

the teacher's workout

It's a not-so-funny paradox that many Pilates teachers rarely can find the time to work out. After closing her studio, this pro had to learn some new tricks for making sure she got her Pilates sessions in. Her discoveries can help you, too.

by Shari Berkowitz

You teach Pilates. You love it, but it's the ultimate irony that you rarely find time to work out any more. You want to exercise while you're at the studio, but there's always a distraction—maybe it's a billing question, scheduling concern or any of the thousand other interruptions that happen every day at the studio. Maybe you run out of time because you need to run out the door to do errands, pick up the kids or do an out-call.

But it's possible to do Pilates three to five times a week. Yes, even for Pilates teachers! I know how hard it can be. For six years, I had my own studio in Beverly Hills; before that, I worked five to seven days a week at other peoples' studios. I always had full apparatus to work out on, so I did my 55-minute workout five to seven days a week. A Pilates junkie! Then I closed my studio and moved home to New York, where I am only in a studio two days a week. So, now, I actually have to think about how and where I'm going to fit in my workouts.

But I've managed—both by scheduling my workouts and setting up a mini home studio, equipped with some of the remarkable new props and

home apparatus that, even professionals will find, add challenge to a workout. (And I promise, you won't have to move all your furniture every time you want to do a Double-Leg Stretch.) Now I'm getting killer workouts at home each day and so can you!

a reminder: why do pilates?

You need at least three full sessions each week to maintain your Pilates body. You already know the benefits—you're a teacher—but sometimes we need a bit of reminding:

physical strength and balance

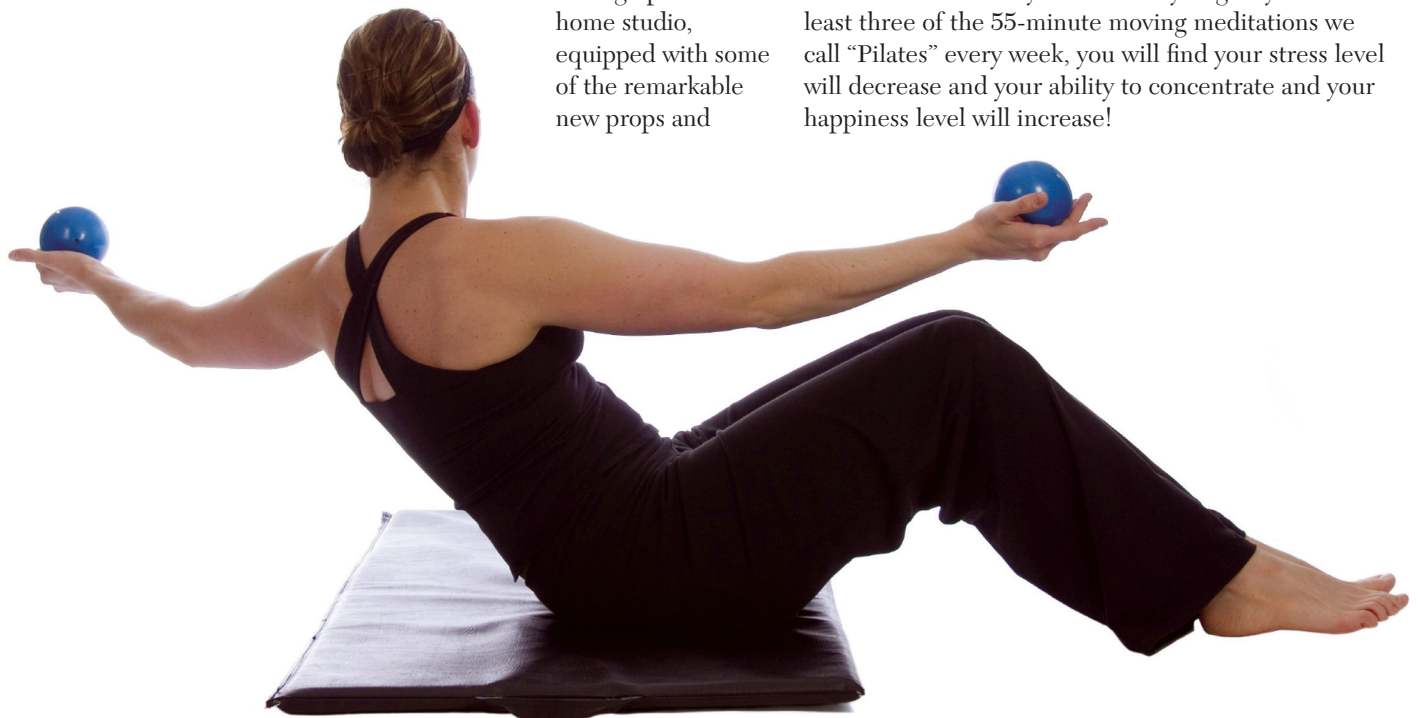
The Pilates body is the look that you're selling to your clients. That means you need the strong, long, supple body that you're telling everyone they can have.

great physical health

It's no lie that with solid core strength and a lengthened, flexible spine, you're much more likely to have great health.

emotional balance

Pilates is a mind-body workout. If you give yourself at least three of the 55-minute moving meditations we call "Pilates" every week, you will find your stress level will decrease and your ability to concentrate and your happiness level will increase!



