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Pilates is a method of exercise that conditions the whole body and is based around improving your core stability and correct muscle movements. Along with the physical work Pilates also focuses the mind on breathing and connecting with the body. Pilates uses specially designed movement patterns and specialised equipment to achieve and restore musculoskeletal balance concentrating on a strong core or centre which includes the abdominals, pelvis and back. Therefore Pilates is not only great for overall strengthening of the body, but also for the rehabilitation of injuries.

Designed by Joseph Pilates initially to strengthen his own health concerns and physical weaknesses. After opening a studio in New York in the early 1900s, his reputation

grew especially from the impressive work he was doing with dancers. His main aim was to have Pilates taught to every child in primary school so that everyone could have the opportunity for overall healthy bodies and balance of the mind.

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Now in the 21st century Joseph's dream is coming true. Pilates studios are popping up all over the world, as people of all levels of fitness are realising the difference it can make to their lives.

“Pilates is strongly based around strengthening the core muscle groups which specifically focus on the abdominals and mid-torso. The result of this is a tightening and strengthening of the waistline, hips and chest. Clients usually report a loosening of their

weight-bearing environment while targeting weak muscles. It strengthens them and protects the joints.

“A lot of people come to us who have injuries, but it's really a broad range. Everyone has had an ache or pain and many people come for conditioning, posture correction and to get rid of these aches and pains. But Pilates has deservedly developed a big reputation for spinal care,” she says.

Very popular with dancers and athletes, Pilates can be a great cross-trainer to help develop other muscles. When Sally was working in America a professional basketballer came to the studio. He had hit the wall, he was training eight hours a day, wasn't getting any better and was therefore stuck on the bench.



What if I said you could lose centimetres off your stomach and hips, improve your posture, reduce back pain and increase your sporting performances with just one type of exercise? You would probably laugh and think I was joking. Well, ever heard of Pilates? Based around strengthening core muscles groups, Pilates is not only a fantastic workout but it can benefit and aid in other areas of your life.

The world of

Pilates

By Elisa Tubecki