



TRAINER  
TALK

# PILATES PRO

WORDS JENNIFER PORTO PHOTOS BRUCE TALBOT

ASK ANY ATHLETE TO DESCRIBE HIS OR HER WORKOUT REGIMEN AND MOST TELL YOU IT STARTS WITH EARLY MORNING PRACTICES, CARDIO TRAINING AND WEIGHT LIFTING. ASU DANCE TEACHER VIRGINIA NICHOLAS HAS ANOTHER EXERCISE TO ADD TO THAT LIST: PILATES.

After earning her bachelor's degree in nursing and her master's degree in theater and dance with an emphasis in kinesiology from the University of New Mexico, Nicholas opened her own Pilates studio in Tempe called Moving Breath Studio – the only studio in Arizona certified as a teacher training facility. When you ask her what the most important exercise for any athlete is, you may be surprised by her answer.

According to Nicholas, pilates is critical for athletes to practice because it helps with strength and flexibility. She advises to exercise moderately almost every day, making sure to include pilates into your routine.

Nicholas was introduced to pilates as a dancer. “We had tried running and weightlifting and other things while we were dancing to keep us strong and flexible. Nothing worked as well as [the core strengthening and the overall qualities of Pilates to keep us strong, fit and injury-free.]”

### Touting the Benefits

Years after that first discovery, Nicholas is now teaching pilates and trying to spread the message of its benefits. “Pilates tends to focus more on strengthening deep core muscles moving through exercises. Compared to yoga, it's a more dynamic workout.”

Nicholas offers classes for people at all levels. “Whether you are an athlete or someone who is de-conditioned or injured, or if you just want to get into better shape, we always look at the client who is in front of us and personalize the class to what that person needs.”

### From Eight to 81

Before moving to Arizona, Nicholas taught at different schools around the country and has even trained some famous faces – from athletes to actresses and Broadway performers, Nicholas had her hand in teaching many different types of people ages eight to 81. “Anyone can do it and everyone can benefit from it. All sports can benefit: golf, baseball, basketball, swimming.”

More than five million people across the country have found pilates to be beneficial to their workout programs. According to Nicholas, it's a great way for college students to integrate balance into their academic lives. And in the mind of this college student, I think that's something we could all use. +



### Virginia Nicholas, M.A., R.N.

- + Master's degree in theatre and dance with an emphasis in choreography and kinesiology.
- + Core Dynamics® Pilates certified teacher and teacher trainer.
- + National pilates presenter.
- + Certified teacher of the GYROTONIC EXPANSION SYSTEM®
- + Principal dancer Bill Evans Dance Company, 1988-90.
- + Faculty member Arizona State University, University of New Mexico, Colorado Mt. College, School of Ballet Arizona.

Pilates student pictured: Audrey Blukis – 2006 ASU graduate – Dance Performance and English Literature.