

Why Should I Add Pilates to My Workout?

By Merc Howard, Romana's Pilates Certified Instructor

Pilates is a series of exercises when done correctly strengthens and stabilizes your core, or "powerhouse". The powerhouse includes your abdomen, lower back, hips and buttocks. A body with a stable core will decrease the likelihood of injury due to increased efficiency of movement. When the core is stable, the peripheral muscles require less forceful contractions to produce the same given amount of power. Adequate stability allows for efficient transfer of power from the lower extremities to the upper extremities.

Low back pain is a common complaint in athletes as well as non-athletes. This pain could be caused by repeated irritation of the muscles that attach to the spine from core instability. Therefore, core stabilization must be incorporated into any low back pain rehabilitation program.

Flexibility is also an important aspect of the core stabilization program. Flexibility training in conjunction with stability training yields results. Appropriate muscle length must be maintained throughout the kinetic chain in order for efficient movements to take place. All muscles of the powerhouse must be flexible and strong. The body must display appropriate core strength, stability, and control of the powerhouse in order to produce efficient movements. A strong core is necessary for impact absorption and will be able to transfer energy efficiently with more power and with less stress. This makes for a productive, successful body.

Pilates teaches you to use your body as an integrated whole, literally from your toes to your fingertips, learning to use your mind and your body together. As Joseph Pilates said, "Our muscles should obey our will". How often have you heard "strengthen your core" only to add 200 sit-ups a day for week until you get bored. Pilates will give you a focused workout that works your entire powerhouse and is never boring. Adding Pilates to your workout regime can help you live your active life with better form and without injury. Enjoy moving!

