more accessible, adaptable, and inclusive in our Pilates practice, I want to share a bit about why I'm so passionate about being part of this shift in our industry. A few years ago, when I was working for a larger studio, the owners asked how I was able to keep my client retention rate so high. This wasn't something that I focused on necessarily. Instead, I made sure I was actively listening to clients, building relationships, practicing clear communication, and staying curious and trauma aware. Most importantly, I focused on helping folks feel Pilates in a way that helped their bodies come alive. It dawned on me that what kept clients coming back to see me, year after year, came directly from my Social Work background. The first tenet of Social Work is "Meet People Where They Are," and this tenet is what I brought to Pilates.

When I took a step back even further to deconstruct my client retention rate, it became sadly clear how much of my career I had felt like an outsider in our industry. I think this was partly because of my approach, but mostly because my body doesn't fit the cultural norm of what we consider a "Pilates Body." This feeling was reinforced by the instructors, and influencers, who were chosen to represent Pilates in the mainstream, and also by personal interactions with people who considered themselves "master teachers" (a phrase I no longer use). Feedback from my clients kept me in the Pilates world, but I stayed under the radar, because the toxic part of the industry made me feel small and unwelcome. I vowed never to be a part of someone feeling shame or fear in a Pilates space, and to work actively towards creating a framework of accessibility for instructors.

I began to curate a toolbox of small actions that teachers could practice to help people feel more welcome and supported in their spaces and empowered to take ownership of their practice. Sonja Price Herbert, the founder of Black Girl Pilates, talks about inclusivity (defined as the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised) in our Pilates studios and practices as an action, rather than as a final destination.

I think we can say the same about accessibility or adaptability: they are living, breathing processes that shift as we know more about who we're working with, and more about ourselves and our internalized biases. When we move someone towards a goal in Pilates, I hope that we acknowledge the small, meaningful steps that our clients take, and that we can extend that same grace towards ourselves as we take action towards a more inclusive, less hierarchical practice.

I've broken my approach to Pilates instruction into what I'm calling the 4 Cs: Communication, Comfort, Culture/Community and Collaboration. Please keep in mind that the categories inter-relate and are always expansive and open to re-interpretation. For instance, I recently offered a workshop on teaching a non-hierarchical group class and two of the participants used mobility aids. At the time, I did acknowledge that when I created the class, that I had not included options for people who used wheelchairs or had trouble getting up and down from the floor due to mobility. Now when I offer the workshop, it will be more inclusive.

Of course, when we talk about communication in movement instruction, we have to consider cueing. But rather than talk about how we say something, in this article, let's look at how we listen. Active listening can be an incredible practice for effective communication in classes or sessions. Attentiveness, open-ended questions, avoiding judgment, and empathy are some of the key components. Questions such as, "Tell me about your body today?" and "What do you think your body needs in terms of movement or exercises?" are simple, open-ended questions to ask, but the key is listening to both their words (which are only 10 percent of communication) and their body language, and leaving space in class for feedback to make sure that you're taking them in the most beneficial direction.

Comfort starts with a C, but what I really mean is support. When I start a class, I want to make sure that everyone knows that props are encouraged, especially if they are experiencing pain or tension. A simple pillow or towel under someone's head goes a long long way for nervous system regulation, which helps our bodies move with more ease. In addition, I layer every exercise so that there is always an option that folks can choose that will work



for their bodies. If there isn't, I've already invited open communication and they can let me know what's not working and we can find a way. When you help one person in a group class find support, I guarantee it will help others who didn't know to ask.

Creating a culture of open communication and support brings an organic sense of community. We are conditioned to compete in fitness, to look at the person next to us in class and think, "Why don't I look like them in this exercise?" Community takes away competition, provides a sense of safety to ask for what you need, encourages your classmates to find joy in movement.

Collaboration may require the biggest shift for some of us. Part of the culture of Pilates is to reinforce that we, as instructors, are the experts and the client needs us to succeed. True collaboration requires us to shed this bias and understand that the client is the expert of their own body. We can facilitate movement, but we have to be willing to listen, support, and tap into our curiosity. Collaborating in a session or a class creates a sense of empowerment for our clients and has the potential to reserve some of our energy as instructors so that we can remain attentive and passionate about what we do, and who we do it for.

Make no mistake, each action we take towards inclusion and accessibility in our personal practice and business will begin to shift the culture of the Pilates industry promoting long-term change for the better. The question is will you join us?

**Ivy Baron, MSW has been teaching movement since 2005 and is the owner of Requisite Pilates in Austin, TX. Informed by her Social Work Background, her 'Judgement Free' approach to Pilates creates a space for people to explore movement that fits their unique bodies. Ivy offers private coaching and learning opportunities for Pilates instructors. Find more information [here](#) or on her Instagram [@requisitepilates](#)**

# What sets you apart as a teacher

DON'T LET YOUR CLIENTS BE THE AFTERTHOUGHT IN YOUR SESSIONS - PUT THEIR NEEDS AND GOALS FIRST

*by Shelly Power, BS, NCPT*



I love being a Pilates teacher. I get to make such a difference in the lives of my clients by enhancing the quality of their lives through movement. I love to take class from other instructors to be inspired, challenged and to help me continue to grow and be a better teacher. As we reflect on the classes we participate in, I am sure we all have classes and teachers we love and classes and teachers that are okay, but we wouldn't necessarily seek them out again. Much of this is personal preference, and there are a lot of choices in the Pilates world today both in the studio and online which is great. But what sets some teachers apart from others? Here are some thoughts about what we can focus on.

I remember one of my greatest fears as a new teacher was that another teacher would see one of my clients, and it would appear like my clients didn't know anything about Pilates. So, I made it my mission to explain the why's, how's and what's to each client. Do your students or clients know the purpose of the goals of the exercises? If they were to practice at home, would they know what to focus on; know if they're doing it well; know what to pay attention to? If the answer is no, you need to start incorporating

that information into your teaching. There is certainly information overload, so cueing too much, too often won't help. Choose a concept or body position and explore that with your clients and give them the tools to be able to understand their bodies and their relationship to the movements.

Treat each client as an individual; create a Pilates program designed for them and adjust the program frequently. Auto-pilot happens to all of us: some days you may not be as creative and attentive as you could, but the main part of our teaching should be driven by the client. The ability to adapt to their needs and focus on their goals is what will set you apart from the average teacher.

In group classes, it can be a little more challenging to give each client detailed information so it's a good thing that there are general things like spine and hip mobility and improved awareness that most clients need to focus on. Once that is addressed, we again need to turn our observation skills toward the clients and learn what each one needs. A masterful instructor can make each person in a class feel like they're in a private



session. If you pause and observe your clients will tell you exactly what they need.

Get people moving and then layer in cues to make the movement even better. No one likes a long-winded set up. Keep people moving by transitioning into the next variation or exercise without stopping. When you can, vary the purpose or focus of the exercise. There can be a lot of repetition, so how can you make each time someone does an exercise new and unique?

Say more with fewer words and focus on telling clients what you want them to do. The brain, to not think of doing something, first must think about it and then try not to think about it. Whew. That's a lot of wasted time thinking about things you don't want. Instead, offer cues that explain the basics, get people moving, remind them about things to focus on, and transition to the next movement.

It's important to create rapport with our clients. Phrases like 'move that leg' or 'reach those arms long' lack connection with the client and is more like you are talking around or at them instead of to them. This type of language, often called 'distancing language', is quite common in today's world. Here is the same cue but speaking to the client 'move your leg' or 'reach your arms'. This is just one easy way to create rapport with your clients and make their experience special.

Speak clearly. Have you ever recorded yourself teaching and listened to your class or session? You can gain such insight by doing this every once in a while. It can tell you about the volume of your voice, how often you repeat the same cues or phrases, if you spend more time counting than teaching. And when you video your teaching, you get to see your body language, your posture, and how you are interacting (or not) with your clients. If you're thinking 'no way, I hate hearing or seeing myself', get over it and work on your delivery. And in most cases I bet you'll be pleasantly surprised how good it really is and appreciate where you can make small improvements. We should continually evolve.

Use thoughtful variations to add interest and challenge. A simple change in tempo – doing a movement at half the speed or double time – can help us discover different nuances in the movements. Remember not all variations need to be rockstar difficult. Try Footwork taking 8 counts to press out and 8 to return. It's a very different experience. Consider shifting the focus of the movement or getting your class to move without telling them what to focus on and then asking them what they're noticing. You might be surprised how five people doing the same movement can have very different experiences.

Stop cueing muscles. When we cue a single muscle or muscle group clients tend to overemphasise or over contract that area and the movement stops being efficient and spontaneous. A symphony isn't one musician or instrument, the same is true for movement. The body is a well-oiled machine that is capable of so much. The muscles know what to do if the maestro (the brain) is in charge. And yes, this is true for the pelvic floor. These muscles work in conjunction with the diaphragm and the trunk muscles, and respond to changes in breath, load and movement. For most people, the pelvic floor muscles are working in the background whether you're thinking about them or not. You will get much better results by cueing the bones and or tasks and then offering cues that improve the quality of movement. Again, the muscles are already working to produce the movement, there's no need to tell them to do what they are already doing.



