



» Pilates | By Jade Winter

Pilates

– NOT JUST FOR THE GIRLS!

In Australia and New Zealand Pilates gets a hard time from the guys. Stop writing it off; get hard and give it a go, says Jade Winter

{ Contrary to popular male opinion, Pilates is not just for the chicks. This stereotype, gentlemen, is a total myth. Pilates is the intelligent fitness choice for the savvy exercise aficionado. In fact, it's tragic that most guys are so wrapped up in

the sweat-is-better image that they never get to experience one of the toughest and most effective workouts on the planet!

You see, one of the massive benefits of Pilates for men is that it really targets the stomach, helping flatten the gut and sculpting some serious abs. And all this can start to happen even before you've even lost any fat. How? Because Pilates targets and trains the transversus abdominus in conjunction with all of the other abdominal muscles. This is your main core stabiliser and is the only muscle – not the six-pack, as commonly believed – responsible for tight abs.

Pilates can be done on a mat, just using

your bodyweight to create resistance. This is known as matwork and is commonly found in most gyms Downunder. However, for those wanting the authentic Pilates experience – who are really keen to see all-over body results – then you need to find a studio that uses Pilates equipment. This acts like a gym-style multi-station, but uses heavy-duty springs for an incredibly intense workout. And with machines with names such as Reformer, Cadillac and Spine Corrector, you might want to take a second look at Pilates' commonly conceived fluffy feminine image!

In the meantime, try these Pilates exercises at home or at the gym:

Criss Cross

Great for firing up your obliques and flattening your abs

Lie on your back with your legs bent up and held hip-distance apart, and your hands behind your head with your elbows out wide. Curl your ribs to your hips by lifting your head and shoulders. Then rotate your upper body, drawing one ribcage towards the opposite hipbone and extending your leg out straight. Return to the centre, maintaining the curl, and swap to the other side. Repeat 50-25 times each side.



Scissors

Ideal for sculpting your abs

Lying on your back, curl your ribs to your hips by lifting your head and shoulders. Reach your hands down past your hips, extending your legs straight up towards the ceiling. Scissor one leg down as far as possible towards floor, without letting your abs pop up. Return the leg back up and slowly lower the other one. Repeat 25-50 times each leg.



Hundreds

Build abdominal endurance and flatten your stomach

Lie on your back, holding your bent knees. Curl your ribs to your hips by lifting your head and shoulders. Bring your hands down by your hips and simultaneously extend your legs straight up towards the ceiling. Draw your tummy button in towards your spine to flatten your abdominals. Hold this position for 10 breaths, breathing in for the count of five and out for the count of five to reach 100.



CULTIVATE
BEAUTY &
WELLNESS,
naturally

A naturally beautiful life is a balanced one. The upcoming Aveeno Inspires Pilates Day offers a chance to nurture mind, body and soul in your pursuit of a happy, healthy lifestyle

Life is all about balance, and this means creating a healthy lifestyle by meeting the demands of your mind, body and soul. That's just the idea behind the Aveeno Inspires Pilates Day – an event designed to inspire you, outside and in.

The concept aims to marry the proven health and wellness benefits of Pilates

with the Aveeno belief that "Natural beauty comes from within. It starts with the choices I make and the person I am". While Pilates cultivates strength, fitness and flexibility, this is your chance to round out the experience by taking advantage of the proven de-stressing aromatherapy properties offered by lavender, chamomile and ylang-ylang, all combined in the Aveeno Stress Relief skincare range.

Specially developed to cleanse, smooth and moisturise, the Aveeno Stress Relief Body Wash and Moisturising Lotion are also designed to boost the autonomic nervous system and mood. As a result, stress levels are generally reduced, with the body responding emotionally, physiologically and functionally.

So, Pilates improves blood flow and oxygenates the skin, while its focus on physical awareness and breath control

fosters tranquility. And Aveeno skincare products are rich in selected natural ingredients to help you achieve the sense of wellbeing that comes with glowing skin, while the Active Naturals in the Stress Relief range help relieve your senses, leaving you calmer and more relaxed.

To experience the beauty benefits of the Aveeno product range for yourself – thanks to a beautiful Aveeno goodie bag – and the fitness advantages of Pilates, keep your eye on www.eventfinder.co.nz for the Aveeno Inspires Pilates Day on the 17th April. The event will run from 10am to midday at the Western Springs Quarry, with the \$20 ticket proceeds being donated to Habitat for Humanity New Zealand.

Tricep push-ups Perfect for building your arms and shoulders



Take up a push-up position, but with your hands no more than shoulder-width apart. Keep your elbows close to your body as you bend them to take yourself down towards the floor. Press back up. Do 2 sets of 15 reps.

And if you have a ball at home or at the gym, try these:

Ab tucks Hone your six-pack and increase your core stability



Place your feet on the ball, with your hands shoulder-width apart on the ground and your body held straight in a push-up position. Bend your knees, drawing them towards your chest while rounding your back and bringing your nose towards your knees. Slowly return to the extended push-up position. Do 2 sets of 15 reps.

Oblique tucks Target and tone your obliques with this killer exercise



Place your feet on the ball, with your hands shoulder-width apart on the ground and your body held straight in a push-up position. Bend your knees, drawing them towards your chest while rounding your back and bringing your nose towards your knees. This time, rotate your lower body alternately from side to side with each repetition, returning slowly each time to the extended push-up position. Do 2 sets of 20 reps – 10 each side.

Pikes Focus on your shoulders and sculpt your abs



Place your feet or shins on the ball, with your hands shoulder-width apart on the ground and your body held straight in a push-up position. Slowly raise your hips towards the ceiling, keeping your legs straight, then slowly lower your body back down to the push-up position. Remember to go slow – this is an advanced exercise, with the work coming from your control on the way down, not on the way up. Repeat 10 times.

For more information, you can visit: www.studiopilates.com.

Jade Winter

is co-founder of the Studio Pilates International brand. He is also a former member of the Australian Olympic swimming team. Jade used Pilates as a cross-training tool to enhance his swimming performance, ultimately achieving a world No 1 ranking in his event. He now focuses on fulfilling his business vision of empowering and inspiring one million people to do Studio Pilates International workouts on a daily basis.



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