



THE WINC....

This morning I felt like the awkward kid that nobody wants on their team. You know the one, clumsy, no sense of timing, constantly falling over their own feet. I tried a 'Step' class for the first time and was devastated to find out that I have absolutely no co-ordination. Initially I put this down to the fact that the class was at the inhumane hour of 9'oclock on a Sunday morning. It couldn't possibly be down to my talent, especially as I used to pride myself on being a bit of a diva on the dance floor. Alas no more, I can tell you! There I was all geared up and ready to go, only to find that once one of my feet left the floor and I was required to work on two different planes, I suddenly lost all control of my legs. That step was only 6 inches off the floor but I wobbled on it, fell off it and fell over it. Picture a puppet with tangled strings and you should have conjured an image of how I toppled, tumbled and stumbled in the most undignified fashion.

So, what have I learnt from this humiliating experience, and trust me it was degrading, as the lycra clad, dancing queen next me never missed a beat or a step. Well, I have decided that it is just as well that I am now a qualified Pilates teacher. Pilates requires a slower, less jaunty movement that seems to suit me, especially as all parts of my body have a single minded obsession with travelling southwards. So what I hear you ask and what's more how does Pilates link to netball. Ah uh! Well that's what this month's WINC is all about.

Like all elite athletes netball players like to make sure that they develop netball skills, but recognise that other exercise can improve their performance. In this issue I aim to show you how undertaking the fluid, controlled movements needed for Pilates can not only enhance your game skills, but also contributes to mental and physical health. And let's face it there is nothing more precious than that. Well a bit of balance in a step class would be useful as well!!

Enjoy!





THE WINC *JULY 2010*

What is Pilates?

Pilates is a system of fluid movements otherwise known as 'Contrology'. The exercises utilise the core postural muscles or the 'Powerhouse' of the body, namely the abdomen, lower back and pelvic floor. The exercises strengthen muscles to improve endurance, whilst lengthening them so that they become more flexible, supple and balanced. However, this can only be achieved if the movements are undertaken using conscious breathing. In addition, the Pilates Method encourages you to raise mind and body awareness so that complete body conditioning is possible. The emphasis is completing well controlled movements with precision. This may mean that fewer repetitions are completed if the quality of the exercise is in jeopardy, as complete co-ordination and control are paramount.



Where did Pilates come from?






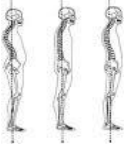
The Pilates Method was inspired by Joseph Hubertus Pilates, a German born, unhealthy child. Joseph worked tirelessly to improve his own health and then that of others. Due to the bullying he suffered as a vulnerable and sickly child he worked to enhance his own health developing an impressive physique that allowed him to become an accomplished gymnast, boxer and circus acrobat.

It is reported that he was a trained nurse and used his 'contrology' techniques to rehabilitate patients suffering from Influenza, in Germany. He decided to come to the UK prior to World War One, but was sent to the Isle of Man as an intern. Whilst there, Joseph used his knowledge of the body to help injured German nationals. After the war, Joseph emigrated to America where he established a studio with his wife, Clara, also a nurse. The studio became widely known amongst international dancers, particularly ballet dancers, and then actors, all eager to learn from Pilates.

Joseph passed on his teachings to some of his followers, and they in turn have passed on the principles of Pilates. Now there are official training courses that have been up-dated and influenced by medical science as more is understood about how Pilates works so well.



Benefits of Pilates

	<p>Improves body tone as it strengthens muscles and lengthens them.</p>	<p><i>Movements need to be controlled and precise.</i></p>
	<p>Helps to create a balanced mind and body.</p> <p>Good for releasing tension.</p> <p>Improves mental concentration.</p>	<p><i>Awareness of breathing and focus needed for all movements</i></p>
	<p>Good for flexibility.</p> <p>Joseph Pilates says you should be 'as supple as a cat'.</p>	<p><i>The movements need to flow in a fluid and rhythmic way.</i></p>
	<p>Prevents back injury</p> <p>Improves abdominal, spine and pelvic stability</p>	<p><i>Exercises require engagement of the core muscles of the torso, including the deep abdominal muscles and the pelvic floor.</i></p>
	<p>Improves balance and co-ordination</p> <p>Establishes strong core and body control</p>	<p><i>Awareness of weight distribution between the feet is important.</i></p>
	<p>Improves posture and body alignment</p>	<p><i>Lengthening through the body and finding neutral spine position required.</i></p>