



DR. MADDEN'S FAMILY WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

MADDEN FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC

Pilates Reformer

In the early 20th century, Joseph Pilates created a physical fitness system that he called "Contrology". Utilizing three tables called the Chair, the Cadillac and the Reformer to improve core and balance, this low impact, versatile and effective option for people wanting to improve their strength, posture, balance, flexibility and muscle tone, has gained popularity in the past several decades. Since 2005, there are over 11 million people practicing the discipline regularly with over 14,000 instructors in the United States alone.

What is Pilates?

Practiced worldwide, especially in Western countries such as Australia, Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, Pilates is an exercise regimen that practically anyone can do. At its core, Pilates consists of low-impact flexibility, muscular strength and endurance building movements.

This article will focus on the Pilates Reformer as these routines will generally include a combination of simple, repetitive exercises to create muscle exertion. The primary goal is to activate a specific muscle in a way that will train it without strain, which using the Reformer has proven to do. The exercises are designed to increase muscle strength and endurance as well as flexibility without over-exertion.

Is Pilates difficult?

Probably the best aspect of Pilates Reformer is that anyone can do it. The average person can begin doing Pilates from home by simply investing in the Reformer table.

For those that are out of shape and haven't exercised in far too long, the Pilates Reformer is safe and simple. Whether a person decides to find a certified Pilates instructor, search for some videos on YouTube, or purchase an instructional video, this is a valuable and effective choice to improve not just overall health but spinal health.

What are some of the benefits?

Because the Pilates Reformer is an exercise option that can be done from the comfort of home, there really is no excuse not to schedule a simple 10 minutes routine for health. For the best results it is recommended that a Pilates Reformer routine be done only 3 times a week, but consistency is key. After 10 days of even beginner Pilates, the average person will see results.

A Healthier Spine - Because the Pilates Reformer strengthens the core, it results in an improved posture which is valuable to the spine. Neck ache and back ache can be the result of bad posture.

The Pilates Reformer requires alignment so that muscles are not straining to hold the body up. The head, hips, feet, legs, etc. are positioned in such a way as to work more effectively without putting excess strain on one muscle group over another.



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Increased Flexibility - Using the Pilates Reformer is not a static exercise, rather it focuses on movement while stretching. This means that the muscles are warm during the stretches, allowing them to stretch even further without pain.

As the muscles continue to be moved, stretched and released, there will be less muscle tension and improved blood circulation that results in less stiffness and improved flexibility.

Kinder, Gentler Conditioning - Many who are out of shape or just unfamiliar with exercise are generally concerned about starting a new regimen for fear of injuring themselves. This is of little or no concern with the Pilates Reformer as there is no stress on the joints or wear and tear on the ligaments and cartilage around the joints, especially knee and shoulder joints which typically would be injured during a high-impact fitness routine. Pilates conditions muscles in a balanced way and increases self-awareness by drawing focus inward. This can be very rehabilitative. Unlike most other forms of exercise, the Pilates Reformer can be done daily without overstressing muscles or joints; still no more than 3 days a week.

Boosts Stamina - Because Pilates is done in sequences with repetition, the body is learning to endure exercise for longer periods of time. In the beginning, it may be that it is tiring but with repetition and consistency, endurance improves.

Decreased Stress and Improved Mental Outlook - The smooth steady movements will help to quiet the mind and soothe the nervous system. Lengthening and strengthening the muscles will help to improve circulation and result in decreased tension. Each completed sequence brings calm and a balanced, rejuvenated feeling helping to relieve stress and improve the body on the inside and out with a benefitting sense of accomplishment.

Better Balance and Improved Coordination - By improving and stabilizing the core, using a Pilates Reformer helps the body restore muscle strength and thus improve overall muscle control. As the core is strengthened and the muscles in the body are stretched, nerve receptor sensitivity is improved which will allow for improved muscle and body coordination.

Less Pain and Stiffness - Anyone who has dealt with osteoarthritis pain or other muscle and joint pain will know that this can be draining. A constant low-level ache can be exhausting. Using a Pilates Reformer to stretch and lengthen the muscles will help to relieve much of this discomfort. The Pilates Reformer increases flexibility through the stretches which will help to reduce the pain and fatigue. Stretching helps to pump vital nutrients through the muscles and tendons, which can stimulate the production of joint lubricants. Increased circulation throughout the entire body will help to improve posture and eliminate tension, headaches, backaches and other joint stiffness and/or pain.

Is it safe during pregnancy?

Not only is Pilates safe, but the *American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* actually recommend Pilates over most other forms of exercise. Of course, it is important to check with your doctor or midwife prior to starting any new exercise program during pregnancy. Since it is designed to strengthen the deep abdominal and pelvic floor muscles, using a Pilates Reformer is an ideal exercise for the pregnant woman.

During pregnancy, the body releases a hormone called relaxin that causes the ligaments that connect the bones to become more flexible, making the pregnant woman more prone to pelvic and lower back pain. Strengthening the deep abdominal muscles will help to counter that laxity. Additionally, the Pilates Reformer is great for strengthening the gluteus medius which may help minimize pain in the sacroiliac joint.

Since breathing is a key focus in all Pilates exercises, this can be very valuable to the pregnant woman as good air exchange is important for her and her unborn child. Also, controlled breathing will be beneficial during labor.

Finally, using the Pilates Reformer can help improve balance by increasing the core strength and helping the pregnant woman be more sensitive to the inevitable postural changes caused by the difference in weight distribution common during pregnancy.

The Chiropractic Factor

Be sure to speak with your Family Wellness Chiropractor to see if there are any stretches you should avoid as a beginner. There are routines created that were not the original Pilates work and so the Reformer is the best place to start. Once you have the equipment, a quick Google search for "Pilates Reformer Videos Online" will give you a myriad of options.

Nutrition and exercise will always be at the core of the wellness lifestyle and your family will benefit from improved diet and regular exercise. Your Family Wellness Chiropractor understands that making drastic changes aren't always welcomed by the whole family and that's why moderation is key.

Adding just 10 minutes on a Pilates Reformer to your schedule 3 days a week is a minor change that can have a major impact. Within just 10 days of this routine, your family will notice an improvement in how you're feeling -- not just physically but emotionally.

RESOURCES: DR. CLAUDIA ANRIG @ GENERATIONS

DEAR PATIENT,
DR. MADDEN IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING YOU WITH THE ABSOLUTE BEST IN FAMILY WELLNESS CARE. SO TAKE A MOMENT TODAY TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR FAMILY WELLNESS CHIROPRACTOR ANY CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING YOUR FAMILY'S OVERALL HEALTH AND WELLNESS.

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