



## Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended

By Peter Fiasca, Ph.D.

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Discovering Pure Classical Pilates looks deeply into Joseph Pilates' traditional method of mental and physical conditioning by describing its foundations, goals, movement qualities and benefits. Specific attention is given to the ways in which market forces, individual creativity or ambition lead to deterioration and commercialization of the traditional Pilates method. We harken back in time to Joseph Pilates' own two books *Your Health* (1934) and *Return to Life Through Contrology* (1945) by exploring social, economic, psychological and spiritual issues associated with his traditional work.

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**Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended** By Peter Fiasca, Ph.D. **Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Peter Fiasca does the most beautiful Roll Up I've ever seen! And his first book, *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates* is equally as impressive. Despite the awkward, lengthy subtitle, *Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended*, there is nothing inept about his discussions of the foundations, key elements, and transmutations of the system. Unlike the many "how-to" manuals on the market, this is a love story - one that makes the reader fall in love with Classical Pilates. It is a must-read for all Pilates teachers and practitioners, particularly those with non-traditional training. Fiasca sets the tone early on, establishing his sincerity, legitimacy, and passion for the Method as he relates his journey into Contrology. He leaves the reader with no doubt as to what makes Pilates unique, emphasizing the athletic, corrective, and organic nature of the system. Recounting the universally accepted principles of Pilates, he adds a seventh principle - cardiovascular conditioning. If this isn't enough to clearly define the Method, Fiasca goes on to explain the differences and similarities between Classical Pilates and physical therapy, dance, and yoga. His skillful writing and solid research make these comparisons striking. Although informative, his discussion of the factors influencing Joseph Pilates and his work is less engaging. Since we know so little about Pilates' early life, much of this is educated speculation. Fiasca traces the roots of Pilates' mind/body connection to Greek influences on German culture and civilization. The origin of the third component of the system, the spirit, proves more elusive, leading to a lengthy examination of various religious concepts of spirit. Chapter 4 is a joy to read! The highlight of the book is a discussion of the four necessary conditions of Classical Pilates. Fiasca delights the reader with well-turned phrases and powerful analogies, referring to the symphonic arrangement of all of our movements as *The Art of Flow*. When flow is viewed through the eyes of a classical practitioner, it takes on greater clarity: we not only practice creating shapes, but we articulate these shapes and refine these shapes. Transitions, then, become an exercise in weight transference between movements. Equally as illuminating are his clarifications of flat-back position, breathing, and external rotation. In the world of Pilates manifestos, it doesn't get any better than this! In contrast to the powerful prose are the graphics, which are often a distraction. Posed and sometimes even hokey, they do not reflect the organic nature of the work. One photograph shows Fiasca and Jamie Trout simultaneously performing front splits and Russian splits respectively on the same reformer. While this may be Pilates art, it does not enhance the concept of flow and the idea of creating shapes that the author emphasizes. Thankfully, he corrects this flaw in the second edition, utilizing classic photographs of the traditional method to more accurately reflect his intention. Psychology AND Pilates mesh in the form of *Metaphors for Living*, a self-reflective tool Fiasca developed to increase one's insight as discovered through the traditional Pilates method. An exploration of the parallels, as well as the differences, between psychology and Classical Pilates is instructive in helping students to determine appropriate boundaries when working with clients: a single comment can have a lasting effect upon a student's life. The physical journey is inextricably linked to the emotional voyage. As a psychologist, Fiasca is well-equipped to offer guidance in this area, recognizing the symbiotic relationship between teacher and student. And his advice is invaluable. --Suzanne Diffine

Ever the consummate gentleman, he acknowledges those who provide him with material for the book or who contribute to the preservation of Classical Pilates. Equally as gracious, he declines to identify those who have bastardized Classical Pilates, seeking profit, power, or prestige. Citing the many reasons for the proliferation of these hybrid forms of Pilates, he reminds the reader that "Joseph Pilates communicated his entire vision and technique to Romana (Kryzanowska) and Jay (Grimes)." Other teachers only learned what worked for their bodies, thus creating their own versions of Pilates. Physical therapy-based versions further distort the original work. Although Pilates referred to his system as corrective exercise, it was designed to treat the

normal, healthy body. Classical Pilates is the only approach with a proven successful track record of creating health and well being since the early 1900s. Why mess with perfection? Learning Classical Pilates is not easy, but the rewards are enormous. It cannot be mastered by watching a DVD, taking a weekend certification course, or reading a manual. It takes real work, real commitment, and the guidance of a well trained teacher. Furthermore, it is imperative to keep the pure work alive by continuing to study with qualified instructors, such as those listed in the Academy Directory, and spreading the word, just like Peter Fiasca. Armed with a PhD. in psychology, a Pilates body, and a generous spirit, he is the ambassador of Classical Pilates. Seeing is believing...and reading is the path to enlightenment! --Suzanne Diffine