Focus on the breathing as it relates to the movement. I often say, if you're counting, you're not teaching, and the same is true for continually saying inhale, exhale, inhale, exhale. This is not to say that breathing isn't important, it is, so when you're using a breath cue be sure that it is enhancing the movement or creating an opportunity for the client to experience something different or meaningful. Breath is a tool, not a rule.

As we continually move our focus to our clients, we'll have better outcomes, a busier schedule and help our clients reach their goals. It's natural to focus on our teaching, and yes being mindful of what we're doing is of course important but let's not let our clients be the afterthought. Sometimes we need to see the forest and sometimes the trees - and in Pilates our clients come first so keep seeing the trees and you'll be serving your clients in the best way possible.

**Shelly Power has taught for Polestar Pilates since its inception in 1992 and is the Vice President, International Education. Shelly teaches nationally and internationally for Polestar, administers exams, conducts Pilates workshops and Polestar Mentor and Educator trainings worldwide. She is a frequent presenter at international fitness and Pilates conferences. Shelly brings a unique and fresh approach to the work of Joseph Pilates.**

**Shelly will be running a two-day course on Critical Reasoning for rehabilitation and post-rehabilitation in Perth 8-9 July & Sydney 15-16 July. Find out more [here](#).**



# Are your clients complaining of sore wrists?

UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF WRIST-STRENGTHENING WORK FOR YOUR CLIENTS

by Tracey Nicholson

Wrist pain is very common in Pilates. From supporting the upper body in four Point Kneeling or Plank to Pulling Straps on the Reformer, all Instructors have had to modify or adjust exercises for clients with this common site of pain.

Often clients only discover wrist pain when they have over-extended themselves resulting in pain and or discomfort. Perhaps they avoid certain exercises or they mention that they can't load bear anymore. So let's discuss the most common causes and how we might support our clients in strengthening their wrists.

For non-pathological related pain, the two most common causes are

- 1.Weakness
- 2.Lack of flexibility

When we speak of weakness relating to wrist pain, we don't just mean the strength in our wrist or forearm muscles. The strength of all the muscles in the arm, shoulder, upper back and neck contribute to wrist pain and therefore strengthening these areas is paramount to avoiding wrist irritation and pain.

First up, let's break down what happens when we do a position such as four-point kneeling and or plank. Essentially we are looking to extend the wrist to 90 degrees, which is the maximum extension for most people who aren't hypermobile. It's worth noting that full wrist extension isn't a functional position. Just think about how often in daily activities you place your wrists in full extension. Therefore our soft tissues in the wrist and forearm are unaccustomed to this amount of extension. Once you add any of the following to the wrists:

- load of the upper body
- weight resistance
- reduction of contact points with the floor (reducing the base of support)
- added load with inflexibility

the result may lead to the joints of the wrist bearing all the weight and resulting in pain.

**So what can Pilates instructors and clients do to reduce the pain?**

Alignment – the same way optimal leg alignment can reduce knee pain, optimal alignment of the shoulder, elbow and wrist will distribute the load and increase strength in the muscles which maintain this alignment. Start with the shoulders, then ensure the elbows aren't hyper-extending, and finally at the wrist and hand, stack the wrists under the shoulders, spread out through the fingers, distributing the load from the heel of the hand all the way to the fingers.

The broad relationship between the fifth finger and the thumb is

also quite important. By broadening the distance between the fifth finger and the thumb it increases tension. This increased tension restricts torsion load, and increases axial load.

**Stretching** – Due to the increased time spent on computers the average adult doesn't move through wrist flexion and extension regularly enough. Adding wrist and forearm stretches to daily routines will greatly improve the wrist joint's flexibility, function and longevity.

**Flexibility** – try these exercises or movements to improve flexibility:

- Rotations in both directions
- Prayer stretch or slides
- Assisted flexion and extension

**Engage the core** – we all know it, we all say it often enough! In all exercises we teach in Pilates, we need to ensure our clients are engaging the core when performing exercises that load the wrists. By engaging our core, the load is distributed across many muscles and joints, think of a marquee with only two poles and stabilising ropes, versus a marquee with many poles and ropes.

### Let's look deeper into the anatomy

The wrist, forearm, upper arm and shoulder have many intricate bones, muscles, nerves and blood supply. There are eight small bones in the wrist and nineteen in the hand, allowing for multiple movements and stability through the ranges of movement. Due to the complexity of the entire limb, causes of wrist pain can be challenging for medical professionals to diagnose. The most commonly listed cause is repetitive motion.

Anatomical description from the National Library of Medicine (US) -

The forearm is the section of the upper limb from the elbow to the wrist, whose bony structure is formed by the radius (laterally) and ulna (medially). Two muscular compartments - an anterior (flexor) and posterior (extensor) compartment - contain together twenty muscles that act on the elbow and wrist joints, as well as carpometacarpal, metacarpophalangeal, and interphalangeal joints of the hand. Thus, the forearm muscles are essential to the fine motor actions of the upper limb, allowing for complex movements of the arm, wrist, and fingers - [Brittney Mitchell; Lacey Whited.](#)

### Cues for improving muscle recruitment

1. Connect from your armpit all the way down to the heel of your hand (or palm if holding straps)
2. Imagine the entire arm as one lever moving or stabilising from the shoulder joint
3. Push the floor or footbar or reformer frame away through the entire exercise (closed chain exercises)
4. Spread through the entire hand. For example don't allow the palm of the hand to arch away from any surface
5. Engage the fifth finger (turn on your pinky) as this will engage the serratus anterior and the latissimus dorsi.

Suitable modifications or adjustments and props

Many clients find relief from decreasing the amount of wrist flexion as results in raising the heel of the hand higher than the fingers.



***“The strength of all the muscles in the arm, shoulder, upper back and neck contribute to wrist pain – (we must) strengthening these areas...to avoid wrist irritation and pain”***

On the mat – roll the end of the mat and position the heel of the hands on the rolled section of mat, or position the client on their elbows rather than hands by using a yoga block or Pilates Reformer box. Remember shorter levers reduce the force needed to move or sustain weight.

On the studio equipment – similar to the mat, raise the heel of the hand, use a box under the elbows.

Props like a rolled-up towel or foam roller can also assist when adjusting an exercise. While props like the spikey balls, Markarlu, etc will aid to increase blood flow, stimulate nerves, increase range of motion and flexibility and relieve tension.

**Let’s look a little closer at a couple of common Pilates exercises and how to adjust them to suit.**

1.Plank to Pike on the Reformer – this exercise can be done multiple ways. You can face the footbar and place hands on the frame or the footbar. In this option, clients can adjust the exercise to position their elbows on the frame or footbar but this may be somewhat uncomfortable and unsafe. Additionally, when facing this direction the resistance is to lower abdominals and leg muscles. If you position your clients the other way and use the short box under their elbows then the exercise becomes safer, less painful, AND the added bonus is that the resistance is applied to the arm and shoulder muscles which assuming optimal alignment is present, will work towards decreasing wrist pain in the long term.

2.Balance Control on Reformer – Place the hands on the shoulder rests in the less than 90 degrees of flexion position discussed earlier to reduce the stress through the wrist joint.  
Side Bend on the Mat – Perform the exercise on the forearm to reduce the load on the wrist whilst still working on shoulder strength and stability.

**So for clients who refuse to work on their wrists, what can you do?**



If your client is resistant to strengthening their wrists due to pain or advice they may have received from a medical professional this is actually great! Why, because the wrist is unlikely the cause, just the site of pain. Therefore work on the client's shoulders, posture, core, etc. It can help to cue your client to focus on the movement of the humerus and just allow the rest of the arm to follow. (assuming optimal alignment is present).

Building or rebuilding confidence post-pain or when pain is still present is of utmost importance. Explaining to your client that the pain won't disappear but that we are striving to work with an around the pain. This may look like short stints of time in a four-point kneeling position, then interspersing with leg or core exercises before returning to arm exercises like long box arms on the reformer or seated lat pull-downs on the Cadillac.

Considering the importance of the wrists in the body and how often this joint is utilised in daily activities, wrist flexibility and strength should be a focus of each session. And this isn't difficult as any arm exercise if completed effectively, will benefit the wrist. Exercises where the load or resistance is applied to the elbow or upper arm will benefit the wrists.

In short, we all need to work our wrists more, whether it's our clients or our own. It's important that we understand the benefits of this work and find ways to incorporate more of it into our teaching.

