

Denise Coleman

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Equipment and Maintenance: Musical Chairs: Which Pilates Chair is Right for You?

by Denise Coleman

Pilates Chair programming has become quite the rage in studios and clubs across the country. They provide a unique and challenging workout and are also a big hit with space challenged facilities, as they take up a fraction of the room that a Reformer does.

Balanced Body has three different Pilates Chairs, each with something different to offer. Which is best for you? That depends on a variety of factors. Here's an overview of each:

1. Wunda Chair

Overview

This was the first Pilates Chair designed by Joe Pilates nearly a century ago. In 1989 Ken Endelman took measurements from a Wunda Chair owned by Kathy Grant (and built by Joe himself) and built his first chair. Balanced Body's version of the Wunda Chair has a wooden base that is basically the same as Joe's chair built all those years ago.

The Wunda is a single pedal chair that uses 2 springs. It is also a complete system, meaning that handles and a high back can be added at any time allowing instructors to increase the number of exercises. Cushions can also be added, which allow the Wunda to convert into a chair for sitting.



Why the Wunda Chair?

It is the most traditional chair, strongly adhering to Joseph Pilates' original design. The Wunda Chair is great for classically trained users who prefer a more traditional repertoire. The spring position brings the single pedal closer to the seat, making some exercises easier. It is also good for shorter users – particularly in leg and arm work.

Specifications:

Height: 22.5" (57 cm)

Length: 29" (74 cm)

Width: 21.5" (55 cm)

Weight: 65 lbs.

2. The Combo Chair

Overview

Ken Endelman along with Dr. Brent Anderson of Polestar Pilates designed the Combo Chair in the late 1980's. The Balanced Body Combo Chair was the first Pilates Chair to combine aspects of the Wunda Chair with Brent's innovation of the split pedal (see picture). The Combo Chair has handles, and the split pedal allows for a wider range of exercises including rotation and alternation movements. The Combo Chair has become the industry standard for most Pilates Chairs.



Why the Combo Chair

The Combo Chair, with its split pedal, provides a challenging Pilates-based strength workout. It also has four springs, which makes the Combo Chair more adaptable because of the greater range of spring resistance. The spring position causes the pedal to be lower to the chair seat than the Wunda Chair. This can make some exercises more challenging.

If you have a Trapeze Table (aka Cadillac) the Combo Chair, at 25.5 inches, fits at the end of the table to facilitate prone exercises, as they require more stabilization. The Combo Chair is also good for taller clients particularly in leg and arm work

Specifications:

Height: 25.5" (65cm)

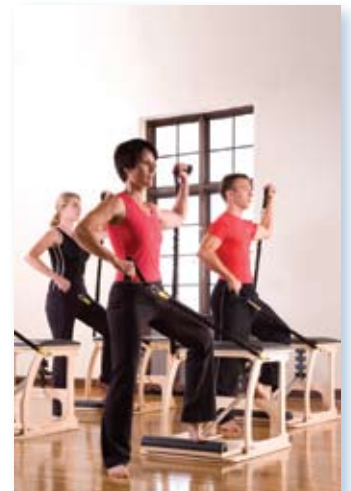
Length: 28.5" (72cm)

Width: 27.5" (70cm), including handles and knobs (53cm).

3. The EXO chair

Overview

Balanced Body's new EXO Chair was designed specifically for clubs and studios looking to implement group chair programming. It shares many of the features as the Wunda chair, but with one major difference – the EXO includes attachments for resistance bands. This makes the EXO Chair the first in the industry to offer a complete full-body Pilates workout – clients can now push as well as pull in the chair workout. Much of the work that can be done on a Reformer can be done on the EXO Chair. It is also much lighter than our other Chairs, coming in at just over 30 lbs.



Why the EXO Chair?

The EXO Chair is perfect for clubs and studios looking to implement Pilates-based workouts but don't have the space for Reformers. In a 20 x 20 space you can easily fit 10 EXO Chairs with room to spare. It is also lightweight, easily stackable and can be carried by one person.

Please note that although the EXO includes attachments for resistance bands it does not include the handles or split step found in the Combo Chair.

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Specifications:

Weight: 36lbs (16.3kg)

Height: 22.5" (57 cm)

Length: 29.5" (75 cm)

Width: 23.5" (60 cm)

For more information on our Pilates Chairs visit www.pilates.com.

Health Club Professionals – come and see the EXO Chair in action at the 2008 IHRSA Convention, March 5–8 in San Diego.