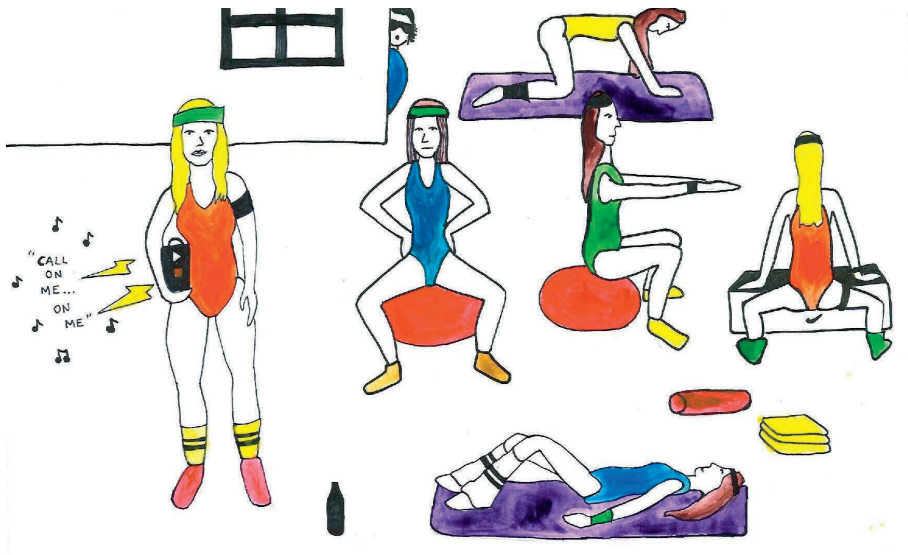


Tip 35 - Call on Me ... Call on Me!

The beat box is carried across the dance hall by a 24 year old blonde fitness girl wearing a thong lined black leotard and neon sneakers. She lowers the beat box down with a combined forward bend and lunge*. She presses play and the beat kicks in. She shakes her long highlighted locks and commences her dance class as the beat box sounds out 'Call on Me ... Call on Me!' with her class of eight equally fit, plastered with makeup, twentysomethings starting a series of deep squats, pelvic thrusts, shoulder protractions, slapping of thighs, head n neck rolls, bum wiggles, more pelvic thrusts, *bent over* rows, jumping on all fours, downward *dogging*, gluteal powered back extensions, sitting bilateral hip abductions, single leg raises, prone pelvic thrusts, bridges, cat poses with more hip abduction, squeezing of the 'pecs', spinal wiggles, dragging pink towels across unnecessary places, sitting up aerial shots, bouncing forward bends n twists gripping the right cheek, biting of lips, pouts, chest shakes.

Am I writing the wrong type of Book here???*



*Not BackSafe lowering technique ... but it sure looked good!

Did you know that excessive punctuation like ?? is actually classed as **aggressive punctuation!! It is a reflection of an extremely grotesque Antisocial Personality Disorder called Sociopathy. If you do it, I am not saying you have this Personality Disorder, but I want to spread the word that it isn't needed and it isn't nice. Don't you think? What with all this '*be kind*' stuff going around.

If you were a 23 year old like me in 2004 you will no doubt recall *Eric Prydz's* Dance Hit *Call on Me*. Male Health & Safety Professionals ... I recommend you take a deep breath in and calm yourself; especially if you have just put your copy of *Sorry! We're Closed* down and watched the dance track's video.

With *Tip 35 - Call on Me ... Call on Me!* I am not saying you need to put on a leotard, although you can in your own time. If you don't already, I want you to learn some Pilates! And with that, spread the Pilates word across your Workforce.

Joseph Hubertus Pilates was a German Physical Trainer, credited with inventing and promoting the Pilates method of physical fitness. Pilates can be described as a mind-body exercise that requires core stability, strength and flexibility with attention to muscle control, posture and breathing.