**Tracey Nicholson is the Director of Tensegrity Training an RTO that offers several different levels of training to help you at any stage of your career in Pilates. Offering accredited training, short courses and somatic and movement therapy, Tracey and her team are dedicated to their clients and comprehensive in approach. You can find out more at [tensegritytraining.com.au](https://tensegritytraining.com.au)**



# Finding an effortless approach to the Single Leg Stretch

THE SINGLE LEG STRETCH - DONE 7 WAYS WITH THE INTENTION OF FINDING MORE CONTROL.

*by Brad Inness*

For me, the Single Leg Stretch is all about controlling the body with our movements. Finding oppositional stretch, stabilisation, muscle dissociation and breath. Like the Hundred, I see the exercise as an opportunity to find endurance and stamina while moving the blood through the body with the breath.

I see a lot of clients struggle with this exercise because like many other exercises, their focus is drawn closer to a destination rather than a process. It's common to see too much pressure put on the abdominal wall which results in loss of stability, control, and breath. By breaking the exercise down into fun, yet challenging variations, clients can find an opportunity to connect to various parts of their body resulting in an effortless approach.

Here are some ways you can challenge clients to find this deeper work.

## 1. The Pilates Circle with Ladder Barrel (sideways)

The intention of this variation assists in finding the stretch more in the upper extremities by releasing the neck flexors and using the

serratus anterior and tricep bracci to stabilise the upper body while working with proprioception. The challenge is drawn closer to utilising the larger upper body muscle groups to lengthen the spine while maintaining softness in the neck and control and stability through the pelvis and the spine on an uneven surface. It offers the client the option to work harder by using their Psoas to pull the knee towards the chest, while finding stretch in opposition at the same time. They can also try a Double Leg Stretch holding the Circle for a challenge, see here if the client maintains same stretch and softness found in the first variation.

## 2. Baby Arc

This variation helps to achieve deeper work in finding the stretch in the lower extremities with the hip in extension while maintaining lumbar-pelvic stability. Using the Arc clients can feel the lumbar vertebrae connected to the arch while still feeling a sense of neutral in slight lumbar flexion. It's challenging but so rewarding for the hips! You can also add weights to the ankles to achieve both a deeper and stronger stretch. Watch the client doesn't begin to overextend through their lumbar, especially when loaded. I like to keep a close eye on the arrangement of their centre and look closely at the hip extensors. A great preparation for The Single/Double Leg Lift.

### 3. Toning Ball

Using the toning ball on the Transverse Abdominus (TA) can offer a great tactile cue to clients to achieve optimal depth through their TA and highlight a challenging neutral pelvis intention while moving. It's a great way to allow the client to feel "what their centre is up to. It offers a challenge to maintain optimal control through their centre while facilitating a wider diaphragmatic breath. Beginning with feeling the back of their thighs on the mat and moving from that place.

### 4. Cadillac

I like this variation as it's offering the client to feel the connection through their cervical spine. By pushing against the bar and using the larger muscle groups of the upper back and latissimus, the client can find length through the back of their head while moving through the exercise. It one of the more challenging variations for many, as it highlights where their control is coming from. For example, have they been properly connecting to their upper back during the exercise or other variations? It's commonly taught that the exercises focus is the abdominals. A great option is to try single arms to challenge the stabilising stretch and strength in opposition using the internal and external obliques. Keep a close eye on their Upper Trapezius to make sure they are not working from here and are connecting to their Lower Trapezius.

### 5. Reformer Arms wide

One of the variations of The Single Leg Stretch using the Reformer I like to teach is Arms Wide. It's assisting the client to find a strong stabilising connection through the latissimus and the obliques while maintaining the stretch through their mid-upper back. Challenging overall spinal, shoulder and core stability. It can encourage the client to find softness through their Upper Trapezius. The exercise can be done with or without a chest lift with the same intention. Adding the chest lift will increase the challenge through the Deep Cervical Flexors and control through their Centre.

### 6. Wunda Chair with Overball or Hanging Cadillac with Trapeze

This challenges the client to maintain work through their gluteal and hamstrings while challenging Pelvic Stability and working with a neutral alignment through their shoulders. It can be challenging to not take too much load into the neck, by using the opportunity to create a lot of stretch through their pectoralis and anterior deltoid while connecting strongly to the shoulder stabilisers and can allow them to begin to feel softness and stretch through their Deep Cervical Flexors and Spine. This is also a great preparation for The Roll U



### 7. Mat (same hand to ankle, opposite to knee)

When I feel clients have gained an awareness on where to stabilise and stretch from and the stomach is strong enough to support the legs, I then like to bring it to the Mat with the focus on the breathing. With the above intentions, I cue them to inhale to prepare for the exercise, and as they begin to exhale lift into the Pelvic Floor and move through consecutively 6-8 repetitions while holding the lift and exhale all the air out of their lungs, and then release the Pelvic Floor on the inhalation. This intension about piecing it all together, creating endurance and strong/mindful movements.



Bradley Inness owns [Ateom](#) an intimate boutique studio nestled in the Byron Bay Hinterland, NSW, Australia.



Photography [@robertslabihoudek\\_photography](#)

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# Creating workshops that speak to your clients

LEARN HOW TO CREATE WORKSHOPS THAT YOUR CLIENTS RETURN TO TIME AND TIME AGAIN

*by Maddie Garlick*

As Studio Manager at Northern Rivers Pilates (NRP) in Lismore, NSW, Australia I aspire to create a positive movement experience for my clients in the studio but also for them in a practical sense outside of the studio and to give them the confidence and opportunity to continue their practice at home. As part of the NRP Workshop series, we hold two hour workshops every month on a Friday afternoon which are open to the NRP community to continue their education about their bodies and their movement. I initially wanted to begin these workshops to give the clients the space and time for themselves to become more attuned with their body, but to also create habits and rituals to continue their movement at home. All of our workshops are around giving the clients ways to better their bodies when they are not in the studio, as we don't want our clients to become reliant on the studio space. When a client has the confidence to create movement at home, when they are feeling a little stiff or a niggle comes on, they can start the process of healthy movement with the knowledge they get from these workshops. Whether it is simple movements like pelvic clocks on a chi ball, roll downs on the wall, lateral stabilisation work on the Oov or rolling on a release peanut, they have the exercises to help relieve any pain they may be experiencing.

At NRP we use small props and apparatus 'til the cows come home'. The beauty of these pieces of equipment is that they can assist a client if they are struggling to understand the concept of an exercise or we are seeing imbalances in the body that are resulting in a recruitment or overcompensation of a certain movement pattern or muscle group. Clients often fall in love with the small props as they can notice how beneficial they can be through their bodies.

A popular prop is the Oov, a 3D piece of equipment designed by Daniel Vladeta which is designed to move the body in the three planes of movement. It replicates the natural curvatures of the spine, creates equilibrium throughout the body and provides a safe environment to explore new patterns of movement. If you haven't tried the Oov before I encourage you to do so, this can work for all bodies as there are multiple Oov sizes. Most contraindications are suitable on the Oov. It can increase stability and mobility, be an invitation to new motor control patterns, challenge proprioception and promote dissociation of the limbs. I could go on and on; we are obsessed with the Oov and our clients are too.

When you first get on the Oov you most likely feel a bit wobbly and a bit disconnected with the piece of equipment. The Oov is designed to mould to your spine and encourages your spine to



mould to it - it doesn't take long for your body to become one with the Oov. There are a few simple ways to assess movement patterns, by lifting a leg to the table top or an arm to the ceiling. An amazing thing I remember Daniel Vladeta stating, which has stuck with me all this time is that the Oov almost comes up with the cues for you, the body is having a conversation with the Oov as soon as you are on it and will tell the body how to react to keep you on in it. Nine times out of 10 every client that walks into our studio has been on an Oov.

We believe so much in the Oov and the bliss it can give the body and we wanted to give our clients inspiration and almost a bit of an obsession with the Oov too. Hence our Move with Oov workshop was born and I dedicated the two hours to incrementally walking them through the exercises we give them regularly in their studio, semi-private. This allowed them to have a better understanding of how they felt on the Oov while doing a certain exercise but also understand what they are trying to achieve out of their body.

We set the room up for our 17 clients who had signed up for the workshop and started by doing some basic anatomy of the spine and how different curvatures of the spine can be utilised by the Oov. This was a great way for clients to completely understand some of the anatomical terms or biomechanical functions we may use in a brief cue in our semi-private sessions and a few 'ahhhaaa' moments were had. The clients are all familiar with lying on the Oov so we started a basic class on the Oov with the exercises that they would use for homework. The clients all got Move with the Oov handouts I



created with each exercise broken down including the number of repetitions and set count. We incorporated simple exercises that were not compromising or dangerous to do at home without an instructor next to them. Some of the exercises that were included were Arm Arcs on the Oov with hand weights, Side lying series on the Oov with BodyMov Band, Book opening, standing balance work and lots more!

