



# Virgin Active Pilates Mat Teacher Training Workbook

- Alice Scott & Mark Seeto -

*Pilates is complete coordination of body, mind and spirit.*

- J. H Pilates

**Welcome:** First time. Learning materials. PowerPoint Slide Show that will be teamed up Instructor manual.

## Purpose – Why are we here?

- Bring Mat to more people: Accessibility
- Spread the benefits of Pilates
- Fill your classes
- Come together as a team
- Pilates Mat vs Reformer
- Pilates Mat online
- Pilates Mat in club
- Consistency Globally
- Ethos / Belief
- Standards / Evaluation

## Outcomes:

Break down barriers, change misconceptions and create a format where people can learn, and practice in a supportive space, where members have a tangible connection to Pilates. A skill set that is continuously improving.

*'whole-body health and whole-body commitment;  
with the whole-body encompassing mind, body and spirit.  
Contrology exercises builds a sturdy body and sound mind  
fitted to preform every daily task with ease and perfection  
as well as to provide tremendous reserve energy  
for sports, recreation, emergencies.'  
-extract from Return to Life Through Contrology.*

## Icebreaker .

1. What's your name and what area do you look after?
2. What has Pilates done for you? What's your 'why'?
3. Who are your students and why do they come to your classes?
4. What are the key elements of a successful Pilates Mat class?

## FOUNDATION:

To unite a diverse teaching team that come together with this format, to solidify a strong foundation that creates space to dive into the possibilities Pilates brings. To acknowledge the varied Pilates styles from Original, Classical to Contemporary teachings, to embrace diverse experience with the end goal to bring Pilates to more people.

**TASK: 2 minutes to write down what is your Pilates elevator pitch?**

**Open Discussion: How hard was that task? Imagine how hard it is for non pilates people.**

**Open Discussion: What are the misconceptions of Pilates?**

## Who is Joseph Pilates?

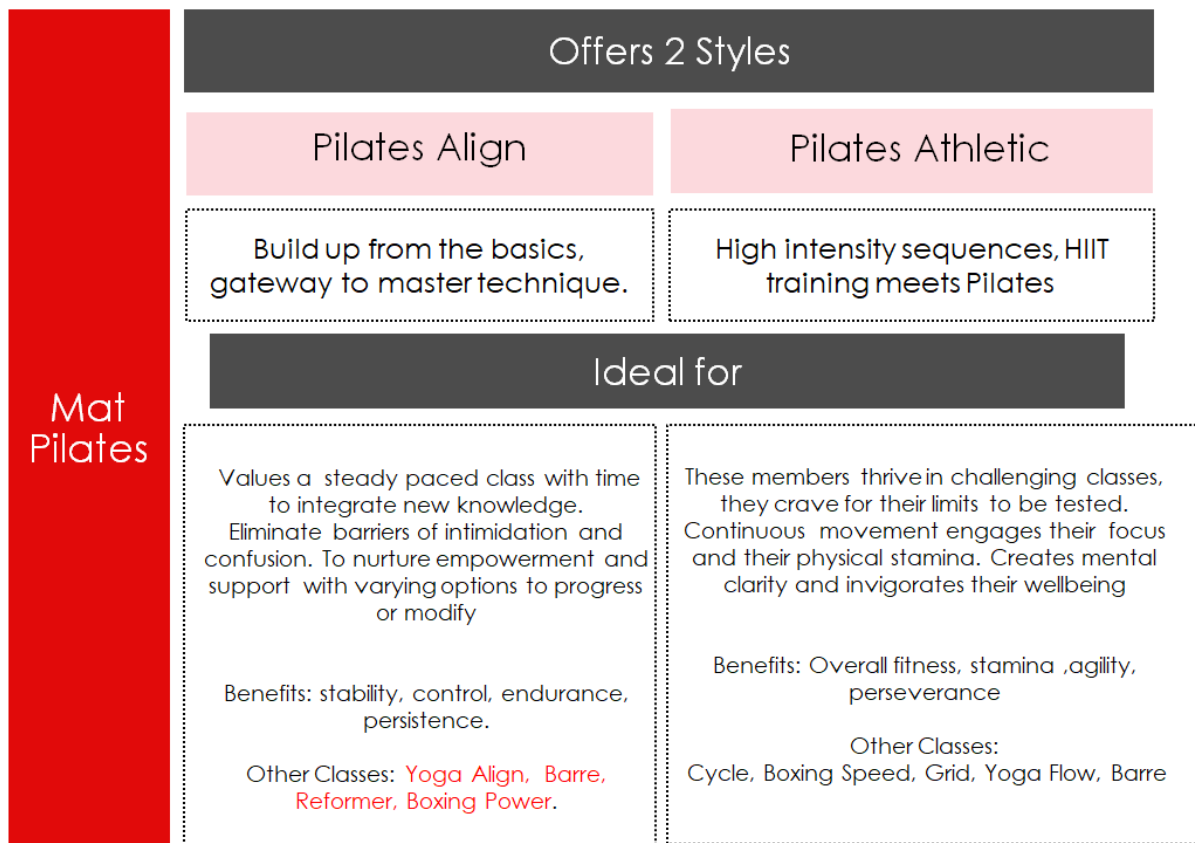
### Pilates Principals:

- ❖ Concentration:  
*'Correctly executed and mastered to the point of subconscious reaction.'*
- ❖ Control:  
*'Be certain to have your entire body under mental control.'*
- ❖ Centring:  
*The act of drawing mental and physical focus to the core or centre of your body (often called the 'powerhouse', of your body).*

- ❖ Breath:  
*'Entire body is abundantly charged with fresh oxygen'*
- ❖ Precision:  
*Placement, alignment and trajectory for each moving part of the body.*
- ❖ Flow:  
The intention is that the energy should connect all body parts smoothly and thereby flow evenly through your body.

**Group Discussion: What Principles resonate with you?**

Our Programs:



## Format & Exercise Selection:

Format that gives members a sense of familiarity, and curiosity.

Deliver a well balanced workout through all movement patterns: Flexion, Extension, Lateral, Rotation we achieve this via exercise selection for all planes of body movements Supine, Prone, Kneeling, Side, Standing.

Class Format consists of 5 blocks:

Introduction Acknowledge Intention Expectation	Warm Up Mobility + Dynamic Stretches	Body Supine Prone Kneeling Side Standing Articulation Rotation Pull/Push	Cool Down Mindfulness Static Stretch and Release	Close of Class Call to action Reflection
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## Pilates Align Class Program:

<p>Introduction Acknowledge Intention, Expectation</p>	
<p>Warm Up Mobility + Dynamic Stretches 2 exercises with 2-3 variation</p>	<p>4pt kneeling / Articulation/Rotation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Cat Stretches Mobility (45 – 60 sec)</li> <li>o Cat Stretch w Single Leg extension x 5 reps, last rep opposite arm extension, hold 4-6 counts.</li> <li>o Cat Stretch w opposite arm and leg extension</li> <li>o Hold end position 5-8 counts</li> <li>o Thread the Needle variation with leg extension, option to regress knee below hip. Last rep pulse end range of rotation x 4</li> <li>o Repeat each side.</li> <li>o Shell Stretch</li> </ul>
<p>Body Supine Prone Kneeling Side Standing Articulation Rotation Pull/Push</p>	<p>1. Supine/Abs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Pelvic rocks x 5 Ab curl 100's variation feet on mat 10-20 beats</li> <li>o Ab curl with Arm circle single leg Table Tap x 6-8 reps</li> <li>o 100's table top x 50 beats, hold ab curl x 10 sec, add on Single Leg Stretch.</li> <li>o 100's with Single Leg per 10 beats per leg.</li> <li>o Single Leg Stretch</li> <li>o Rolling Like a Ball</li> <li>o Double Leg Stretch</li> <li>o The 100's</li> </ul> <p>2. Lateral/Hip + Legs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Clams – Top leg external rotation. 10 -15 hold last rep 8 counts.</li> <li>o Modified Half Side Plank with Clam x 8 reps last rep hold 4 sec. Half Side Plank Hip Lift with clam x 10 reps on last rep, top leg extends hold 5-10 sec.</li> <li>o Seated/Mermaid x 4, Mermaid with Leg and Hip extension</li> <li>o Repeat Side</li> </ul> <p>3. Prone/ Plank</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Half Plank</li> <li>o Half Plank Push Up x 20 sec</li> <li>o Shell Stretch Recovery</li> <li>o Full Plank to Half Plank Combo x 8</li> <li>o Leg Pull each Leg hold 10 sec</li> <li>o Leg Pull alternating x 6 reps per leg</li> </ul> <p>4. Standing/Legs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Standing Hip Hinge / Small Squat</li> <li>o Single Leg Balance 30-40sec</li> <li>o Add combination of leg extension/flexion (table tap)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Lunge x 10 – 15 per leg.</li> </ul> <p>Roll down to 4pt to laying down.</p> <p>5.Prone/Back Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Swimming prep Single Leg Lift hold each leg 8 counts x 2 hold per legs, increase tempo Swimming Legs x 20 sec</li> <li>o Thoracic Extension arms ben, single arm reach, added Leg extension.</li> <li>o Full Swimming</li> <li>o Heel Squeeze pulses x 10 reps, progression to hamstring curl.</li> <li>o Rocking modification/Front Hip Stretch</li> <li>o Rocking</li> </ul>
Cool Down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Hip Flexor / Hamstring Stretch</li> </ul>
Close of Class Call to action/Reflection	