I taught myself Pilates as an early Osteopathy Graduate using Pilates Expert (there's that word again) *Lynne Robinson's Body Control Pilates* DVDs. As you know my career in Osteopathy was cut short due to a serious neck injury. One of the key practices I have done over the years to get my neck to a state where it is 'comfortable enough' with no daily use of pain killers, is through consistent, weekly practice of Pilates. Each week I perform two 1 hour routines to strengthen my core muscles (the abdominal muscles as well as the deep spinal muscles) and improve my whole body flexibility. In this 1 hour coupled with nose diaphragm breathing, I can drag a stiff and sore neck and back, to a point where it feels like I have a new spine. **Trust me, it's that effective.**

Manual Handling tasks create all over body tension. As you have *Done a Branson!* and with that *chucked bags*, some of your Business' Manual Handling tasks are seriously physically tough on the human body ... right? Do you concur? Ok you do. So how can you harness the power of Pilates into your Manual Handling Risk Management Programme? You might be saying ...

'Gareth, we have an ageing Workforce and they are predominantly male. Do you seriously think they are going to do Pilates?!'

Or you might be saying ... *'Gareth, we have quite a young Workforce whom have reported no issues with their backs. Why would they feel the need to do Pilates?!'*

I hear both statements loud and clear. Well you better get your *'Pilates Sales'* Hat on ... that's if that exists?

Pilates is all about slow, controlled movements. But its fitness and health rewards are supercharged. Whether you go for a class on a mat, on a reformer (a flat, bed-like machine with muscle-strengthening springs), or a more contemporary variation with equipment like spring-loaded chairs and larger Megaformers ... you will walk away with feel-better benefits on day one.

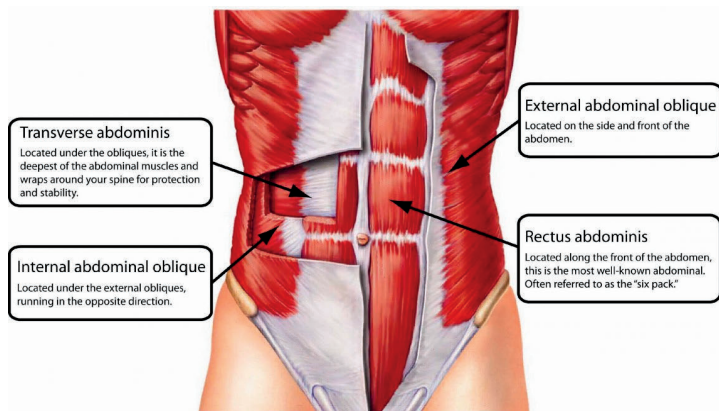
And here are the benefits of Pilates; and remember the benefits to the person are far more important than the features:

Benefit 1 - Tones your Muscles

Pilates is not just about the core muscles. As the exercises work all body muscles including the abdominal, spinal, arm and leg muscles. Pilates strengthens muscles across the body reducing the chances of muscle strains and painful back spasms.

Benefit 2 - Improves Core Stability

The core muscles comprise of not only the abdominal muscles (shown in the image below) but also the deep spinal muscles. Having improved core stability will help to stabilise the spine, protecting the soft tissues including the spinal discs and spinal joints, and with this reduce the risks of back injury.



Most Pilates exercises require you to keep proper alignment and challenge your stability to stay balanced, which helps fire up your midsection (the abdominals). In fact, after just 12 weeks of a Pilates routine, a majority of people showed improved core strength in a British Study (see Web Pages to Research at the end of this *Tip*).

Benefit 3 - Increases Flexibility

No wonder Pilates has been a favourite of dancers for decades, including *Call on Me's Deanne Berry*. The workout is about strengthening and stretching. Research has shown it comes with a major muscle loosening payoff. After only eight weeks of a Pilates routine, people showed improved flexibility in a study published in the *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*. Increasing flexibility of muscles as well as strengthening them is a recipe for musculoskeletal health and wellbeing.

Benefit 4 - Improves Posture

In all types of working environments, not just offices, I have seen job roles that can have disastrous effects on a person's spinal posture. The repetitive nature of the roles can mould the person's spine into a position of extreme strain, increasing whole body aches and pains, as well as being high risk for a serious Injury at Work. Pilates routines can be tailor made to an individual's postural issues helping to remould their spine back into positional health.

Benefit 5 - Musculoskeletal Pain Relief

As I wrote earlier in *Call on Me ... Call on Me!* Pilates is like drug free pain relief. No need for Anti-Inflammatory Medications, Opiates, Narcotics et cetera. Even after one Pilates routine people will feel a reduction in their pain, added to the improved flexibility, muscle tone and postural benefits. If people have chronic musculoskeletal conditions like spinal disc injuries a consistent Pilates routine will reduce the amount of those nasty drugs they take.