The two hours of Move with the Oov allowed us to spend time on creating a relationship with each exercise, and filling mental notes into what felt difficult, or easy, or to acknowledge if there was a prominent imbalance in one aspect of movement or side of the body. This is what the Oov shows up so greatly compared to other pieces of equipment in our studio due to its three-dimensional nature. The Oov can make a client really consciously aware of imbalances of overactive sides of the body, it can highlight mobility issues in the shoulder girdle, identify if a client can force close the sacrum correctly and so much more. The workshop gave the clients time to grasp the Anterior and Posterior Oblique slings which the Oov is really great at highlighting, getting them to deeply tune into their bodies unlike they had before.

Spending a lot of time working with the Oov in personal practice, listening and learning from Daniel Vladeta in various formats and also researching the slings and understanding them on a deeper level to educate for Polestar Pilates, I was able to strip it back and present it to clients in a way that a non-anatomical brain could understand.

At NPR we pride ourselves on teaching our clients not only Pilates but how their bodies respond and how they can better their

*“All of our workshops are around giving the clients ways to better their bodies when they are not in the studio”*

functional movement and better their everyday life. Our clients enjoy learning about the anatomy of their bodies and finding those little weaknesses or challenges that their body may present. I believe each workshop that we have offered is benefiting them in how they care for themselves and it almost becomes therapeutic to have such in-touch and internal conversations with your own body.



We may see a theme from time to time in our studio which may be an inspiration for our next workshop. Recently we have had a lot of clients chat to us about how their menstrual cycle affects how they move and their energy when they may be in a certain phase of their cycle and attending their Pilates sessions. This then led us to offering a workshop called Cycle Aligned Pilates which deconstructed each phase of the menstrual cycle and how different forms of movement can assist in the way you feel during that time. By appealing to common questions or ailments in the studio it can be a great base to start creating your own workshops in your studios.

So what are the secrets to having a successful workshop?

Leave plenty of time to advertise your workshop. Time is of the essence and when you give enough notice, you give clients time to shift schedules and prioritise their time to join a workshop. Creating diversity within your workshop series, and appealing to all types of clients is important to keep inclusivity across the studio community.

Make it affordable, if you are asking your clients to give up their Friday afternoon, you want to make the workshop accessible. Make it a spicy jam-packed two hours ready to blow your clients' mind and give them bang for their buck.

Be sure to be passionate in what you are speaking about and the rest will follow.

**Maddi Garlick is the Studio Manager at [Northern Rivers Pilates](#) in Lismore and an Assistant Educator for Polestar Pilates. NRP will be holding a mini-conference called [Power in Motion](#) designed for Pilates professionals 21-22 October 2023. Contact them for more information.**

# Hips Don't Lie

GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR CLIENTS WHEN IT COMES TO THEIR HIP PAIN AND HELP THEM FIND STRATEGIES THEY CAN USE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

*by Julia Frankish*



Hips are complex and fascinating joints. The more I work with people experiencing hip pain, the more literature I read about hips and the more I explore and experience different exercises on my own hips, the deeper my fascination grows. I've tried to identify some of the tips and tricks I've discovered along the way including some problem-solving strategies that you might find helpful when working with clients with tight, achy or sore hips.

My strategy involves a two-stage process which begins with releasing and subsequently strengthening the hips because in my experience, this gives the best results.

## Releasing the hips

Most of my sessions start with an exercise to release the problem hip, especially with anyone remarking on tight hips, anterior hip pain, tightness or a grumbly low back. My preference is to use a small, firm round ball. I find these are very targeted, and give a smooth surface for the muscles to release around. I like a small ball for really getting into specific areas, and knowing your anatomy is super useful. Pull out those anatomy charts – and while you're at it – educate your clients on the why of what you're doing so they can give you feedback which will help you to determine not only the course of that session, but your programming overall.

It also use spikey balls, and I know people love them. I'd encourage you to try both, and do what suits you and your clients.

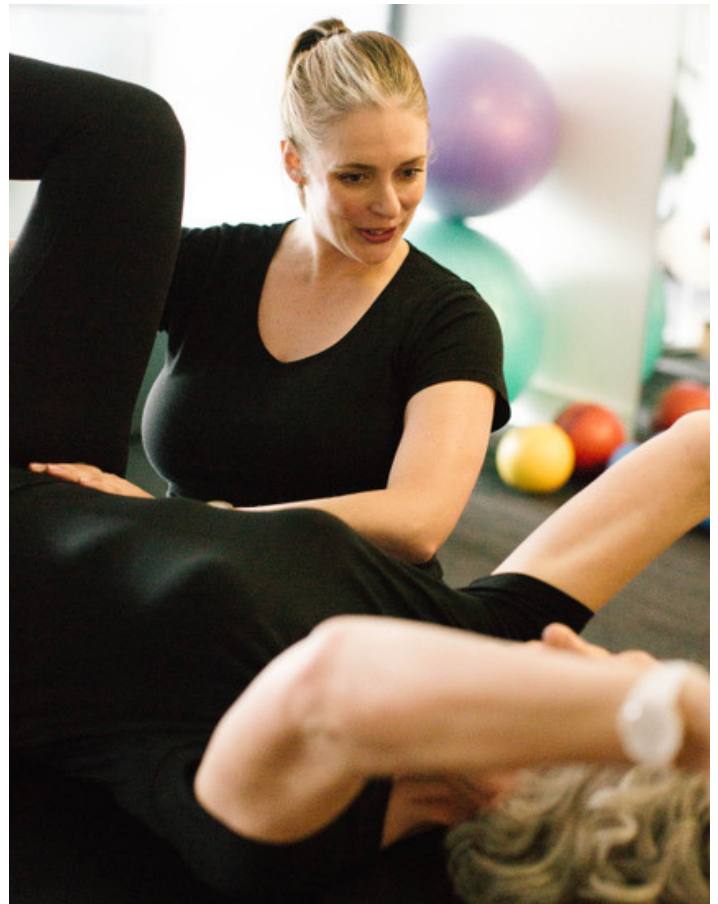
[Spikey ball lateral glutes bilaterally](#) – knee openings double and single with a license to rotate the pelvis from side to side.

[Spikey balls into central glute bilaterally](#) – add hip flexion single leg, up up down down and femur circles. Be mindful about them not falling into a posterior pelvic tilt.

[Smooth ball into hip rotators](#) – roll the pelvis down toward the sit bone on the side you're trying to release.

[Foam roller release](#) of quads bilaterally/unilaterally and adductors and foam roller/ball release of tensor fasciae latae (TFL). I like to use this for desensitisation. I find it's helpful to down-regulate these muscles when we are trying to work on strengthening specific muscles around the hip and pelvis.

I like to spend a minimum of ten minutes on this release series. Releasing (but not stretching!) the muscles before strengthening is something that is overlooked but is, in my opinion, essential to a good outcome. After each stage, I think it's useful to record how you/the client feels, especially when you're introducing this series. The art of noticing and becoming attuned to how your body feels is an undervalued skill (and one that takes time to develop).



*“Teach (your clients) strategies for times when they’re away from the studio and feeling sore. This will empower them to manage their own bodies”*

I know that the activity is effective when the client reports feeling heavier and more grounded to the mat. I talk about the idea of spreading your glutes across the mat to make the biggest widest imprint possible. I use the analogy of instead of resting on two firm peaches, it should feel like melted ice cream!

This provides the perfect environment to work on specific strengthening and the concepts of active hip relaxation – rather than overusing the muscles surrounding the hip and pelvis and ending up with a gripping or clamping sensation. This is specifically important in relation to psoas and TFL. I encourage lightness, gliding and smooth glossy movements. These cues give a lovely smooth quality to hip movements and help with better muscle activation. Now we are primed and ready to work on some strength!

### **Strengthening the hips**

There are so many exercises we could choose for strengthening the glutes, and each body will respond differently to the same exercises. I primarily like to look at

- Adductor strength
- Glute max strength
- Glute medius strength
- Hip external rotator and internal rotation strength and range of motion (ROM) independently and then introduce more complex movements depending on where their deficiencies are.

Some of my all-time favourites include:

Adductor squeezes with a ball or magic circle squeeze.

Side to Side with the knees and feet wide

Bridges: Keep it low! I teach this just hovering the hips off the floor

Four-point kneel rock backs: try to hip hinge and activate the glutes in four-point kneeling.

Assisted Squats. I teach these either hanging off the upright poles at the end of the trapeze table, with the tower bar, or the TRX suspension system.

Standing leg press on all the apparatus, the Wunda Chair is my pick

Scooter with preference into adduction/abduction with power band gives an extra dimension of control, strength and stability into the exercise.

{You can read how Julia applies this in more depth on The Pilates Journal website}

In all of these exercises education of your client is key! The more they understand the intention behind what they’re trying to do, and the muscle that should be working or not, the better the feedback they will be able to give you. Try to ask open ended questions. Rather than saying ‘is that feeling good?’ Try asking ‘how does that feel?’ or ‘where are you feeling that?’

