

Safety First in Pilates

The repertoire of exercises that collectively comprise what is now known as Pilates, was developed over 80 years ago but has recently come to the fore. Why? Personal trainers, dancers, and athletes have realized its healing benefits, both physical and mental. Founded upon the core principles of breath, balance, precision, control, and concentration, the Pilates method emphasizes quality over quantity of repetitions, enabling the average citizen to participate in the method. In other words, 20 sit-ups executed with proper body mechanics is more effective than 200 incorrect repetitions. Of course, clients must be instructed by teachers properly educated in the Pilates method as well as safety, and injury prevention.

Pilates teachers are not required to operate with a certification, so how can clients be assured that the training they are receiving is legitimate? The Pilates Method Alliance (PMA) is a non-profit organization that is committed to establishing a universal standard of quality and safety, as well as code of ethics, for Pilates studios and teacher training centers. The PMA website (www.pilatesmethodalliance.org) lists the following guidelines for teacher-training programs including, but not limited to: 1) The director should have at least 10 years prior Pilates teaching experience, 2) Passing score on an industry-wide written exam, 3) A program of 450 hours altogether, consisting of lecture/observation/personal Pilates practice or lessons/workout/supervised student teaching, and 4) Program covers instruction on reformer, trap table, ped-o-pul, ladder barrel, and chair.

-Written by:

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Virginia Nicholas, M.A., R.N. of Moving Breath Pilates Studio located in Tempe, Arizona operates Pilates Core Integration, a 450 hour comprehensive teacher training program. Virginia gained an extensive knowledge of body mechanics through a Master's Degree in Theatre and Dance from the University of New Mexico. Not only does she instruct clients on how to properly manage their bodies, she shares her gift for teaching to other potential Pilates instructors that participate in the program.