



Colleen's Corner

Hi. I'm launching a website and am really excited about it. I plan to offer Pilates news, my favorite Pilates products and exercises, featured articles and class availability, - sort of what I do with this newsletter, but better.

At the date of this writing We're still under construction, but we're close, so keep checking WholePilates.com.

Biofeedback and the Pilates Mind

As stated in the Authentic Pilates manual, "To fully benefit from the Pilates workout, the exercises are executed with focused concentration. It is the **mind** that guides the body. We center the mind with the body in action. We bring five aspects of the mind into the workout: **intuition, memory, imagination, will, and intelligence.**"

The aspects of the mind, essential to Pilates workouts, don't come easily to most of us. I believe all of us have these aspects innately, (even intelligence :)) but most all of us have at least one of these aspects that need "development".

A new video game is helping hone the aspects of intuition, imagination, will, and memory (intelligence seems to come as a result of the first four). With breathtakingly beautiful graphics, Journey to Wild Divine lets you use an actual biofeedback device to maneuver through a mythical world of towering palaces, sumptuous gardens, with wise mentors helping to guide you along the way. The biofeedback device measures real time changes in your body that are most easily controlled by the five aspects of the Pilates Mind.

As performing Pilates improves our physical well-being, developing the Pilates mind not only improves our performance of the exercises, but improves the quality & scope of our mind.

To see a demo of this game, please go to WholePilates.com & click onto the banner for the Wild Divine.

Powerhouse in the 3 Dimensions

"Navel to the spine" "It's a belt around your middle".

Your Pilates teacher may have started you envisioning your Powerhouse very simply. Just like our elementary school teachers helped us to conceptualize numbers by using fingers, Pilates trainers start with these simple ideas to get us moving, but the Powerhouse is bigger than a belt, and when a student starts to embody this idea our body's stability and strength dramatically improves.

Let your imagination expand the concept of the belt to that of a tightly laced corset; the muscles closest to the bone along the length of the spine compressing the holding firmly. For this to work we need to expand the concept to look at what is going on at the top and bottom of the corset.

If we were to take a tube of toothpaste, cut off the ends, then squeeze the middle, we can easily imagine the mess. The toothpaste is unstable, uncontrolled and all over the place. We need the resistance of sealed ends to make the squeeze in the middle meaningful. We need to find and engage the muscles of the pelvic floor, and on the top, the muscles of the diaphragm, ribs, and shoulder depressors.

Pelvic floor muscles are essential for the stability and control of the pelvis in Pilates exercises as well as all life's movements. People with back issues experience some of their biggest improvements in strength and ability to perform the Pilates series when these muscles are found. Women after child birth, sometimes many years after, can receive some of the biggest benefits by strengthening these muscles because of the weakening and damage to the structural integrity of the pelvis and pelvic floor.

To find these muscles, envision drawing the two bones you sit on together. This is not a clench of the larger muscles of the Glutes, but rather a strong but more delicate action that results in a natural turn-out of the thighs. At the same time we activate the pelvic floor by picturing the drawing of the tail-bone forward towards the pubic bone. This results in a feeling of lengthening of the low back, and when strength is developed, the legs are held up in the Teaser as if weightless.

The muscles of the ribs, diaphragm and shoulder depressors can be somewhat more difficult to find for many of us. Pilates breathing patterns help us engage the diaphragm at the appropriate times. The bottom ribs are pictured as drawn towards each other and connected by flexible steele to the tops of the hip bones. The shoulder blades are pulled down & back as if they were seated in two "pockets" on your back & held in place by a strong suction.

The result of engaging the total of these muscles is the building of something with a roof & floor, in addition to just walls; a column of "PowerHouse" rather than just a "belt", and a much more efficient dwelling.

Contacts and Credits:

To include yourself on my email list, or if you have questions or comments, write me at : fitcalm@yahoo.com

Please go to my website, <http://www.WholePilates.com> to find the link for the Biofeedback game.

To install Adobe Acrobat, go to: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

Good Mat Pilates book: Pilates Body in Motion by Alicia Ungaro, DK Publishing

Colleen Wenrich, RN, has been teaching wellness & fitness for over 20 years and is Certified Authentic Pilates, ACSM, AFAA, ACE and BCIA.