## Pilates Athletic Class Program:

<p>Introduction Acknowledge Intention, Expectation</p>	<p>Pilates Athletic Pilates moves amplified by High Intensity circuit format Unleash your greatness</p>
<p>Warm Up Compound Mobility + Dynamic 2 exercises with 2-3 variation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Standing Roll down x 6</li> <li>o Thread Needle 10 reps/20 sec</li> </ul>
<p>Body  Supine Prone Kneeling Side Standing Articulation Rotation Pull/Push</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> Block: Plank/ Squats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Half plank Push Up option to add pulse</li> <li>o Progress Full Plank Hold 30sec + Mountain Climbers x 20-30sec</li> <li>o Plank Hold transitions to Pike with Prances</li> <li>o Roll Up to Squats x 30sec</li> <li>o Squats Pulses x 15 sec</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Roll Down to Full Plank Push Up</li> <li>o Plank with alternating Shoulder Taps x 15-20 taps</li> <li>o Pike to transition to Squats</li> <li>o Squats x 15-30 sec</li> <li>o Squats with pulse, add heel rise 20 to progress into Jump Squats x 20-30secs</li> <li>o Roll Down x 1</li> <li>o Mountain Climbers x 30 sec</li> <li>o Hold Plank to shoulder taps x 10-20sec</li> <li>o Push Ups x 30sec</li> </ul> <p>2<sup>nd</sup> Block: Supine Abs/Side Body</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Single Leg Stretch x 8 reps</li> <li>o Criss Cross option to tempo double time. X 15sec slow/15 sec fast.</li> <li>o Seated Leg Pull Back, hip lift variation with bent legs progress to straight legs. X 30sec</li> <li>o Leg Pull Back variation with bent legs, alternating table top.</li> <li>o Half Side Plank hip lift + hold lateral leg extension lift &amp; lower x 30sec</li> <li>o Transition Forearm arm plank 20-30sec</li> <li>o Half Plank Hip Lift progress to lateral leg extension lift &amp; lower. X 30sec</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Abs - CrissCross play with tempo 30-45 sec, 20sec slow then 20sec double time.</li> <li>o The 100's - coach regression if needed x 100 beats</li> <li>o Scissors x 30sec</li> <li>o Transition to forearm plank step touch, prances.</li> <li>o Recover Shell Stretch</li> <li>o Half Plank, Lateral leg lift &amp; lower,</li> <li>o Forearm plank with progression to Star Jumps.</li> <li>o Half plank Lateral leg lift and lower</li> <li>o Forearm Plank step touch to Star Jumps</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Abs 100's 30 sec</li> <li>o Double Leg Stretch 10-15 reps</li> <li>o Scissors with bottom leg pulse rep reduction, 8, 4, 2, singles.</li> <li>o Transition - Roll up to seated prep for Leg Pull Back.</li> <li>o Leg Pull Back straight leg lift + Alternating single leg lift</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Triceps dips with bent leg, pulse progress to full range triceps dips add in single leg kick. X 40sec</li> <li>o Transition to rolling like a ball / Rolling Back to Standing</li> </ul> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> Block:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Reverse Lunges alternating x 30-45sec</li> <li>o Hold Lunge, add pulses, layer in front heel rise x 8-16 reps</li> <li>o Progress reverse alternating Lunges to Jumping Lunges.</li> <li>o Squats progression pulse, add step touch, Squat Jumps</li> <li>o Mountain Climbers</li> <li>o Prone T-Arms arms lift &amp; lower, 20-30sec.</li> <li>o Hold arms in T position, add Swimming legs, add arm sweeps x 30sec</li> <li>o Swan Dive variations, reach and catch x 30 – 40sec</li> <li>o Swimming Variation</li> <li>o Prone Double Leg kick with overhead arm reach x 20sec</li> <li>o Mountain Climbers x 45-60sec</li> </ul>
<p>Cool Down Mindfulness, Stretch and Release, 1 – 3 positions.</p>	<p>Pike slow prances Shell Stretch Seated Cat Stretch with back bend extension &amp; flexion. Standing To finish with</p>
<p>Close of Class Call to action Reflection</p>	

## TOOLS + FEEDBACK

Our tool bag is what makes us Rockstar Instructors, these are the key elements that make an exceptional experience.

