

Get in Shape with Pilates

Pilates is a friendly workout that packs a lot of great elements. Developed by Joseph Pilates, this form of exercise emphasizes the balanced development of the body through awareness, flexibility and core strength. The adaptability of these exercises for different body types and fitness levels is one of its primary benefits. Virtually all Pilates exercises can be modified to meet differing needs. If you are just starting out, read these basic tips to better understand Pilates:

Be present in your body

By exercising consciously it brings our full attention to the moves that we make. This attention accelerates the movement's effectiveness and enables the body to learn more from each exercise than it would if the exercise were done mindlessly. That type of body awareness can also be applied in daily activities like washing the dishes or folding the laundry.

Engage your center

Pilates exercise starts with the "core" of your body, which is located in your stomach and diaphragm area. When we strengthen and stabilize the core, we can safely move outward to increase the flexibility of our spine, stretch our muscles, and improve the range of motion in our joints.

Breathing is important

As mammals, if we stopped breathing oxygen, we would die. But how many of us are conscious of how it feels to breathe? Breathing deeply from your diaphragm is an important part of Pilates. This brings more oxygen to your heart and circulatory system and from there into your tissues. Having more oxygen in your blood has many lasting health benefits.



Take it anywhere

Before you try Pilates elsewhere, it is a good idea to take a class so you can understand the basics and have an instructor give you personalized attention. To get in shape with only Pilates, it is recommended that you schedule Pilates four times per week, building the duration of a session up from as little as 10 minutes to 45 minutes at home or an hour at class. You could do Pilates exercises during the commercial breaks of your favorite TV show – That's approximately 20 minutes of available time!

Adding Pilates equipment

Once you get your foundation in the Pilates mat work, you can add challenge (and variety) with Pilates equipment. There is small equipment that you can use at home (like the ball, the circle or the roller) or you can take classes at a Pilates studio to work on the larger equipment like the reformer and Pilates chair.

Get started with Pilates today

Now that you know some of the great benefits of Pilates, get moving. Pilates classes are available here at the Y. Check the current schedule for details.

Pilates Exercise: How to do the Pilates Hundred

Now that you know a little more about Pilates, consider adding an element of unique core training into your daily workout. The Pilates hundred is often used as a dynamic warm-up for the abs and lungs and can be challenging at first. As always, ask your doctor if Pilates is right for you. This exercise was provided by About.com. See "Tips and Tricks" for possible modifications.

Difficulty: Average

Time Required: 3 minutes (or one TV commercial break)

Directions

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent in tabletop position with your shins and ankles parallel to the floor. Inhale.
2. Exhale. Bring your head up with your chin down. Use your abs and curl your upper spine up off the floor. Keep the shoulders engaged in the back. Stay here and inhale.
3. Exhale: At the same time, deepen the pull of the abs and extend your arms and legs. Your legs reach toward

where the wall and ceiling meet in front of you. You can adjust them higher if need be, or lower for more advanced work. They should only be as low as you can go without shaking. Your arms extend straight and low, just a few inches off floor, with the fingertips reaching for the far wall.

4. Hold your position.

Take five short breaths in and five short breaths out (like sniffing in and puffing out). While doing so, move your arms in a controlled up and down manner - a small pumping of the arms. Be sure to keep your shoulders and neck relaxed. It is the abdominal muscles that should be doing all the work.

5. Do a cycle of 10 full breaths. Each cycle is five short in-breaths and then five short out-breaths.

The arms pump up and down a few inches, in unison with your breath. Keep your abs scooped, your back flat on the floor, and your head an extension of your spine, with the gaze down. OK - not hard!

6. To finish: Keep your spine curved as you slowly bring your knees in



toward your chest. Grasp your knees and roll your upper spine and head back to the floor. Take a deep breath in and out.

Tips and Tricks

1. You can do this exercise with the legs extended but the head left down on the floor. This modification is often used by people who need to protect their necks.
2. To make the hundred more challenging: Lower your legs. Do not lower your legs past where you can control the movement. Don't let your spine peel up off the floor as you lower the legs.
3. To modify the hundred for back or neck problems: Do this exercise with your knees bent and the feet flat on the floor. This modification is often used by people who need to protect their necks.

Healthy Recipe: Maple-Mustard Chicken Thighs

Times: Preparation: 10 minutes, Cook: 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 large bone-in chicken thighs, skins removed (1.5 lbs)
- 2 tablespoons grainy French mustard
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 1/2 teaspoon dried marjoram
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup

Directions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Rinse chicken and pat dry. Combine mustard, garlic, marjoram and maple syrup in a small bowl. Spread about 1.5 tablespoons mustard mixture evenly on top of each chicken thigh, being careful to cover as much of the surface as possible to form a "crust." Arrange chicken in a glass baking dish. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, or until mustard mixture has formed a crust and is slightly hardened, and juices run clear when the chicken is pierced. Recipe by Ellie Krieger.