### **In closing, a few related tips and observations.**

— Don’t be worried about making them sore – it’s likely to happen along the journey as you both figure out the best way to navigate getting stronger together. But at the same time, it’s something that’s important to talk to them about these issues.

— Progress isn’t linear, and there are lots of factors impacting their outcomes. Don’t worry about making an exercise look pretty or perfect. Be playful and experiment. You can always go back to a release or exercise that you did earlier, or in another session that left them feeling good.



Julia is the owner and director of [Evolved Pilates](#) in Fairfield, Melbourne which she opened in 2014. Julia has been teaching for Pilates for 20 years, and her work alongside a range of health practitioners along with her dance experience earlier in life, ignited a lifelong love of the method and its intelligent movement principles.

Julia has a passion for Pilates education, having taught Pilates teachers and delivers regular lectures on a range of related topics to allied health practitioners, Pilates teachers and into the dance world. She will be presenting 'It's Hip to be Square' at the 2023 PAA Conference in August in Australia.

— Don't be fearful of making a mistake or the client ending up sore will either mean you will avoid the area completely or not challenge them sufficiently.

— Teach strategies for times when they're away from the studio and feeling sore. This will empower them to manage their own bodies. As I always say to my clients, there's no point in me holding my cards close to my chest and not showing you what and why I'm choosing specific exercises. I need you to problem-solve alongside me if we're going to succeed together

— Don't be afraid to fail! Or for the client to fail – sometimes we need to watch things unfold (so long as no risk is involved) rather than micro-manage. Don't confuse problem-solving with micro-managing. In this respect, I've found a number of parallels between parenting and Pilates teaching!

This is where communication, confidence and experience all come into play. If you don't have honest open communication with your client, you won't be able to hear their perspective which is imperative to a successful outcome.

I really encourage you to be creative, critically problem solve and think about how you can use the movements and repertoire you know and tweak them to preference certain muscles. Our teaching, like us and our clients, needs to evolve. Be clear on your objectives, and use your flexibility and curiosity as your teaching super power!

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# Level up your teaching with Amy Taylor Alpers

DO YOU FEEL CONFIDENT IN KNOWING WHEN A MUSCLE IS FIRING? DO YOU STEER AWAY FROM SPINAL EXTENSION WORK? ALPERS UPCOMING TOUR WILL GIVE YOU THE TOOLS YOU NEED

by *Cie'Jai Zarb*

In July of this year, Amy Taylor Alpers will be heading to Australia to help Instructors further develop their teaching skills. The Pilates Journal caught up with Amy to discuss what she will be focusing on when she heads down-under.

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So what is a uniformly developed body? Have you seen one?

Ask Co-Founder of The Pilates Center and teacher trainer Amy Taylor Alpers what this means to her and you'll get insight into her teaching focus and style. "When I'm teaching Pilates, the goal is to uniformly develop the body in front of me. To not only make the

body strong and flexible, but to help bring it back into its ideal alignment, balance, and organisation; the way nature designed it well before civilisation took its toll on it," said Amy.

"Mr Pilates believed that human health lay in returning the body back to the way it was originally designed - to its natural and normal way of moving. He felt we should emulate the way babies and animals move so innately before they have been taught anything or ruined by things like sitting in a chair all day," she said.

This concept flows perfectly into Amy's upcoming session called 'Finding Your Centre through your Feet and Hands'. "Of the 206 bones in our bodies, 106 of them are in the hands and feet, and 75% of our motor cortex is used just to move them. Making sure the hands and feet are used correctly during the Pilates movements, ensures that the information coming to and from our brains is fully activated and reaches through to the ends of our bodies, incorporating all of us more functionally," said Amy.

"Our nervous systems are still designed around our original four-footedness, so the connection from our hands and feet directly activates the abdominals correctly.

"Ideally, when we move normally and naturally, the abdominals should simply do what they are designed to do when needed rather than being manually contracted or held. During exercises, we may have to strengthen them back to that, but then we want them to operate automatically.

"Just look when you watch a cheetah run you see that with her eyes locked on her prey, her brain must then instantaneously calculate exactly where each paw (hands and feet) must land with perfect timing. This is what enables her to run so fast and accurately. The rest of her body – for example, her spine, abdominals and the like – must respond accordingly, naturally and normally, to support this action or else she will lose speed, miss her prey, and/or even hurt herself," said Amy.

Amy will also be presenting another session called 'Timing is Everything'. Here she explains why it is so important that Pilates teachers have the skills to know when a muscle is firing.

"This is what teaching Pilates is all about to me. How do we know if the movement timing was right or not? For me, it's simple to explain but takes a lot of practice to recognise. It must look like the way nature designed it. Human movement is made up of an inexplicable series of neurological communications. If one muscle fires out of sequence, the movement will be uncoordinated or ineffective at the very least, dangerous at worst. If you watch nature moving enough, you will see what natural and normal should look like. We will be talking a lot about how to develop this ability.

Finally, we take another look at one of Amy's other sessions about spinal extension and how we should feel confident as teachers when working with the spine. "Our modern lifestyle is not good for the human spine – especially all the sitting. Spines today are filled with tightness, weakness, injury and pain, as well as scary beliefs from the media and other factors. Pilates teachers are not immune to this fear. We must realise that as movement teachers, we hopefully believe that it is always better to move something than to not move it.

"Pilates teachers have basically had the fear of god put into them when it comes to moving spines. However, if we move spines in

***“Every spinal joint that’s not moving in its ideal design will weaken, stress... To me, it is essential...that every part of the spine move exactly as it’s designed - to the best of its ability today - for optimal health.”***



the exact way in which they are designed – in other words, return them back to their natural and normal movement sequence, timing and balance, they will heal themselves. We must be careful, but not fearful.

“It’s important that we help our clients remove fear and tension in the spine. Our nerves run through every vertebral joint – going to and from all parts of the body (from the organs, to muscles, to systems and more) to send and receive unfathomable amounts of information. Every spinal joint that’s not moving in its ideal design will weaken, stress, if not disable, this vital communication. To me, it is essential to one’s health, that every part of the spine move exactly as it’s designed – to the best of its ability today – for optimal health.

“Each spine has its own unique path to take. Depending on the history of that unique spine, we must watch with care, how it moves. There may be pain, trauma, fear, injury, surgeries, fusions and more going on. So we are always and only want the very best possible movement that a specific spine is willing to do today. We must encourage and enable, but not force or assume. In this workshop, we’ll explore how we can do this with care and confidence. Because movement is life after all!” said Amy.

**Amy Taylor Alpers co-founded [The Pilates Center \(TPC\)](#) and [The Pilates Center Teacher Training Program \(TPCTTP\)](#) over 30 years ago in Boulder, Colorado. When not travelling the world to teach both foundational and graduate-level Pilates teacher education, she remains part of the core faculty for TPCTTP, mentors advanced teachers, teaches classes and private clients. You can join Amy for her Australian tour with [PilatesITC](#). To find out more visit [here](#).**

# Caring about your studio means caring for your equipment

WHAT CAUSES CRACKS IN YOUR UPHOLSTERY AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

by *Cie'Jai Zarb*

Owning 12 Pilates Reformers and maintaining them appropriately is no small feat for any Pilates Studio. For Naike Mouromtsev from Kefi Studios in Five Dock, Sydney Australia she learned an important lesson when it comes to looking after the upholstery on her Pilates equipment.

“Our studio had been open a year when we discovered cracks in three of our shoulder blocks on our Reformers and we knew we had to act quickly,” said Naike.

“I have three studios running, a Reformer studio, a mixed equipment and a clinical studio. My business partner Fanny Nassour and I started this business from a place of passion and care about the presentation of our studio. Our studio is a place for community, we have daughters, mothers and grandmothers all coming to our studio or mums, dads and their teenagers, it’s a real inclusive multi-generational studio.

“So naturally I care a lot for my equipment; we do a deep clean every two weeks and in the busyness of running a studio I’d run out of the wipes that are supplied by Pilates Reformers Australia (PRA). And while I couldn’t get my hands on their wipes immediately, I sourced some from another supplier.

“The issue I faced was that these new wipes, although alcohol-free were detrimental to the upholstery.

“When I first mentioned the crack in the shoulder block to Cheryl and Adrian from PRA, they were right onto it. I sent them some photos and Adrian came down for my Reformers first-year service. He was also able to take a good look at what was going on and provide me with a quick solution.

“I didn’t realise that the wipes I had been using were making the leather look shiny, which Adrian mentioned was a result of the leather being dehydrated. That’s what had created the crack in the leather on a high-use area of my machines. Near the seam you could see the foam underneath so it was important to me that we got this sorted so it didn’t impact our clients’ experience.

