



# World-class Pilates in Naples: Pilates, Fitness, and Therapeutics, Inc.

By Jill Wheeler

“Physical fitness is the first requisite of happiness. In order to achieve happiness, it is imperative to gain mastery of your body. If at the age of 30 you are stiff and out of shape, you are old. If at 60 you are supple and strong then you are young.”

—Joseph Pilates

Once reserved for elite dancers and athletes to increase performance, strength, and flexibility, Pilates entered the mainstream fitness world about 20 years ago and is currently a foundational element of the everyday person's workout with more than 12 million people practicing world-wide. Pilates' fascinating history began with an actual namesake, Joseph Pilates (1880-1967). During World War I, German-born, Pilates, was living in England and working as a self-defense instructor for Scotland Yard. He was interned as an "enemy alien" and during that time practiced and honed his fitness training skills on fellow internees. Wanting to help bed-ridden patients get exercise, he used mattress springs to craft devices, enabling these patients to exercise against resistance. When an influenza epidemic struck England in 1918, killing thousands of people, all of Joseph's bed-ridden trainees survived; a testament to the effectiveness of his resistance training.

Eventually released from internment, Joseph Pilates found his way to the United States in the early 20's where he met his wife and his formal instruction to elite dancers and fitness leaders took off. Joseph Pilates instructed students and future instructors at his studio until he passed away at the age of 87. While all Pilates practices are rooted in the resistance-based, anatomically focused muscular-skeletal training model of Joseph Pilates, there are different training programs and levels of certification amongst practitioners. Some trainers adopt elements of Pilates training and incorporate the exercises into their training regimes. All Pilates is based on the lengthening-strengthening of the muscular-skeletal system using resistance and conditioning techniques that emphasizes spinal structural integrity, scapular stability, and spinal rebalancing.

Local standout Pilates practitioner, Jennifer Gerali, Owner/Director of Pilates, Fitness, and Therapeutics, Inc. in Naples, has a world-class studio and extensive training and certification in STOTT Pilates for special populations, including post-rehabilitation and sports-specific training. STOTT, a modern form of Pilates, developed by professional dancer, Moira Merrithew, along with sports medicine professionals, is a highly acclaimed, often medically endorsed practice. STOTT Pilates' rigorous training program is often referred to as the "Ivy League" of the Pilates training world. People of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are finding strength, renewal, rehabilitation and fitness in practicing Pilates with Jennifer right here in Naples.