

We've got the power

A new kind of Pilates is behind some of the hottest celebrity bodies – and it's on its way to the UK...

We all want to be fit and toned, but the trouble with many types of exercise is that they require persistence and patience. So a workout that promises tangible results in just ten sessions sounds like a real winner.

Jennifer Aniston, Claudia Schiffer, Marcia Cross and Elizabeth Hurley certainly think so. They are just a few of the stars who are said to be hooked on Power Pilates, the exercise craze taking the celebrity circuit by storm. Claudia Schiffer used Power Pilates

to help get in shape for her revealing German *Vogue* cover shoot last spring. Nicole Kidman and Ben Stiller have been seen at classes in Los Angeles, while Courteney Cox, Sarah Jessica Parker and Liv Tyler are also said to be fans.

Powerful evolution

Of course, Pilates itself is nothing new. Developed almost a century ago and loved by dancers, it involves a series of stretching and core-strengthening routines that help create long, lean and supple bodies. But Power Pilates takes it to another level, by incorporating more resistance work and some circuit training.

It is performed on a piece of Pilates equipment, the "reformer" (or an adapted version), which employs a series of springs and pulleys and a moving platform to provide varying levels of resistance. Power Pilates (also sometimes called Dynamic Pilates) then adds circuit training to provide an aerobic workout and typically small class sizes for hands-on training – all adding up to a

dynamic, body-sculpting workout that retains the core-strength benefits for which traditional Pilates is famous.

According to David Higgins, a trainer and co-founder of TenPilates, which runs high-intensity Pilates classes in its two London studios, the workout helps maintain motivation by offering results you can see in the mirror. "It's a really effective way to specifically target areas like your abs, bum and arms while working everything from the deep stabilising or core muscles to your larger, superficial muscles, strengthening you from the inside out," he explains.

Fast track to fabulous

David, who studied in LA with Pilates guru to the stars Sebastien Lagree, says that in addition to the trademark long and lean look, Power Pilates can actually help sculpt the body – in a matter of weeks. "We consider it to be the next step on from the classic Pilates."

And by keeping the numbers down, trainers can closely monitor progress. "What attracted me to TenPilates is that there are never more than ten people in a class," explains Neil Dimmock, who teaches the technique at both London TenPilates studios. "That means I can help each person get the most out of their workout. It is the opposite of the 'one-size-fits-all' mentality that fails so many gyms and puts so many people off exercising."

Neil says he has never known a more effective workout in his 15 years as a personal trainer. "I recommend it to everyone from the complete exercise novice to professional sportspeople; from women who have just had babies to people rehabilitating from back injury. By focusing on posture, core strength and control it will help you tone up, whatever your age. It delivers visible results, and quickly."

In fact, according to Neil, within ten classes you should notice:

- Your body is realigned and posture is improved.
- Your energy levels rise and you sleep better.
- You become better at your chosen sport.
- You develop longer, leaner muscles.
- Your flexibility increases.
- You enjoy working out.

TenPilates classes start from £12.50 (introductory offer), visit tenpilates.com or tel: 020-8969 9677. To find other Pilates classes near you, visit pilates.co.uk.



Claudia Schiffer (above) keeps in supermodel shape with Pilates, and *Desperate Housewife* Marcia Cross works out with weights at her Power Pilates class in LA (left). Jennifer Aniston (far left) is another fan



CORE CURRICULUM

- Pilates was developed during the First World War by Joseph Pilates, who combined yoga postures with aerobics while concentrating on the breathing to strengthen the "core" muscles of the body.
- Despite being viewed as a mat-based exercise, Pilates was originally intended to be performed on the "reformer" equipment, which is enjoying a revival.
- Power Pilates was pioneered in 2001 by Hollywood-based instructor Sebastien Lagree (pilatesplusla.com), whose "Systeme Dynamique" has a devoted A-list following.