

feel energised, vibrant and inspired



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Stretch                      Stabilize                      Strength

## Pilates as a Way of Life!

*In order for you to reap the many benefits from your regular Pilates practise, it is important to apply and consider the 8 Fundamental Principles that underlie all your Pilates moves. These principles go way back to the founder of Pilates, Joseph H Pilates but they still hold true today. The evidence behind the technique is not only strong but scientifically proven.*

### 8 Fundamental Principles

#### 1 Awareness

This is the first step into the wonderful world of Pilates and every step that follows should be filled with awareness and mindfulness – being fully present in the moment, with both your mind and body! We cannot address the process of realigning the body without awareness of our positioning or how we are moving! The pursuit of full awareness is what makes Pilates so rewarding.

#### 2 Concentration

This principle is clear to everyone who has attended a well-taught Pilates session. For Pilates to achieve its goal, you must really focus on the execution of the movement. Joseph Pilates believed that every movement had to be performed with full attention as this then leads to increased body awareness. It is only through remaining totally focused that you can perform your Pilates exercises with perfect technique and form. Concentration is also vital to maintain your stability and alignment throughout all your Pilates moves.



#### 3 Breathing

Joseph Pilates stated that 'breathing is the first act of life and the last' and therefore, above all, we must learn how to breathe correctly. He was an asthmatic and truly believed that by employing both full exhalations and inhalations, that you rid your lungs of stale air and replenish your body through increased oxygenation. This energises and revitalises your system, improving your overall health and wellbeing. The Pilates breathing technique has been proven to increase our lung capacity. Focusing on your breath also gives the flow to the movement and engages your mind to the way your body is moving.

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## 4 Centring

This forms the crucial starting point for each Pilates exercise. We aim to establish a strong and stable central core around which we then perform an ordered sequence of slow and mindful movements. Creating our 'girdle of strength' keeps the pelvis, spine and shoulder girdle stable throughout each and every exercise performed.

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## 5 Control

Pilates is not about intensity of movement but rather about the ability to move correctly with ease and grace. By being aware of your alignment, by maintaining neutral spine and through the use of the deep stabilisers of the pelvis and shoulder girdle, we can ensure that we are performing our Pilates exercises correctly and with skill as the complexity of the movement sequence increases.



## 6 Precision

You will feel the benefit from your Pilates more profoundly when you perform each movement with precision, down to the finest detail, with full awareness to how your body is moving and remembering your mental checklist of the 5 Key Elements in fine tuning your postural position. We are aiming for 'execution and mastery' to the point of subconscious control! Precision in our movements is the long term goal.

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## 7 Flow

Pilates exercises incorporate naturally flowing movements in harmony with your breath, requiring precision and fluidity from one exercise to the next. This gives us an excellent carry over to everyday movements which are indeed mostly continuous and flowing e.g. walking!

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## 8 Routine

Joseph Pilates believed that in order for Pilates to give you sustained strength and vitality, you have to practise regularly to perfect your exercise technique and skill. Pilates 'fitness', like all other forms of fitness, cannot be stored, so enjoy your regular sessions and try to incorporate what you are learning in class into your daily lives!

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**Embrace your Pilates as a Way of Life!**



**Pilates for life**  
with elizabeth marks