Health and Fitness News

July's Spotlight Program of the Month

Teen Extreme Fitness is a program designed for kids/teens who need guidance in Fitness, Health & Wellness, and making smarter nutritional and activity choices. Register with Membership Services.

Ages: 9 and above

Cost: Members: \$40 for 3 months / Program Members: \$80 for 3 months

Participants receive:

- 1/2 hour free personal training each week
- Nutrition counseling
- Proper weight techniques
- Cardiovascular training
- Sports conditioning

Hours

Holiday Hours on Sunday, July 4th – Independence Day

11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Family Swim 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. / Open Swim 1:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Limited program schedule throughout the weekend. See membership staff for details.

Early Closure on Thursday, July 15th

We will be closing the Clark County Family YMCA at 7:00 p.m. for an All Staff Meeting.

Success Story – A Member on ActivTrax

Hi, my name is Jennifer and I want to tell you about my experience with the Y's new program called ActivTrax. I started the program on May 6th, I had already lost close to 70 pounds after joining the Clark County Family YMCA, but I was at a standstill. When I was asked by Larry C. to try this new program I was very excited! I have lost 14 pounds, since I began using Activtrax! This program is amazing and unlike anything I have ever tried before. The workouts are different every day. It keeps track of your progress and you can even access it from home. I got my husband to join the program, and we both are on the nutrition plan. This plan is the easiest plan to follow. You input your likes and dislikes and it prints out menus, meal plans and even shopping lists. I would recommend this program to anyone who wants to lose weight, tone up, or just feel good!

July Employee of the Month – Brady N.

We are pleased to announce that Brandy N. is Clark County Family YMCA's July Employee of the Month. Brandy has been with us for a little more than two years, first as a swim lesson instructor and later as one of our excellent massage services staff. Brandy always provides a professional approach regardless of the assignment. The dozens and dozens of students that have learned the valuable life skill of swimming under Brandy's tutelage are so impressive. And her deep tissue massages are in great demand too!

But Brandy does not stop there, for she actively demonstrates the importance of health and wellness by faithfully sticking to her Activetrax exercise routine. We are pleased to see her entire family utilizing the facility and she is a true example of the YMCA. She actively helps people take personal responsibility for their own well being. Thank you Brandy for your great service and being such a positive role model.

From Eddie's Desk

Dear Members,

Is summer coming? It doesn't seem like we have had much of a break from the rain over the past few months, so here is to hoping for a warmer July. The weather has kept many indoors, and we have seen an increase in members using our new ActivTrax program. If you are using this program and have not received a link to complete our survey, then please let your wellness coach know. We want your feedback!

We have made some changes in the last month and will continue to look for opportunities to help create a safe environment for you and your family to accomplish your wellness goals. Currently, we have made changes in what snacks are allowed in the Child Watch area in order to safeguard against hazards associated with food allergies and choking. We will also be removing our soda machine and are in the process of working with our snack food machine vendor to offer healthier choices. I thank you in advance in supporting a healthier environment for our members and staff. As always, I am open to any suggestions or feedback that you may have.

With summer brings enrichment and sports camp opportunities for our youth. This year will be the first year we have taken most of our programs off-site. We have done this in order to provide opportunities at a variety of locations, as well as provide more open times in the gym for our members and guests. If you haven't signed your children up, don't wait. Spaces are filling fast.

Please join us on the 4th of July for Independence Day at Fort Vancouver. The YMCA will be hosting fun family activities, so come out and enjoy the day with us. We are also looking for volunteers to help from 12:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. All those that help out will receive a free pass to enjoy the festivities and fireworks later in the day. Please let myself or Nikki Donathan know if you are interested in volunteering. We can be reached at 360.885.9622.

Sincerely,

Eddie White, Executive Director

YMCA Partners With Family Medicine of Southwest Washington

The Clark County Family YMCA is excited to announce a free Pre/Post-natal exercise pass for eligible participants in the Family Medicine of Southwest Washington. The pass includes access to our Monday and Wednesday Pre/Post Natal water class from 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. AND the brand new 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Yoga class on Tuesdays. In order to be eligible for this pass, participants must present an authorization card from Family Medicine of Southwest Washington.

Additional Benefit For Members

In addition, we are pleased to offer these classes to our regular members at no additional fee. Unlike our other exercise classes, we do ask our members to take a few minutes to register for these classes at Membership Services.

Program begins July 1st.