

A New Wave of Fitness

What is Pilates?

(pronounced Pi-LAH-teez)

Pilates is an exercise technique designed to strengthen the muscles of the abdomen and back. These muscle groups are often referred to as the “core muscles.” Strengthening is achieved by developing pelvic stability and abdominal control, along with exercises to improve flexibility and joint mobility. Pilates is named after its founder, Joseph Pilates. Pilates primarily uses one’s own body weight as resistance, and can be done with or without equipment. Whether equipment is used or only floor work is performed, participants are lead through a series of progressive, range of motion exercises. All of the exercises are low impact and proper technique is very important. Make sure your sessions are taught by a qualified and experienced instructor.

What are Stability Balls?

They look like an overgrown beach ball, but are a very useful piece of exercise equipment. Stability balls are designed to improve balance while targeting specific muscle groups. The stability ball can be adapted for many uses, including stretching and strengthening. They are primarily used for working the core muscles of the abdomen and back, which serve to “stabilize” the rest of the body. There are different ball sizes and firmness from which to choose. The ball size should be chosen based on your height. When sitting on the ball, the user’s knees and hips should align at a 90 degree angle. The softer the ball, the less difficult the exercise will be.

What are Medicine Balls?

Medicine balls can help you generate strength and power and are a key component in sport conditioning programs. Medicine balls are much smaller than stability balls and are weighted. Beginners should use a light weight ball, such as two or four pounds, and gradually progress to heavier ones. Medicine ball training is appropriate for all levels of ability, development and sport, though it is typically utilized to specifically enhance sports-related performance.

What is Curves?

Curves is a franchise with more than 5,400 gyms in the US, Canada and six other countries. *Curves* is for women only. They are small, simple workout areas, designed for first time exercisers and/or women who need to incorporate a quick and efficient workout into their day. Only one service is offered – a 30 minute circuit training workout with a recorded voice that informs you when to move to the next station. There are no showers, massages or amenities offered. *Curves* has been successful because it has broken through the perception that you have to be fit in order to go to a gym, or that you have to spend many hours in a gym to get fit.

What is Yoga?

Yoga is an ancient practice that incorporates proper breathing and posture to achieve a union of the body, mind and spirit. Yoga involves completing a series of physical postures, breathing exercises and meditation. There are many styles of Yoga, each with its own unique focus. Styles range from powerful and intense, to relaxing and soothing. People practice yoga for many reasons. It can be a spiritual path for some, a way to promote physical fitness for others, and it can also be a method of relaxation and stress management. To be effective, yoga requires training and regular practice. Make sure a qualified instructor is teaching your favorite style of yoga.



Sources:

- American Council on Exercise
- Mayo Clinic