- Lugging a Wunda Chair up from the basement every
-
- time you want to exercise is not a viable option.

But it doesn't just happen. Here's how to do it: find the time.

Your students schedule their workouts. And, whether it's between appointments at the studio or in your off time at home, so should you. In your appointment book, set aside 55 minutes for yourself at a specific time three a week. (And don't cancel on yourself.) You owe it to yourself to be present for yourself.

find the place.

option #1: the studio

It may be difficult to work out at the studio. Some teachers feel concerned with everyone watching them, that maybe they will make mistakes. I encourage you to do it anyway—and make plenty of mistakes! We need to practice, struggle and challenge ourselves. If you work out in front of your clients and peers, you will create a real school where everyone understands that Pilates is not about perfection. It's about practice!

Also, maybe you work out with your clients during their sessions. As a classical Pilates teacher, this is not an issue because we don't do the exercises with our clients. However, other styles of teaching do. If you do, I still suggest you schedule three additional workouts a week for yourself. Why? Because you need to be working out at your level, concentrating on your individual needs.

option #2: at home

Working out at the studio is ideal. The studio has space, all of it dedicated to Pilates. Your home, however, is not built for Pilates. You've got to live in it...and maybe other people (and pets) do, too!

But you don't actually need that much room; just enough to lie down and spread your arms and legs like a snow angel. And you'll need somewhere to store your Pilates gear. Maybe a little wall space in a corner to put up some hooks. (When I was teaching in Japan, in some hotels I did my matwork on my bed because there was no floor space. If you have a studio apartment, try it!)

When I moved into my current apartment, I knew that my personal space would be limited. I took a little corner of the living room to store my apparatus and kept the middle of the floor clear of furniture, children's toys and everything else. When I am ready to work out, I roll out my mat or slide out my Wunda Chair and can just as easily store it away.

Ideally, your apparatus should be stored in the same room where you're going to be working out.

Lugging a Wunda Chair up from the basement every time you want to exercise is not a viable option.

If you live in a house, consider designating an under-

used space as your Pilates room. But if, like most of us, you can't devote an entire room to your practice, you can still practice in a room without completely ruining the look of the room. Apparatus can be stashed in a corner and either cleverly enclosed with lovely curtains or screens or you can even build a closet unit around it. Props can just fit into a basket that can be stored anywhere.

Wherever you choose, make sure you still like how the room looks. It ought to be organized, efficient and become a natural part of the life of the space...just like Pilates!

home session ideas

There are as many combinations as your creativity and desire can muster! Make sure you vary your workouts, and have goals and themes. Give yourself the gift of Pilates!

- 30 minutes Advanced Mat, 20 minutes Wunda Chair, five minutes Magic Circle Standing Arms and Legs
- 15 minutes Intermediate Mat, 25 minute Wall Springs (Cadillac set up for home), five minute Leg and Arm series on the Spine Corrector or Barrel, 10 minute Wunda Chair, 5 minute Wall
- 45 minutes Advanced Reformer on the Mat (maybe use your Sliding Discs for some exercises), five minute Abdominal Series and Rolling exercises, 5 minute Standing Arm Springs
- 30 minutes Intermediate Mat on the Spine Corrector, 10 minutes Wall Springs (Cadillac set up for home), 10 minute Wunda Chair, five minutes Magic Circle Standing Arms and Legs
- 30 minutes Advanced Mat with Magic Circle, 20 minutes Beginner Reformer on the Mat, five Minutes Magic Circle Standing Arms and Legs
- 25 minute Intermediate Mat with Small Ball, 10 minutes Small Ball: Spinal Lift, Leg and Arm Series (like Small Barrel), 10 minutes Kneeling exercises with Wall Springs (Cadillac set-up for home), 10 minutes Standing exercises with Wall Springs (Cadillac set up for home)

choosing home apparatus

In the studio, you have many pieces of apparatus to choose from. At home, all you need is a mat and a few versatile items to provide spring resistance and to spark your creativity. Fortunately, there are a lot of great pieces to choose from for home use; even professionals will get the challenge they need! Here are some of my favorites:

wunda chair

If you don't have enough space for a large piece of apparatus, Wunda Chair is an obvious choice. It's compact, you can actually use it as an extra chair and it's not as expensive as other equipment (Models range from about \$745 to \$1,200).

spine corrector

A small barrel is another option, but the Spine Corrector provides an almost endless number of exercises because of the step.



motivation secrets of the pros

We asked a panel of top instructors their best advice on how to stay on track, no matter how hectic their schedule.

