

# Super Benefits of Pilates

For nearly a century, the Pilates Method has been the exercise program of choice for those wishing to strengthen both their bodies, and their minds.

Developed by Joseph Pilates during the First World War, the Pilates Method has since been regarded as one of the most reliable and substantiated forms of exercise. However, there is much to Pilates than simply being a form of exercise. The complete program consists of a series of controlled movements that aims to strengthen and condition the "powerhouse of the anatomy". This powerhouse, made up of the abdomen, lower back and buttocks, becomes strong and stable, allowing the rest of the body to move freely. Once this aim has been achieved, it is possible to build a body that will not let you down.

Joseph Pilates' program continues to offer many benefits:

## Increased Flexibility

One basic premise of the Pilates Method is that stretching plays a very important part of an average person's daily life. Joseph Pilates' program helps greatly in stretching the body and making it more flexible, which is especially important after a busy, tiring day.

## Stress Management

Stress is an important, if uninvited, player in today's fast paced lifestyle. In order to reclaim control of our lives, it is necessary to relieve our bodies and minds from the stresses caused by everyday activities. The benefits of Pilates can be greatly helpful for stress relief. This system works on the basis of two principles: by focusing your mind and concentrating on proper breathing. Experts believe that this combination of principles has proven results on eliminating the effects of stress.

## Improved Mental Alertness

Proper, controlled breathing is an important principle of the Pilates Method. Joseph Pilates incorporated precise breathing methods, as it was proven that correct breathing is essential for increasing blood flow and blood supply. An improved blood supply can help our bodies to flush away toxins, and can aid in facilitating mental alertness. Those who practice the Pilates Method claim to enjoy a greater level of calm, clarity of thought and an uncluttered mind.

## Improved Body Alignment, Posture and Shape

Those who study Joseph Pilates' program will notice that balance is a recurring element. This is because in order to improve body alignment, shape and posture, it's essential to strike the right balance while performing Pilates exercises. The Pilates Method was devised to have a major focus on the proper alignment and symmetry of the body. It has been suggested that the Pilates Method can serve to correct any imbalance in a person's physique. Additionally, Pilates promotes overall balance between muscle groups, stretches the body, lengthens muscles and improves overall posture and body shape.

## Core Strength

The core, or center of the body, is considered to be the most vital area of the human body when performing Pilates exercises. The core area encompasses the deep abdominal muscles, as well as the muscles close to the spine. Fans of Pilates believe that a strong core is indicative of a strong body, which is why most of the exercises involved in the Pilates Method focus on strengthening the trunk, shoulders and pelvis.

The benefits of Pilates extend well beyond merely building a better body. Pilates exercises create a healthy mind and spirit as well. It's a balance that practitioners of the Pilates Method have attributed to their overall wellness for nearly one hundred years.