“I knew the upholstery on my Align Pilates machines was of good quality. I didn’t question it. I just realised that all the oil, body



lotion, fake tan and sweat that my clients were bringing into the studio was another reason why I needed the right wipes to get the best clean for my machines.

“After our discussion, Adrian kindly replaced three shoulder blocks for my three impacted machines and I got the new parts within a day so it didn’t impact my teaching schedule. I now realise I should have listened to the experts and used their wipes but like everything life gets busy and you just get by,” said Naike.

Adrian Burgess CEO of Pilates Reformers Australia explained further, “Unfortunately what Naike and Fanny have experienced with the wipes and upholstery is becoming more prevalent across the industry. A wipe is not just a wipe. Many components go into getting the right balance of chemicals to do a thorough clean, are environmentally friendly but also maintain the integrity of the upholstery and frame. That is why we worked with an Australian company to produce independently tested PGW wipes made specifically for Pilates equipment. They are wetter and larger than traditional wipes meaning that studios use less wipes, save money and give their equipment longevity”.

Naike explains that she obviously cares about the equipment because she pays for it. “I also understand that small things like little cracks in upholstery or marks on the walls can all impact a client’s experience.



*"I didn't realise that the wipes I had been using were making the leather look shiny, which Adrian mentioned was a result of the leather being dehydrated"*

"A lot of the feedback we've received to date is that our studio looks really clean, high end and premium. This might be the colour palette we chose for our brand but it's also how we present all our equipment. It also impacts our Google and Mind Body Online reviews because it's the little things that matter so much to new clients," said Naike.

"Sure the upholstery cracks didn't make any change to the workout itself but the whole experience end to end is everything. I also think I use less wipes now too which is saving me some money, especially when you run about 60 Reformer classes a week like we do.



"I had tried a lot of Reformers by the time I decided to purchase my Align Pilates Reformers with PRA and by process of elimination I knew these were best for me. I'm really happy with the machines and the level of service. I'm also happy that they have stock as I'm about to open our fourth studio soon too!" said Naike.

Align-Pilates upholstery is known for its impeccable quality, lush look and slick finish and is also responsibly sourced. This means it ticks the box for being environmentally aware during its manufacturing methods and does not use toxic chemicals during the process.

Responsible cleaning of your upholstery with Australian Made PGW Wipes supplied exclusively by PRA will extend the life of your equipment. Independently tested PGW Wipes are biodegradable and compostable and combined with care of your Align Pilates equipment will extend the warranty of Align Pilates upholstery from 120 days to 365 days if used uninterrupted for this period of time.

Photography: Kefi Studios and PRA.



**Worried about your equipment? Pilates Reformers Australia is happy to discuss your equipment maintenance requirements.**

You can get in touch at [info@prateam.com.au](mailto:info@prateam.com.au) or via website [pilatesreformersaustralia.com.au](http://pilatesreformersaustralia.com.au) or 1300 107 331.



# Encourage your clients to feel and find the benefits of stretching

EDUCATE YOUR CLIENTS ON HOW STRETCHING WILL IMPROVE THEIR PRACTICE

*by Kimberley Garlick*

How common it is to hear a non-Pilates practicing person say something like ‘Oh yes I want to start Pilates so I can have a good stretch’. Hmm, such a sentence may have grated on me a few years ago until I began to embrace that the lack of awareness of what Pilates offers can be a wonderful conversational opener. Sure we incorporate a lot of stretch and if that is what someone feels they need.

Does Pilates improve flexibility? Yes. Does a Pilates session include stretching of all forms? Yes. But will stretching alone improve the sensation of tightness or lack of movement and availability to perform in long-range? No. Sometimes one may need some stiffness in one place to create better flexibility. Oh this topic can open up a magnificent can of worms.

So lets define what it means to stretch; It is to be made or capable of making longer without breaking or tearing.

In Pilates quite often we think stretch is the answer for most situations, but is it?

When we think of stretch, terms that come to mind are Proprioceptive Neuromuscular Facilitation (PNF), Dynamic, Ballistic, isometric and Static. Good old terminology we have referred to for as long as I can remember. All of these forms mentioned have a decent purpose and role and are quite often happening in Pilates without intentionally doing so.

When we are investigating a client and their requirements, we are looking at their stiffness versus flexibility, their mobility versus their stability. We are aware that a tight muscle is often a symptom of some other part of the body not working as it should.

Probably the most common comment we hear is ‘my hamstrings are so tight I can’t touch my toes’.Do we address just hamstring flexibility alone? I personally look at starting from the feet and working up. It’s a wonderful segue into deeper conversations. One way I take my client’s mind off ‘my tight hamstrings’ is to start them with a ball under the foot and take the time to explore the stiffness in the foot. The feet have a gorgeous array of bones that make up the foot and the ankle and about after one minute of massage and deep release, I ask the client to do a roll down and notice the difference they feel between their left and right hamstring. I guarantee they will feel they have improved their hamstring flexibility in the foot they have just released. Then follow with the other foot. Then work with pelvic clocks on a chi ball and take the

***“I want to encourage us all to look at the need to stretch in a more subtle light and take into account why the body is tightening in one area”***

time to explore the variations and create the amazing sacrum float sensation. Another exercise to now indulge the body with is some typewriter bridging. This movement hones in on the spinal mobility with the facet joint conversation occurring at a decent volume.

The body has now enjoyed mobilising mostly through the sagittal plane, so I would invite the client then to do some rotation with book openings and then mermaid of appropriate choice in the coronal plane.

To gain optimum spinal mobility and encourage some shoulder mobility and scapular movement, I also suggest adding for our tight hamstring client the golden Supine Scapula series on the Cadillac with the variation of the very responsive movement of the tactile version into rotation. Incorporating extension in a supported Swan on the Chair with prone shoulder awareness movements will also add some spice. At this point I’m confident that the client with tight hamstrings will have a notable response at the end of his session with a roll down of appropriate sort, for example, rolling down a wall, free-standing or hamstring one on the chair.

So put simply, I want to encourage us all to look at the need to stretch in a more subtle light and take into account why the body is tightening in one area. Newton’s third Law of Motion states that for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. So if your client feels tightness in one area, you may need to work on the opposite reaction that is the cause and it may be about strength, or stability or mobility. Let’s give our clients a newfound appreciation of the body that may embolden them with an explorative view to movement and wellness.

**Kimberley Garlick is the Director of Northern Rivers Pilates in Lismore, Australia. She is also a Certified Polestar Studio/Rehab Practitioner and Educator/Mentor for Polestar International since 2003.**



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# Instructor Spotlight: Therese Ogg

WE SPEAK WITH PILATES INSTRUCTOR THERESE OGG ABOUT HOW SHE'S BROUGHT PILATES TO A SMALL OUTBACK TOWN IN AUSTRALIA FOR THE FIRST TIME

**Q. Tell us a little about yourself and your Pilates background?**

**A.** I'm Therese Ogg, and I created my Pilates business, Channel Pilates in 2021 in Cloncurry. I moved to Cloncurry in 2019, which is in North West Queensland, Australia, to live with my now husband. He grew up on a sheep station five hours East of Cloncurry, which out here is considered relatively close, and that is where we will be moving to later this year. If you're wondering how a girl from New South Wales has ended up here, we met 15 years ago at boarding school and have been together ever since. Even though it was a big move, it was certainly worth it and I was ready to start my life in the outback.

This is my third year of teaching mat and reformer Pilates classes. I have a home studio, which is where I teach my private classes. I teach group classes at a local hall. My spaces definitely aren't what you find in the city, but at the end of the day it's about quality movement and everyone loves the opportunity to come together and do Pilates. I'm the first person in our community to offer Pilates, so I'm really proud of that. I came up with my business name,

Channel Pilates to represent how we channel a particular purpose into our Pilates practice that can be expressed or felt. It could be strength, calm, or specific feelings. It might change for clients and even myself depending on what is going on in their lives, their energy levels or their mood when they arrive at class. Pilates encourages a mind-body connection, you can't have one without the other.

**Q. Tell us who you are completing your Diploma of Pilates with?**

**A.** I'm completing my Diploma of Pilates with Pilates ITC. When I completed my Pilates matwork I would travel 1700km to Brisbane for contact days and work experience. When I enrolled to do my Diploma, I decided it would be more practical to be an online student. I definitely miss hands-on cueing from other instructors and not having access to all of the studio equipment, but I'm determined to make it work. I don't see living in the outback as a barrier to lifelong learning and reaching my goals.

In my home studio, I have a reformer and spine corrector.

I'm interested in purchasing a Wunda Chair and Tower in the future, which will be exciting additions to my home studio. My mentor is Alisha Porter Baird, who is the owner of Sense of Power Pilates in Pyrmont, Sydney, Australia. I discovered Alisha on the Pilates ITC Facebook page, when she was offering classes via zoom during the Covid lockdown and I was completing my matwork training. I have been completing all of my self-mastery hours for my Diploma via zoom now, twice a week, for three years.

