

Power Without the Pain

The low-impact nature of this exercise form makes it a great whole-body workout for people who want to lose flab and get fitter without opting for bone-breaking regimens

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FITNESS TRAINER Nawaz Modi-Singhania has got Mumbai's swish set doing just as they are told at Pilates Hub, the city's first equipment-based Pilates studio. Singhania, who also happens to be married to industrialist Gautam Singhania, has found several new converts to this low-impact exercise form that uses equipment such as trapezius, studio reformer, wunda chair, magic circle, barrels and spinal correctors to target specific muscle groups. Sonia Garware, Ananya Goenka and Lea Dubash are among those who frequent her Hughes Road studio.

"There is a general lack of awareness about Pilates but when people come to the strength-training class, they really enjoy the Pilates segment," says Brinda Desai, head, group exer-



cise, Gold's Gym at Nepean Sea Road, which offers offers mat classes as a one-hour segment of its strength-training programme.

Mat classes tend to be in large groups and are more generalised for the average person's needs, as opposed to Pilates at Singhania's studio that chooses equipment tailor-made for a person's individual needs.

Pilates is an all-encompassing workout that does not involve jerky movements, heavy weights, or complicated training equipment. Any straining to the point of exhaustion is considered count-

er-productive and one rarely breaks out into a sweat while doing a Pilates workout.

The method compounds muscle groups and trains the whole body, coordinating the upper and lower musculature with the body's centre. Like yoga, Pilates is a mind-body workout. Pilates, however, goes a step beyond yoga: it combines the eastern tradition of emphasising stretching with the western emphasis on motion, muscle tone and strength. "The body needs to be challenged constantly as it can quickly develop a resistance to a certain form of exercise. The great variety in the Pilates regimen offers an effective alternative to people doing the more routine workouts," says Singhania.

The workout is best done thrice a week. Initially, you start with 20-minute sessions, but as the body adapts to the routine, you can gradually work up to an hour.

Pilates Hub: Rs 2,500 per month
Gold's Gym: Rs 1,500 per month



Nawaz Modi Singhania at her Pilates studio in Mumbai

Pilates Basics

Whole body workout. Pilates has over 500 exercises, with a specific isolated exercise for each muscle group.

Low impact. The exercises are low-impact and non-weight breaking, producing fast results.

Strengthening without bulk. Pilates produces strong muscular bodies. The exercises used add strength without adding bulk.

Builds endurance. Physical and mental strength and endurance are increased while fatigue, discomfort and pain are lessened.

Improves coordination. The body's coordination, posture, balance and alignment are corrected.

No over-straining. Pilates does not follow the 'no pain-no gain' approach. Any straining to the point of exhaustion is considered counter-productive.

Stimulates inch loss. Especially effective for those looking to lose inches from the stomach and the hip region.

Cuts across age and gender: Pilates can be practised by people of all age groups. Is great for people recovering from an injury and pregnant women.