

PILATES

The Balanced Body® Newsletter

CORETERLY



David Higgins is co-founder of TenPilates in London, England. Originally from Australia, David was both a professional Aussie Rules player and a sports scientist for the Australian Institute of Sport. He also has a degree in Exercise Sports Science in Human Movement. After studying Pilates in Beverly Hills, David moved to London in 2004 and co-founded TenPilates three years later.

PROGRAMMING FORUM

The Evolution of a Group Reformer Program

by David Higgins

Like so many instructors I was introduced to Pilates after being injured. I was playing semi-pro Australian football and studying for a degree in exercise rehabilitation at Victoria University in Melbourne, Australia in 2001. I dislocated my shoulder and tore ribs from my sternum. That pretty much ended my playing career. While self-rehabbing the injury, I was introduced to Pilates, using its basic principles to aid in my treatment. After a full recovery from the injury I completed the remaining few months on my degree and left to travel the world.

Los Angeles was home for 12 months where, along with working with private clients as a personal trainer, I was introduced to “system dynamic,” a Reformer-specific exercise program at Sebastian’s Pilates Plus. I was intrigued by the equipment and the potential programming possibilities in a group format.

I continued on my travels to the United Kingdom and landed in London late 2004 where I began a stint as a rehabilitation personal trainer. There was a Reformer in the studio where I worked and I began to “play” with it, instantly falling in love! After years of furthered education, and mostly through trial and error, I collated my first teaching manual that has now become the corner stone for my business, TenPilates.

My first studio opened in September of 2007 in Nottinghill, London. It was 1500 square feet, with ten Allegro Reformers. We saw a maximum of ten clients a class with a schedule that ran 20 classes a week. Now we have 3 studios in London: Notting Hill, Mayfair and Chiswick, with over 75 classes running a week. And we are going to expand even more in 2010!

So how did we grow to three studios and counting in just over two years? A solid concept and business plan.

The guiding “concept” behind TenPilates is what I have termed “Dynamic Pilates.” Dynamic Pilates is a system that focuses on isolation, integration, fatigue and stretch. It is tailored to the active individual who requires more education on how to use their bodies correctly and efficiently. It is a results driven, fun and informative exercise Reformer program. All programs that we offer tie into this concept.

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Public Relations and Marketing are Key Components

In order to grow you have to get your name out there.

It seems like an obvious tactic, but I'm shocked at how many businesses in general don't diligently market their services. When our first studio was launched, a large portion of the budget was given to marketing and increasing the visibility of the brand. Public Relations was also very instrumental in the launch and continual popularity of the brand.

In addition, I met my business partner Joanne Mathews in the same rehab gym where I was working on the Dynamic Pilates manual. She sustained a fractured spine from a car accident in 2004 and was one of my first clients in London. She was the first to experience "Dynamic Pilates." She is now 100% rehabbed and back to an active, pain-free lifestyle. As the founding partner of TenPilates, Jo comes from a Marketing and PR background and therefore understands and believes in its importance.

I'm aware that not everybody has marketing-trained staff on board. If you don't, find someone – a friend, a cohort – who does have a marketing background and bounce ideas off them. It's critical to understand all the avenues available and finding something effective within your budget.

Quality Instructors

I find that with Pilates quality instructors are more important than almost all other exercises. There are so many modifications and nuances to the exercises, and if an instructor does not make the right one for a particular client that client will not have a positive experience. At TenPilates every member of our training team has a degree level of exercise and at least three years experience in the industry. They have to share our values of being Expert, Celebratory and People-Driven; above all they have to care. We also assess industry knowledge. We look for experts and then continue to train them. All instructors undergo 180 hours in our academy before they even teach a client.

At TenPilates we're expecting a great 2010 and are looking forward to exposing more and more clients to the concept of Dynamic Pilates!