



Tone Up for Your Wedding with Pilates

It's not yoga and it's not ballet -- to get the basics on Pilates, we asked Pilates expert to the stars and author of *The Pilates Body*, Brooke Siler, to pare it down for us.

by Anja Winikka

In a nutshell, what is Pilates?

Pilates is a system of exercise that combines flexibility and strength with cardio and resistance to create a long, lean, and powerful body. Joseph Pilates, the method's founder, brought Pilates to the U.S. in 1925. It was a training secret of dancers, athletes, and actresses and then became more mainstream in the early '90s. With Pilates, the will controls the body. It demands a high level of concentration and control. Despite many a myth, Pilates requires a lot of athleticism and is one of the most satisfying and challenging workouts around.

What are the benefits for a bride-to-be?

Tight and toned muscles, a longer, leaner physique (especially around the waistline), and reduced stress are just a few of the benefits of Pilates. Pilates also increases energy and helps to improve posture and balance.

Do I need any special equipment for Pilates?

While Pilates is a system that utilizes six main apparatuses (the Reformer, the Cadillac, the mat, the Wunda Chair, the Electric Chair, and the Barrels), it was developed by Joseph Pilates exclusively for the mat. Therefore, no, you don't need any special equipment beyond an open space and an optional towel or mat.

What are some good resources for getting started?

If you want to change your body, find a teacher trained in the style most akin to that of Joseph Pilates himself -- reABnyc.com has a directory of teachers trained in Joe Pilates' authentic style. You'll also find a number of DVDs and product resources at ClassicalPilates.net.

Any tips for getting the most out of a Pilates workout session?

Come ready to work! There's a terrible rumor that Pilates isn't a real workout -- or that it's slow and more akin to yoga or spiritual practices -- this is untrue! Those who teach in the traditional and athletic style of Joe Pilates as I do are teachers who help change, reshape, and improve bodies. Also, if you're not sweating, you are *not* with the right teacher.

MBE NOTE: Do you live in the southern MD area and want to try Pilates? Contact Carey Taylor, trained Pilates instructor AND Wedding Planner, to discuss how to get started: BodyInBalance.CT@gmail.com or Magnolia.Blossom.Events@gmail.com