Benefit 6 - It will make you Fitter!

You might be saying ...

'Get real Gareth. You're lying on a gym mat.'

My reply ...

'What did you just see in the Call on Me video? Lots of sweating?'

When you start Pilates the routines are fairly low impact. If you have a chronic musculoskeletal condition it can generally be prudent to keep the routine low impact so not to aggravate the MSD. Low impact doesn't mean it is ineffective at reducing the symptoms of the MSD. It just means your heart rate won't be raised that much. If your body can cope with it, the more you raise the effort level in Pilates the better the cardiovascular element of this remarkable exercise will be. Coupled with that, Pilates can help shape your body and help you lose weight. Are there any employees at your Business who could do with getting fitter and losing weight? If there are, have they been off work at all in the last few years with a MSD?

Clinically speaking there is a lower back postural condition called *sway back*. This is typically what you would see with Drivers in Distribution and Logistics Businesses. With this the lower back muscles contract harder to counter the weight of the extra stomach lbs. This results in compression of the L5/ S1 facet joints. Over time that equals chronic lower back pain.

In the British Study on Pilates posted on *PubMed*® the conclusion was the following:

The study was the first to investigate individual perceptions of the impact of Pilates on the daily lives of people with chronic Musculoskeletal conditions. The Pilates-based Exercise programme enabled the participants to function better and manage their condition more effectively and independently. Further to previous work, the study revealed psychological and social benefits which increase motivation to adhere to the programme and promote a healthier lifestyle.

Encourage better Health and Wellbeing amongst your Workforce with Pilates, and as you can see the benefits to them with this alone ... are huge. Here are 4 ways you could promote the practice of Pilates in your Workforce:

1). Book Pilates Classes for Employees. These are run at Leisure Centres, Private Gyms and Physical Therapy Clinics. They could be one to one Classes (i.e. one employee with the Pilates Instructor) or groups of your employees going to a Centre, Gym or Clinic. This may be logistically difficult.

2). Bring the Pilates Instructor to your Site. A better and easier approach may be to contract the Pilates Instructor to run classes for individuals or groups at your Business' venue. As well as an appropriately large room that is clear of all furniture, you will need to arrange the sufficient supply of the following **for each employee:**

- Gym Mats
- Pilates Head Blocks
- TheraBands
- Foam Rollers
- Disinfectant Spray & Tissue Wipes

With this, there is a little financial outlay. What did your last RIDDOR from a Manual Handling Accident cost your Business? What did your last Injury at Work Claim cost?

Exactly ...when going to the budget holders, remind them that.

3). Play Pilates Video in Public Place. Combine 1). or 2). with a TV placed in the staff canteen, in a hallway, in a Training Room, in the toilet*.

4). Pilates Stand during Health & Safety Week. Contract a Pilates Instructor to be available all day to speak to employees about the benefits for them of a weekly Pilates Exercise routine.

*Maybe that's going too far. If *Sunseeker International* in Poole did that, this would be added to the camera in the toilet. Yes, seriously a camera in the toilet. Shocking 'Business' practice.

At the end of reading *Sorry! We're Closed*, please do *Call on Me ... Call on Me!* Literally call me. Pick up the phone and speak to me. I may just help you make a major part of your role ... stress free!

Exercises

- Go to a Pilates Class. But note the Instructor may not look like *Deanne Berry* or *Juan Pablo Di Pace* from *Call on Me!*
- Purchase a *Body Control Pilates Education Ltd's* DVD from www.bodycontrolpilates.com

Web Pages to Research

- Check out *Osteopathic Solutions'* Expert provision of 1 Hour Stretching & Pilates Core Stability Exercise Classes run at our Clients' venues via www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/stretching-core-stability-classes
- Visit my *YouTube* Channel where you can watch me demonstrate some super effective Pilates and Stretching Exercises. Great for a sore back!
- Read *Emma Farrell's* Blogs '*Keeping Body & Mind Fit during this Lockdown*' and '*The Benefits of a Workplace Pilates Programme*' via www.osteopathicsolutions-manualhandling.co.uk/blogs-2020
- Read the *PubMed®* Study '*A qualitative study of the experiences and perceptions of adults with chronic musculoskeletal conditions following a 12-week Pilates exercise programme*' via <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30402992/>