“Take a class from another Pilates teacher at least a couple times a month. Most of us get into habits that start to change our awareness. We need feedback from outside sources to set our internal postural awareness.”

— Brent Anderson, PhD, PT, OCS,
President and CEO Polestar Pilates

“Go into a room that is designated as your workout space and leave your phone, computer and TV behind. Ask your family to respect the time you need to take care of yourself.”

— Liv Michele Berger, owner and founder of
Body Endeavors, LLC, in Chicago, and regional
Pilates coordinator for Fitness Formula Clubs

“Don't fall into the trap of thinking that if we don't have time for an hour-long workout, then it doesn't count—that's a complete lie. Refreshing your body with just five minutes of work really adds up. It punctuates the accumulation of stress and tightness in our bodies and preserves our more lengthy workouts longer in our bodies.”

— Rebecca Leone, owner of Pilates
Powerhouse NW and Pilates Excel in Seattle, WA

“I find bands and balls (of all sizes) to be the best, affordable and portable props in existence. I also like using the TYE4 for mat workouts because, instead of just offering resistance, it proprioceptively gets you deeper into your body when your mind is straying.”

— Maria Leone, owner of Bodyline
Pilates Studio in Los Angeles

“I like what DVDs, online workouts and Fitness TV do for teachers: They allow you time to just listen and follow. Let someone else do the teaching and you can be the student—all from the comfort of your own home.”

— Liv Michele Berger, owner and founder
of Body Endeavors, LLC, in Chicago, and regional
Pilates coordinator for Fitness Formula Clubs

“The key is to have a good, comfortable space—you don't want to exercise with laundry all around you. Also, work out first thing in the morning so the studio doesn't wear you down and you dread staying one more hour.”

— Jay Apking, Power Pilates Teacher Trainer and
studio owner Olympus Pilates in Knoxville, TN, and
co-owner of BodyMind Balance in Cincinnati, OH

“Schedule the time for yourself, just like we tell our clients to do. If you don't schedule it, you'll think of a million other things to do besides work out.”

— Connie Borho, Peak Pilates Senior Level Teacher Trainer
and owner of Balance Pilates & Yoga Centers in Tampa Bay, FL

—S.B.

- Pilates students across the world use videos. Would they benefit
- teachers? Some will. Some won't.

magic circle

This is a no-brainer! It will enhance your mat work and standing work (see our cover story on page 42 for ideas). And it's small enough to stow away just about anywhere.

spring board

To do Cadillac/Wall Unit exercises, we need springs anchored to the wall. A particularly easy option is Ellie Herman's Pilates Spring Board (\$445). It's set up for you with 20 eye hooks, springs and roll back/down bar. You just anchor it into the studs in your wall. Use it for the exercises where you'd use arm and leg springs or a roll back bar! (Note: You can customize to create the spring tension you like best by getting springs from your favorite manufacturer.)

small balls, bands and tubing

These inexpensive props can be used in an almost endless variety of ways.

a mat

Your mat is your greatest option for home work, so you must have a great mat! At least one-half inch thick helps

protect your bones from a hard floor. If you have really cushy carpet, then you might be able to get away with a thinner mat. Who makes the best mats? Airex. Yes, they are a bit expensive, but they are thick and sturdy and clean easily. Pro-Systems and OPTP also sell them at reasonable prices. There are long mats and short mats, so get what works for you!

the wall

The wall exercises can be done anywhere—no purchase required!

DVDs

Pilates students across the world use videos. Would they benefit teachers? Some will. Some won't. I suggest looking for videos that will challenge you and that are in real-time. Bob Liekens teaches some great mat classes by DVD/download through Power Pilates that are challenging enough for teachers. Also look for strong intermediate and advanced workouts—again, in real-time.

creating engaging workouts at home

The last key is to plan well-rounded workouts. Just like when you're teaching a client, you have to have goals and themes. Maybe one week is all about opposition. Another week is about flow. One week can be about scapular stabilization. Yet another, about hugging the midline of the legs. Sometimes it's just about getting through the 55 minutes! But it's always about movement.

Make sure the TV and music are off. Focus. Keep the kids, pets and partners out of the room. Let it be your time and your session. Take it seriously and you'll thrive!

Follow these tips, and you'll find it won't be such a challenge to do three to five really effective Pilates workouts a week. Do some work at the studio and some at home.

Of course, the more you do, the better you feel, look and teach! Make the most of what you know—for you! **ps**

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