Funny story, Alisha and I only met in April this year, when I went to Sydney to do work experience in her amazing studio. She is incredibly professional and experienced and is a lover of the method and quality movement. Being the only instructor in the region and early in my Pilates teaching career, Alisha gives me time for mentoring conversations to help develop my knowledge and skills to assist me with my clients. I'm halfway through the content and am working through the Cadillac, High Barrel and Wunda Chair repertoire. When possible, she helps to emulate the exercise using equipment I have – which is so creative!

**Q.** How did you discover Pilates?

**A.** I have a Bachelor of Primary School Education and have taught in Moree, NSW (where I grew up) Brisbane and Cloncurry. After one year of teaching in Cloncurry, I decided I needed a break from the teaching profession. I decided to do relief teaching. In that year, I definitely felt that I wasn't



being challenged and fulfilled. This is when my Pilates instructing journey began. When I left Brisbane, one thing I truly missed was my weekly reformer Pilates classes. I spoke to Blair, my husband, about doing a Pilates matwork course. In the beginning, it was for me, not only to further my education but knowing that we will always live in the outback, I wanted to be able to learn Pilates to be able to look after us! And when you're 10 hours away from a Pilates studio, you've got to adapt!

I also believe I found my calling in Pilates because wellbeing is something that has always been really important to me. For me Pilates not only has physical benefits but also mental benefits. In my late teens and early to mid-twenties, I had anorexia nervosa. I discovered Pilates when it was recommended to me as a gentle form of exercise that would help to increase my bone density. I had osteopenia (low bone density) and I cracked a rib not doing anything vigorous. My Pilates journey started at Movement Principle Pilates. I would've only been in my early 20's. I was fragile in my mind and body and these small group classes were gentle and one piece of the puzzle in recovering from my eating disorder. I have recovered and my bone density has improved, but it is a lifelong journey that I have to work on. Pilates allows me to strengthen my mind and body in a nurturing way.

**Q.** What's so great about teaching Pilates in a rural community?

It's knowing that I'm making a difference. Everyone deserves

the opportunity for quality movement, no matter where they live. In a remote community, it can sometimes feel like you're missing out on services that are so accessible in larger towns and cities. Knowing that I am providing a service that improves the well-being of people in the community brings me so much joy. We don't always have consistent access to health services, like physios and podiatrists. I've noticed that it's easy for us to let those niggles and concerns go for longer than they should. I always stay within my scope of practice and recommend my clients seek advice from health professionals, but I do keep them safely moving.

**Q. Had many people in Cloncurry heard of Pilates or done it before?**

**A.** Not at all! Out here there are great opportunities to be involved in group sports, like netball, volleyball and touch football. Pilates classes had never been taught in Cloncurry before, so it was new for almost all of my clients. We started our journey together, which has been so cool. My teaching has evolved and improved and I have got to be with them on their Pilates journey from the beginning. Educating my clients about Pilates has been such a joy and many of them have become as passionate about it as me, because they see and feel the difference.

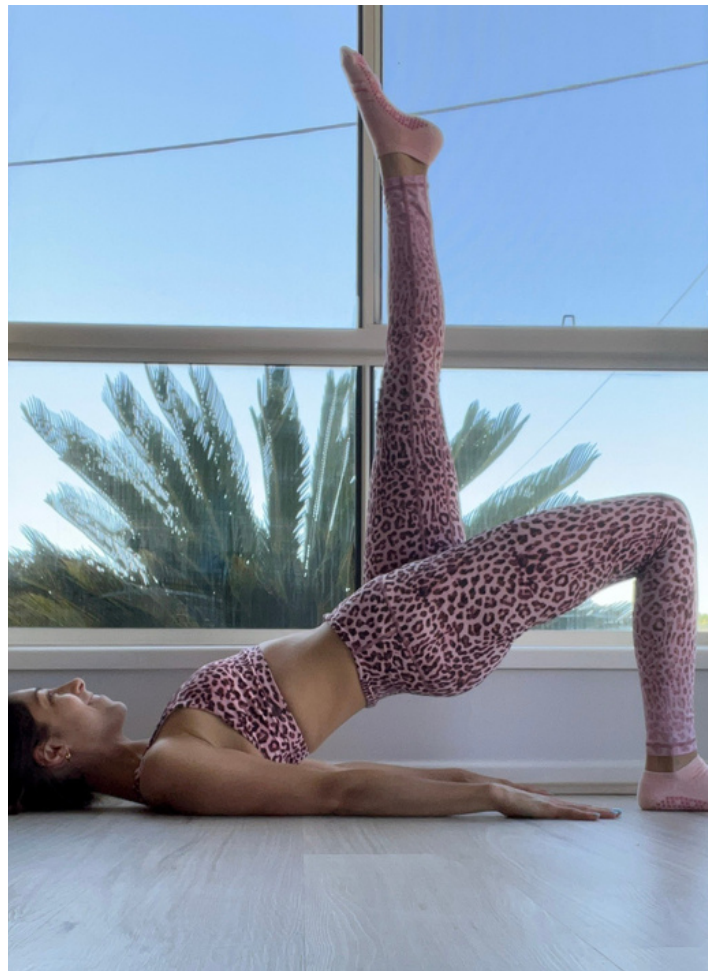
**Q. I see you recently hosted your first Sunrise Pilates Session - tell us what this entailed**

**A.** Yes I held my first Sunrise Pilates Session a few months ago. I had a variety of women attend from regular to new clients! Everyone arrived at Chinaman Creek dam just before 6.30am and I taught a one hour class as the sun was rising. Even though I teach weekly group classes, I felt like I was getting out of my comfort zone by making myself known to more people in our community. I also collaborated with two other businesses to run this event. Each participant received a self-care gift box from Bare and Simple, and an energy tea from Country Blends, both local businesses. I felt proud to run this event because I'd seen community events like this, and thought that I'd love to do something like that but didn't imagine it actually happening! I'm working on backing myself and having the confidence to put my business out there. Bringing a group of like-minded people together to do Pilates brings me so much joy - it comes back to making a difference in our community.

**Q. What sorts of classes do you typically run?**

I run two mat classes a week, using small apparatus, at the hall and I run on average 18 private classes per week, in my home studio. We use the reformer, spine corrector and small apparatus.

I love my clients - their stories and journeys are inspiring. Cloncurry is such an interesting place. You have your locals who have been here for generations and are well-known in



the community, but you also have people from all walks of life, who have moved here for love or work opportunities.

The mining and agricultural industry here is really big. My clients range from graziers, stay-at-home mums, principals, assistant principals, teachers, geologists, accountants, machinery operators, nurses, teachers, cafe owners and massage therapists. So many of my clients have come to me without having done much exercise for years. They are tight, deconditioned, experiencing general aches and pains and not feeling connected to their bodies. I feel so grateful to have the privilege of working with them to achieve their goals and improve their physical well-being. Women's health is also an area that can be neglected out here. I have a lot of conversations with my clients about their pelvic floor and we do specific exercises to address their concerns, particularly for women who are pre and post-natal and entering menopause (within my scope of practice).

**Q. What kind of benefits are your clients seeing?**

I've had clients tell me that for the first time in years they are not experiencing incontinence which is a big win. They can jump on the trampoline with their kids and sneeze without feeling like they have to brace themselves.

-Some have said it is a chance to forget about things in life that were bothering them. Some of my clients have high-stress jobs. They love how connecting the movement with breath requires concentration and is almost therapeutic.

-For those with kids, it's the one time in their week that they have to themselves.

-My clients says they walk away feeling stretched, taller, more mobile and stronger.

**Q. Is there something you try and instil in each of your clients?**

**A.** Absolutely - to show their mind and bodies compassion. When you come to Pilates, it's about improving how you feel within your own body - becoming stronger, more mobile and flexible. Clients say – 'I feel fat today, I haven't exercised in so long, I'm so weak, I can't touch my toes, I'm not sure I'm doing it right.' I usually respond with something along the lines of, 'That's okay, this is where you are today, it's your own practice and we are going to work consistently to take steps to get there.'

**Q. What's an essential part of being a teacher for you?**

**A.** Keeping up with my own self-mastery. It allows me to feel each exercise, which helps me to explain it to my clients. My job is also quite physical, moving apparatus, providing hands-on cues, changing springs, and I'm on my feet all day, so I need to look after my body!

**Q. What's an essential part of being a teacher for you?**

**A.** It's okay that you don't know everything yet. Keep teaching, upskill often and trust your ability.



Therese Ogg owns [Channel Pilates](#) in outback Queensland, Australia.

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# Creating a self-sustaining business

LEARN TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN MAKE YOUR BUSINESS VIABLE AND FINANCIALLY SELF-SUPPORTING

*by Ingrid Thompson*



We've come from Pilates school, and you don't learn how to run a business," said Bernadette when she and her business partner called looking for help to understand their business financials. "We just want to work with our clients doing Pilates. Then came all this other stuff!"

