

What is the Lee Pilates Method?

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Hi, my name is Lee Vallely, and I am the founder of the **Lee Pilates Method**. As an athlete and a Master Pilates teacher with a background and degree in dance, I've applied my 30 years in professional movement conditioning to form what I believe is a powerful methodology. Now, I've opened up my own private studio to combine my expertise into my unique practice: The Lee Pilates Method.

The Lee Pilates Method is a combination of Pilates, dance, and athletic conditioning. This incorporates neuro-muscular reeducation and proper breath control.

Pilates and dance complement one another, because each requires moving with elegance, control, and fluid transitions. Both emphasize a strong center or core, which is essential to all other movements in Pilates. Each of these practices require great control and stabilization of non-moving body parts. Both require strong concentration and mental focus due to the precise and detailed movement.

Through my 20 years of practice, I have seen that many of us develop improper movement habits over time. I've observed poor movement patterns, such as "rounded shoulder syndrome" where hunched shoulders create tightness and strain. I also have seen hyper-mobile issues, which involve excessive joint laxity and poor joint control.

I've become an advocate of micro-movement to help reeducate the brain/muscle connection. *This* is why I developed the Lee Pilates Method.

Below is the Lee Pilates Method's three main primary principles:

Principle #1: Neuro-muscular re-education



To improve our movement, we need to train our brain and muscles to communicate properly and efficiently.

An example of this is hand-eye coordination. Your brain sends signals for movement and your muscles respond. By re-educating this pathway we improve strength, balance and overall function. Training the brain to *activate* or turn on underutilized muscles requires detailed micromovement using precision and repetition. This “rewires” a muscle to the brain.

An example of a micromovement would be lifting the arm out to the side of the body only as far as one can while keeping the shoulder blade and shoulder down and in their proper position. The arm may not lift even to shoulder height if there is little or no activation of the correct muscles to hold these bones in alignment.

Practicing this basic movement repeatedly in each session helps the client “relearn” this movement by connecting the brain to the appropriate stabilizers which hold the shoulder blade in place, giving the arm itself more range without shrugging the shoulder up to the ear.

The Lee Pilates Method is founded on the concept of neuro-muscular reeducation and most clients need this before progressing into larger, more athletic movements.

Principle #2: Proper breath control



Breath is essential to life, and something all living beings share. But most of the time, we breathe automatically. We might not even pay attention to when the breath becomes short, erratic, and inefficient.

Proper breath control is crucial to support the advanced motor demands of my method. Learning to use the breath during all phases of exercise helps to strengthen the core, integrate the muscles of the trunk and create more stability to the spine and hips.

I focus on specific breathing strategies in my method, such as nose breathing, lateral breathing, three-part breathing, and box breathing. This strengthens my clients' cardiopulmonary systems, reduces their stress, builds more awareness of breathing itself, and creates more enhanced well-being.

Principle # 3: Move through all planes of movement



In a typical class or private session my client would start with breathing and movement neural drills to activate the nervous system and prepare the body for movement. We then move to larger more complex movements on the equipment or mat using the Pilates or my dance based toning repertoire.

We have fun as we move through all planes of movement and ranges of motion appropriate for my client to mobilize the spine, strengthen the abs and spinal muscles, condition all the muscles of the trunk as well as strengthen the legs and tone the arms.

As clients get stronger and more confident and coordinated, these movements often include athletic conditioning exercises such as squats, planks, push ups and balance challenges which are so needed in everyday life.

Additionally, I'm passionate about elongated, erect posture and sculpted shoulders and arms and upper body strength; particularly for women.

My clients feel a great sense of accomplishment as they hit goals they never thought they would reach. They develop more courage and joy in their lives from seeing themselves transform through their own commitment and dedication to my principles of precision, commitment and focus. It takes time to restructure the body through meticulous movement and thought but it is well worth the journey.