## Language + Cuing:

Using the best economy of words for concise delivery, where possible address the exercise name before detailed set-up to reduce confusion or a disconnect of flow, cue the key elements of the start position, initiate cues to begin movement, then allow for technical cues to be layered in to minimise information overload.

### What is the most effective way to cue? Internal VS External Cuing:

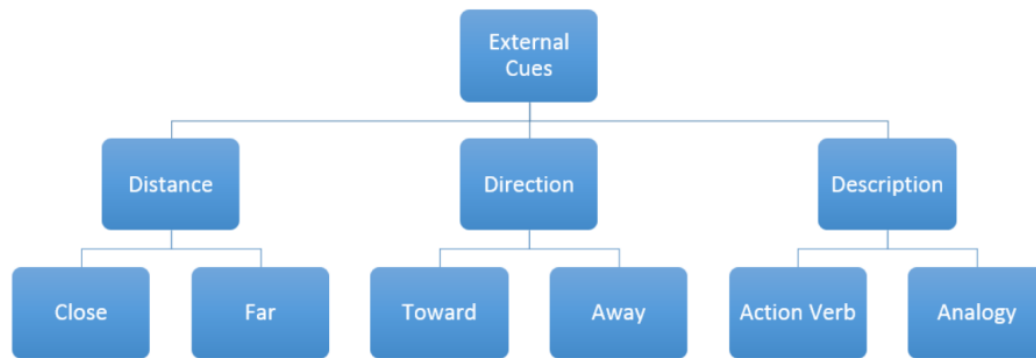
**Internal Cuing:** “Now, contract the muscles of your back and gluteal medius, and engage the muscles of your inner thighs.” “turn on your triceps to move your arm.”

Research on motor learning consistently finds that instructions that have an internal focus cues for muscular actions, such as “contract your hamstrings” are much less effective at actually triggering contraction than ones that have an external focus—meaning they are directed at the actual movement that prompts a muscular action.

When you're asked to move, your brain—with the help of the visual demonstration, will call upon the vestibular (relating to the inner ear and sense of balance), and proprioceptive (the ability to sense joint position and movement) systems to generate a motor command that automatically activates the muscles necessary for accomplishing the task. We don't need to cue a specific muscle to do this; this is primarily reserved for a rehabilitation private setting.

**External Cuing:** “Lift your hips towards the ceiling, ground feet into the earth, and imagine dragging the heels towards your hips and knees past your mat.”

Cues like this provide real context to the member, and clearly explain to them what the instructor is trying to translate across. Likewise, analogies, such as “propel like a slingshot”, “spin the earth” or “explode out of the start position like a jet engine” also clearly translate the information to the athlete.



In multiple occasions research has concluded that external cues were more capable of retaining the skill and performing better when reattaining technique and skill than those using only internal or normal cues.

There a place internal cuing, however pairing up an internal cue with an external cue my help the member better comprehend the exercise.

**TASK: List your most favourite cues, in the interest of time aim for 5-10 cues. Then categorise as Internal or external. 5mins**

**TASK: Write the corresponding Internal VS External cues so you have an example of both.**

Language: Words that inspire, simple, directional and concise.

Avoid cues with filler words and overuse words or phrases. This can confuse and distract members away from the exercise.

Fear based language often has a good intention but how is it being received? It can lead to confusion, anxiety, a sense of failure it can create a non placebo response with certain members. EXAMPLE: I will instruct you to move with good technique, I'll do this by telling you all the negative things that might happen to your joints and muscles. "It important that you stay in a diagonal position during your lunges, don't lift your torso too high as it will go into your lower back."

**TASK: Give an example of a fear based cue.**

**TASK: Give an example of how you would re-word a fear based cue to inspire.**

**TASK: List words that sound like Pilates Align, create another list for Pilates Athletic.**

## Format & Exercise Selection:

Following a familiar format with expertly sequenced exercises, will build both knowledge and confidence for members, leading to a greater sense of accomplish, and motivation to stay committed.

- Align aims to deconstruct the complexity of the exercises into buildable layers of movement, members move through various modifications and supportive

progressions. Transitions aim to prepare the next block of work with mobility and preparation exercises.