Does this sound familiar?

As Pilates has changed and grown over the past 20 years this growth has enabled many Pilates Practitioners to create a business for themselves.

There are different Pilates business models, and each has the potential to be viable and financially self-supporting:

A sole Practitioner operating across several different studios is the simplest operating model to earn income with low costs.

A sole Practitioner operating from a home studio will have more costs and certainly has the potential to be self-supporting and pay themselves a salary.

Then there are a variety of Pilates Studio business models and with increasing complexity comes increasing costs, which impacts the financial viability and feasibility of the Pilates business.

I'm the first to completely agree that there are many ways to measure the success of your Pilates studio – client improvement, strength and mobility impact, postural differences and so much more.

The thing is, that running a successful business hinges on its financial viability and in the simplest terms this is:

More money coming in than is going out. Do the fees charged to clients cover all the costs + pay the owner a fair salary?

How do you assess if your chosen business model is financially viable and will be self-sustaining?

## 5 Steps to calculate the financial viability of your Pilates Business:

1. Calculate the total of all the costs for the coming 12 months to 2 years
2. Create a schedule for how many sessions and what mix of sessions you want to offer in that 12 months, 2 years – be sure to factor in Public Holidays and school holidays and your own holidays
3. Review your pricing schedule to determine how much to charge clients for each of the different types of sessions and what packages you will offer
4. Determine how much you want to pay yourself as the lead Pilates Practitioner and business owner?
5. Run the numbers: Is the total income greater than the total costs?

This is the financial business model that every business uses to calculate viability and profitability.

Think of it as similar to your Pilates Reformer; when you swap the springs that changes the exercise and results in a different outcome for your client. As you tweak the various components of your business you change your financial outcome.

I recommend that business owners review these 5 steps on an annual basis and take into account any further additional expenses occurred.

I suggest these "Healthy Financial Habits"



## Set up separate accounts

1. Set up separate accounts for business and personal finances. Even for the most basic business model, it is Best Practice to have separate accounts. It makes it much simpler when it comes to keeping track of all costs and income.

## Keep your accounts up to date

2. Keep your accounts up to date. Whether using a handwritten spreadsheet or an Excel document or Xero or MYOB, get into the habit of keeping your accounts up to date.

I like to think of keeping your accounts up to date a bit like your clients' Pilates Practice. It's OK to skip a few days and it's hardly noticeable. The longer the break, the more it takes to get "back into it." Keep up to date – weekly, or fortnightly – and definitely no longer than monthly.

Develop a Business Mindset; it's super important to think like a businessperson and think of someone you admire – maybe in Pilates or in another line of business. What makes them successful? How do they define success – and I'm guessing that while they run a financially viable business, success is more than money.

As well as having a self-sustaining business, what else constitutes success for your Pilates Studio for you?

## Get your pricing right

3. Get your Pricing right. Pricing can be an extremely emotive topic. There are four aspects to pricing:

i.) Get super clear about the value you provide, be able to fully articulate that value and know deeply how what you do impacts your clients. "Own it and price accordingly"

ii.) Annually review your prices and have the confidence to ask for and charge that amount.

iii.) No discounts and no "mates' rates" and no contra. Each of these devalues your offering.

iv.) Put your prices up on a regular basis. Over and over again clients I have worked with have held back from putting up their prices, for a variety of reasons and when they do their clients tell them "It's about time you put your prices up".

4. Understand the numbers: There are a few basics to know: profit and break-even are essential and being able to track cash flow means you'll never run out of money.

With a few tweaks based on the information above you'll be on your way to building more viability into your Pilates business.

**Ingrid is the Founder of Healthy Numbers – a training, coaching, and consulting business for existing business as well business startups and entrepreneurs. She is driven by her passion for helping people create and maintain financial well-being and especially through business ownership.**

**Ingrid has also written a book called 'So You Want to Start a Business; The Seven Step Guide to Create, Start and Grow your Business'. To find out more visit [healthynumbers.com.au](http://healthynumbers.com.au)**

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# Upcoming courses

## BASI AUSTRALIA

The Mat Program , Mat and Reformer Program and Comprehensive Global Program are now offered in  
 Canberra - Pilates Centre Canberra - 19 May to 13 Aug  
 Sunshine Coast - Pointe Pilates Studio - 14 Apr - 30th July  
 Brisbane- BASI Pilates Academy Australia - 8 Sept - 3rd Dec  
 Perth - Rig Pilates - 1 Sept- 10 Dec

Find out more [basipilates.com.au/education/](https://basipilates.com.au/education/)

## BODY ORGANICS EDUCATION

Goals and Programming - Brisbane - 10-12 June  
The Tower of Power - Sydney - 21 July  
Springing this joint - Sydney - 13 October, Wamberal - 14 October and Brisbane - 4 November  
Hashimoto's Disease - Bondi, Sydney - 15 October  
 Springing this Joint and Hashimoto's Disease - Canberra - 29 October

Is offered as an online course. There will be follow-up face-to-face courses in QLD, NSW and VIC, other states to follow.  
 A full event calendar can be found [here](#).

Find out more [www.bodyorganicseducation.com](http://www.bodyorganicseducation.com) or contact [info@bodyorganicseducation.com](mailto:info@bodyorganicseducation.com)

## REACH MOVEMENT HEALTH

Further your education with one of Reach's online or in-person workshops.

Online workshops include Pilates for Pregnancy, Visceral Mobilisation through Movement, LumboPelvic Rhythm with Lisa Jackson, Hands to Arms to Shoulders with Sally Anderson, or Load and Progression with Lanette Helene and much more.

Find out more [reachmovementhealth.com/continuing-education-programs-2023/](https://reachmovementhealth.com/continuing-education-programs-2023/)

## PILATES ITC

Blended (Online + In-Person) or Online (start anytime) options available.

(10838NAT) Diploma of Pilates Instruction, Matwork and Reformer + Small Apparatus Pathway, Reformer and Small Apparatus Pathway, Matwork and Small Apparatus Pathway, Studio Instruction Pathway, Anatomy + Physiology (Online only), (10839NAT) Advanced Diploma of the Pilates Method.

Upcoming Blended Entry Points

Enrol and start your online Coursework at any time ahead of your first in-Studio session!

ACT, NSW, QLD, SA, WA – Enrol now for July Entry Points.

Give the Pilates ITC Careers Team a call on (08) 9330 4570 to secure your place - [pilatesitc.edu.au/](https://pilatesitc.edu.au/)



## POLESTAR PILATES

Upcoming Continuing Education Courses include:

SPINEFITTER by SISSEL® - 7 July - Perth  
Qov Foundations Level 1 - 17-18 June - Sydney  
 Pilates for Chronic Lower Back Pain Online Course - available anytime  
 Online Masterclass series - available anytime

Critical Reasoning for Rehabilitation with Shelley Power - 15-16 July - Sydney and 8-9 July - Perth

For a complete list of courses see the Polestar website [polestarpilates.edu.au/pilates-continuing-education/](https://polestarpilates.edu.au/pilates-continuing-education/)

# Upcoming courses

## NATIONAL PILATES TRAINING

National Pilates Training (21719) offers the following government-accredited skill sets and qualifications

Groupfit professional pilates Instruction  
Professional pilates matwork Instruction  
Professional pilates reformer instruction  
Diploma of professional pilates instruction (10838NAT)  
Advanced Diploma of the pilates method (10839NAT)

Our government-accredited courses are available in person - Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Hervey Bay, Morisset- NSW, Ballarat- Victoria, online only – global

National Pilates Training has courses starting each month, in person, in a location near you and all courses are available online wherever you are. Find out more [www.nationalpilates.com.au/](http://www.nationalpilates.com.au/)

## STUDIO PILATES

Matwork Course - 13-16 July - MEL, 3-6 Aug - NSW, 10-13 Aug - QLD  
Reformer Course - 13-16 July - NSW, 30 Aug -3 Sept - QLD, 31 Aug -3 Sept - MEL  
Platinum Instructing Course - 17-22 July - QLD, 9-14 Aug - NSW

Those in the USA and UK can join one of their online courses via zoom.

For a complete list of dates in other states see the Studio Pilates website [studiopilates.com/education/book-a-course/](http://studiopilates.com/education/book-a-course/)

## TENSEGRITY TRAINING

Cert IV in Contemporary Pilates and Teaching Methodology  
Cert IV of Contemporary Pilates and Teaching Methodology (52855WA) with Reformer (Cert IV and Reformer)  
Integrated Diploma of Contemporary Pilates and Teaching Methodology  
Pilates Group Reformer Instructor Training (PGR)

Tensegrity offers training in NSW, QLD, VIC, SA and TAS.

For a full list of dates in all states visit [tensegritytraining.com.au/accredited-training/](http://tensegritytraining.com.au/accredited-training/)



## Feedback

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