

A Pilates Kind of Person

Our writer conquers her fear of the P-word in downtown Wayzata.



FOR YEARS, I'VE BEEN STUCK IN THE SAME OLD EXERCISE REGIMEN: running, biking, the occasional aerobics DVD when the weather gets bad... So you can understand how I might have been a little hesitant to break out of my rut and head to a local Pilates studio. Sure, I had plenty of friends and co-workers who had taken classes, but I'd always assumed that I wasn't fit enough or hip enough to try it myself. Truthfully, I'd always thought that I just wasn't a Pilates kind of person.

That all changed one chilly Wednesday morning, as I pulled into the parking lot of Pilates MN, an independently operated Pilates studio located in a quaint brick building in the Village Shoppes Mall on the east end of downtown Wayzata. Pamela Hasselbring, owner and certified instructor, greeted me warmly as I walked through the front door. After a few brief questions about my health and medical background, we started our session.

As we toured the studio, Hasselbring quickly brought me up to speed on the fundamentals of Pilates. "Basically, we work the core," she says. "We develop strength, posture, flexibility, balance, body alignment. People work out [at the gym] and think they're in good shape, but Pilates is like truth serum; it tells what you're really made of." I crossed my fingers and hoped I had what it took.

After an introduction to 'the Chair,' 'the Reformer,' and other basic Pilates equipment, we stopped in front of the newest addition to Hasselbring's studio: the CoreAlign machine. Pilates MN is the first—and only—studio in the Twin Cities area to offer this cutting-edge equipment. Developed in 2005 by Jonathan Hoffman, a physical therapist in Israel, the CoreAlign is only sold to studios that employ physical therapists schooled in their revolutionary techniques.

At the time of my session, Pilates MN was home to only one of these exclusive machines, but Hasselbring virtually glowed with excitement as she divulged plans to expand her studio with the addition of five more CoreAlign machines and a newly minted class schedule by early 2011.

As she spoke, Hasselbring adjusted the tension on the CoreAlign by easily swapping out a few elastic cords, and demonstrated how the sliding platforms stimulate core stability and strength through both large and small controlled body movements. After a



brief lesson, I stepped onto the machine and quickly learned that what looked like simple, easy exercises were actually quite challenging—but not in the traditional sense.

I wasn't lifting heavy weights or running until my lungs burned, yet I could still feel my muscles working and tiring. According to Hasselbring, it is this controlled, low-impact movement that makes Pilates perfect for every age and fitness level. "We all need posture, flexibility and mobility," she says. "We have a lot of seniors come in to work on stability and athletes rehabilitating after sports injuries."

Pilates is also a great choice for those with health conditions that may prohibit them from other activities. Hasselbring points out that people with conditions like osteoarthritis or spondylolisthesis aren't supposed to be doing certain kinds of movements, which "can actually worsen their condition," she says.

Hasselbring confides that she herself has a compression fracture in her lower back, making it essential for her to be able to differentiate between exercises that will strengthen the surrounding musculature

People work out [at the gym] and think they're in good shape, but Pilates is like truth serum; it tells what you're really made of.

—Pamela Hasselbring

and those that may cause further damage to her bone. Because of this, the staff at Pilates MN is trained by physical therapists and has a real understanding of not only the exercises and equipment that they utilize, but also the anatomy and physiology of the clients they work with.

At Pilates MN, Hasselbring offers private, semi-private and group sessions, as well as discounted teen classes, physical therapy sessions and healthy living seminars. So try it—you just might discover you are a Pilates kind of person after all. //



Pilates MN

864 East Lake Street Wayzata, MN 55391

952-476-0304 • www.pilatesmn.com

pamela.h@pilatesmn.com

Pilates MN is offering a one-hour Assessment/private, 5 Introductory classes, 1 CoreAlign class *only* \$75. This is a regular value of \$225.

Special is good through March 31st.