**TASK Align: Choose a Pilates exercise, how would you deconstruct this exercise through layers of modification and progression.**

- Athletic dynamic pace between transitions, encouraging minimal rest between exercises without any stagnant pauses. Not necessarily more complex or advanced repertoire, the challenge is within the simple movements linked together in continuous movement that will challenge fitness.

**TASK Athletic: Write a sequence for Pilates Athletic using no more than 3-4 exercises.**

Class Type	Class Duration	Pre Game	Intro	Warm Up	Body	Cool Down	Close of Class
Align & Athletic	25 min	10 min	1 min	3 min	18 min	2 min	1 min
	45 min	10 min	1 min	6 min	32 min	5 min	1 min
	60 min	10 min	1 min	6 min	45 min	7 min	1 min

## Coaching & Connection: What makes an exceptional experience?

Coaching: Word choice has a profound effect. Motivating cues can often become repetitive and take up space as filler words, the outcome is diminished and lose effectiveness. "Nice", "Good work" are common words that we use to praise and motivate, but they do they spark a surge of enthusiasm?

**TASK: Explore the common cues you use to motivate members? Write alternative words/phrases that promote the same outcome?**

EXAMPLE: "Nice work everyone, keep going" reworded "So powerful team, can you commit to that same energy for your last 10 seconds"

Coaching cues on how many reps/time is remaining in an exercise provides an end goal members can work towards. Create mental space, avoid counting everything single rep, provide a guide and let members have moment to be immersed in their own space. Create a call to action, rather than last 5 reps, provide a verb or adjective to link to a countdown.

EXAMPLE: "How controlled can you make your last 5 reps?"

Acknowledge members: Establish sense of community, recognition of member on an individual and group level.

Individual

Section of  
class

Day/Club

Connecting with member on individual level, using their name, expanding upon the class as a whole, acknowledge their presence "Wednesday morning crew" " Back of class looking so strong" "Mark you've got this"

Praise and encourage through these 3 ways.

Manual Assists: Aim to give everyone a form of manual assists. Tactile feedback improves retention of technique and builds a deep sense of body awareness. Please note some members will request not to receive any tactile feedback.

**TASK: Think of 3 non-physical manual assistance that you can implement in your class.**

## Mindfulness: Setting an expectation and intention

Pilates unlocks inner resilience, a mindset that is not defeated after the first, second or third attempt. Movement and mindset needs to be trained and challenged; Pilates helps to unlock barriers surrounding exercises to inspire a new way to exercise.

'Contrology exercises that produce a harmonious structure we term physical fitness reflecting itself in a co-ordinated and balanced tri-party unity of body, mind and spirit.'

- Extract from Results of Contrology Chapter, Return to life Through Contrology. J.H. Pilates.

**TASK: Write an Introduction with an intention and class expectation**

## Music: How to create a killer playlist

Music will enhance and compliment the instructors cuing, and the exercises selected. This will build upon motivation and energy of the session. Music will also navigate the journey through class blocks

Compelling research links music and the effect on brain function, particularly how music can stimulate hormones. Music releases Endorphins leading to a heightened feeling of excitement. In addition to feeling euphoric, endorphins quell anxiety; music will stimulate cognitive function, enabling more focus to a task. However, if music is not paired for well for a particular part of class, it will be distracting and ineffective.

To avoid sensory fatigue, use various musical genres from various decades, promoting moments of nostalgia. Avoid no more than 4 songs from the same genre, this will provide a musically journey that is stimulating but not leading to repetition.

CLASS BLOCKS	ALIGN	ATHLETIC
Introduction	110 - 120 bpm	120 – 124bpm
Warm Up	120 - 125 bpm	120 - 125 bpm
Body	120 - 125 bpm	125 – 132bpm
Cool Down	80 – 90 bpm	100 – 120 bpm
Close of Class	110 - 120 bpm	124bpm

In both Align and Athletic speak to the bpm, count to the beat. During Athletic cascade your cues when the beat drops. Counting down from 8 or 4 reps/beats will blend music and movement together. Music becomes a part of the immense sensory experience.

The Introduction and Warm Up of class will benefit from either instrumental or minimal lyrics. This will help members focus on your vocal tone, and your words.

**TASK: Listening Activity play part of playlist from both Align and Athletic. Discuss the difference.**

## ENVIRONMENT:

Explore ways to play with lighting, dimmed lights when member are facing the ceiling, and during cool down.

Props, and class set ready as members enter the studio.

Light mist diluted essential oils, at the beginning and end of class.

Space is clean, free of dust, all equipment is neatly packed away if not in use.