

# JOY: The Journal of Yoga

Fall 2005, Volume 4, Number 4

## **Yoga and Pilates: Why Both Are Ideal for You!**

Deborah Harris  
Premier Pilates Yoga, Inc.  
Deborah@premierpilates.net

### **Keywords:**

pilates, yoga, pilates articles, yoga articles, yoga nj, pilates nj

Although most people know that they should be exercising daily, they typically do not. Initiating an exercise program is no easy task for most people and frequently there are medical problems that make it difficult for a person to walk half a block down the street, let alone twenty minutes on the treadmill. Examples of such conditions include osteoarthritis, back pain, muscle weakness, and general fatigue.

It is precisely these people that can benefit the most from starting to do Yoga or Pilates. Both of these techniques have an established track record of helping people regain their full range of motion, improve flexibility and strength. Yoga focuses each client on improving their physical condition through a flow of Yoga postures, or asanas. Each pose builds on the last and advances the muscles' ability to stretch. Yoga retrains the neural and muscular fibers in the body to accommodate longer flexions and extensions for a longer leaner body. It, also, works on the neurovestibular apparatus in the body to improve the sense of balance, especially important for older clients.

Pilates, as a system, has roots as disparate as physical therapy, dance and Yoga. It is a technique of over 500 mat and equipment exercises with countless modifications. Pilates is flexible enough to challenge everyone, from someone just starting their road back to shape to someone in their prime physical condition. Because of Pilates history with physical therapy, there are numerous exercises for people with all sorts of medical conditions, from scoliosis to multiple sclerosis. Pilates exercises, done in small repetitions, focus in on the specific muscle groups, while keeping the stress out of the back and spine. Together, the two techniques compliment each other beautifully as they increase flexibility, improve strength, balance, and ultimately serve to give their practitioners a long lean look of a dancer.

Both, Yoga and Pilates have been increasing in their popularity recently and many new studios have sprung up seemingly overnight. Be wary of instructors who took a "Weekend Certification Course" – they exist! Because of the very real danger of injury it has never been more important to confirm the qualifications of the instructors before starting to work with them. Each instructor should have a solid background of an established training program, hundreds of hours of practice and observation and, ultimately, a track record of working with people of all levels of physical fitness.

For more specific information about these techniques, check out [www.Yoga-n-Pilates.com](http://www.Yoga-n-Pilates.com).

Deborah Harris, a certified Authentic Pilates instructor owns *Premier Pilates Yoga* in Warren Township, NJ

© 2005 JOY: The Journal of Yoga  
[www.journalofyoga.org](http://www.journalofyoga.org)