

Nora's Corner

Pilates Goes to College

Last year in this section we talked about "a call for Pilates research" that could help legitimize the industry and the method.



Interestingly enough, during the last five years another phenomenon has been taking shape that could push this legitimacy a step further.

Many colleges now offer vocational certificates in Pilates teacher training or include Pilates as a key adjunct in attaining degrees in various movement fields.

Pilates classes have been part of many universities' dance training programs for a number of years. But offering teacher training is a much different deal. In general, academia does not make curriculum decisions lightly - or quickly. They are made conservatively and with the knowledge that anything they decide to add is of genuine practical and vocational value to their students.

These curriculum changes show that being a Pilates instructor is now considered a valued occupation - one that has passed the scrutiny of institutes of higher learning. You don't see this happen with many other exercise methods.

Right now, California State University at Northridge, the College of San Mateo, Fullerton College and more are all involved with some type of practical training or teacher training classes as part of other degrees.

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What's happening at Northridge is particularly exciting: Pilates is being incorporated into its physical therapy program. Balanced Body faculty member and physical therapist Dawn-Marie Icken, is spearheading the Northridge program and is excited about the future of Pilates teacher training in colleges.

"With regard to the two-year vocational programs, I think they set the stage for creating a foundation for the recognition of teaching Pilates as a true profession," says Dawn-Marie. "The requirements are greater than most comprehensive training programs, but they are also administered over a two-year period and support the concept of true mentoring/student teaching, a concept adopted in most programs designed to create teachers."

The beauty of the option, Dawn-Marie states, is that whether students are taking Pilates as an adjunct to a dance, performing arts or physical therapy degree, or specifically studying to teach Pilates, they learn a skill set they can use while they further their future studio manager or owner. The college setting also provides opportunities for teachers to take additional classes, potentially enhancing their ability to succeed as a Pilates teacher.

Some of these schools decided to offer teacher training because they want to make sure that students in their dance program

have something to fall back on after their dance careers are over. Others offer it as part of community extension programs to the general public.

Whatever the reason, this is fantastic news for our industry. First, it promises to unearth more research opportunities to further strengthen the perception and validity of Pilates in both fitness and rehabilitation settings.

Secondly, it solidifies the staying power of Pilates. It's not a fad. It's not a trend. It's here to stay and we as instructors can take pride knowing we all had a part in this.

Balanced Body has been pleased to help get this program off the ground. But we want this initiative to grow and can use more help.

Do you know of a college that may want to offer Pilates teacher training? Maybe you know they offer Pilates classes and might want to take it further?

Contact us by reaching out to our Director of Education, Al Harrison at al.harrison@pilates.com. We'll discuss next steps with you.

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