Anyone who has viewed Peter Fiasca's Classical Pilates DVDs or attended a training session with him will easily agree on one thing: he is passionate about Classical Pilates and defends it with the ardor of a religious apologist. In that regard, his newly-released book, *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates*, does not disappoint. And like a religious apologist, he is bound to confront and challenge fundamental beliefs, for if there were no grounds for disagreement, there would be no need for apologetics! He has, in fact, called himself an apologist for Classical Pilates. *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates* is a look into the method's foundations, goals, movement qualities and benefits; with special attention; given to the ways in which market forces, individual creativity or ambition lead to deterioration and commercialization of the traditional Pilates method. Peter wastes no time in declaring his three key points. In terse, plain-language style, reminiscent of Martin Luther's 95 theses, Peter declares: There is only one Pure Classical Pilates Joseph Pilates' traditional method. There are many derivative approaches incorrectly or falsely called Pilates. Contemporary Pilates; is a contradiction of terms. Peter assures us that the method Joseph Pilates passed down to the likes of Romana Kryzanowska and Jay Grimes is sufficiently complex and allows for almost infinite modifications and variations to meet the needs of the individual and will reward a lifetime of study. Any change to the system passed down will necessarily dilute it, he says. Why does he consider Romana and Jay the chief bearers of the flame of Pilates? Because unlike many of his other protégés, Joe Pilates taught them the full method and they chose to preserve it. Others, he says, either chose to change his method or were trained in the context of their own limitations and special conditions and, therefore, did not learn the whole system as he intended for the normal, healthy body. However, *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates* goes beyond the defense of the traditional method, and provides rewarding reading even to those not inclined to consider Peter's arguments. For instance, his explanation of how Pilates relates to Paideia directs the reader to a deeper understanding of the method than considering it as mere physical conditioning. Acknowledging that the widely circulated biographical sketches of Pilates are of questionable origin, he suggests that Pilates' writings parallel the tradition of Paideia, which was the Hellenistic process of educating humans into their true form, their real and genuine human nature. And a consideration of these parallels leads to the conclusion that Joe Pilates intended his method to promote citizenship and productivity in society. Peter also takes on the task of explaining how the Pilates method engages the whole body, mind, and spirit. He shows how Joe Pilates wanted us to have a more responsive body, a more facile mind, increased vitality, and a greater capacity to cope with problems in everyday living; To facilitate experiencing the mind-body components to the method, he suggests using the seven principles of Pilates as metaphors for living. Slightly modifying the six well-known principles handed down from Friedman and Eisen, Peter has us consider how Centering, Concentration, Control, Correctness, Core Strength, Cardiovascular Conditioning, and Cadence have metaphorical parallels in our daily lives. For example, he would have us ask. Am I applying the principle of Centering in my daily actions analogous to the ways I achieve centering during a workout? As to the spiritual component to the method, he searches for parallels with numerous religious texts that examine the connections between spirituality and the body. --Tom Floyd

#### About the Author

Peter's unique perspective comes from years of experience as a Romana Kryzanowska certified Pilates teacher. **TEACHING THE METHOD:** Peter's many years of study culminate into intriguing and fun

workshops that periodically highlight the interrelationship between traditional Pilates and overall health. Because of his extensive work as a teacher trainer, instructors, students and the public can benefit from Peter's insights into the traditional Pilates method. Peter's devotion with Pilates began in 1988, when he took his first class at Wee-Tai Hom's studio in Manhattan. As his passion grew, he pursued teacher training at Drago's Gym, receiving certification in 1998 from famed master teacher Romana Kryzanowska. Over the years, he honed his teaching and his practice with regular lessons from Romana, as well as from master trainers Jay Grimes, Kathy Grant, and other distinguished, traditional instructors. Peter continues to study the work and has dedicated himself to the preservation of the Pilates method, creating the ClassicalPilates.net worldwide directory of traditional instructors. Producer and director of the award-winning Classical Pilates Technique series of six DVDs and author of the critically reviewed companion book, *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates*, he has been a frequent guest instructor at training centers throughout the U.S., Europe, and South America. He appeared in Romana Kryzanowska's first commercial DVD project, demonstrating the Pilates Mat workout, as well as the DVD titled "Jay Grimes Revealed," with master teacher Jay Grimes.

## **Users Review**

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#### **Linda Shell:**

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because if you are reading a book specially book entitled *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended* your head will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every aspect that maybe mysterious for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging just about every word written in a reserve then become one type conclusion and explanation that maybe you never get prior to. The *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended* giving you a different experience more than blown away your brain but also giving you useful information for your better life in this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished examining it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary wasting spare time activity?

#### **David Hernandez:**

This *Discovering Pure Classical Pilates: Theory and Practice as Joseph Pilates Intended* is great reserve for you because the content which is full of information for you who else always deal with world and still have to make decision every minute. This book reveal it data accurately using great manage word or we can declare no rambling sentences inside. So if you are read this hurriedly you can have whole information in it.

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**Scott Roche:**

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