



Little Movers

PILATES AND FITNESS FOR KIDS AND TEENS

By DELIA BUCKMASTER - Photos by LINDSEY JANE PHOTOGRAPHY



As healthy adults we get caught up in different dietary theories and exercise routines. Teaching children about health and fitness is different than teaching adults. With children you help them focus on understanding the benefits of a healthy routine and at the same time making it fun.

A rigorous exercise regimen may not be beneficial some children. For this group, a safer, healthier, low-impact workout is needed such as Pilates. Pilates is designed to build muscle strength, endurance and flexibility.

Many adults have developed faulty movement patterns from lack of body awareness, which lead to poor habits and posture. Kids of all ages can benefit from Pilates. Because Pilates is a mind and body discipline, it can guide kids to a stronger body, and more relaxed state of mind. Working to strengthen their bodies can increase stamina and build confidence that can last a lifetime.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS FOR TEACHING KIDS AND TEENS.

KEEP IT FUN! – Rename some of the exercises so that the age group can relate. Most adults don't know the anatomical names of their muscles nor do they understand movement terms such as "extend your spine" or "engage your glutes" therefore its unlikely that kids will either. Use toys and props they are familiar with like playground balls. Teens are able to use more sophisticated pieces of exercises equipment. Pilates reformers and other equipment are used for older kids to add resistance and more body control.

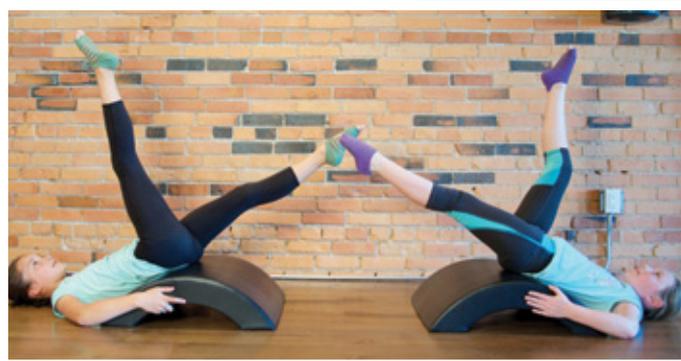
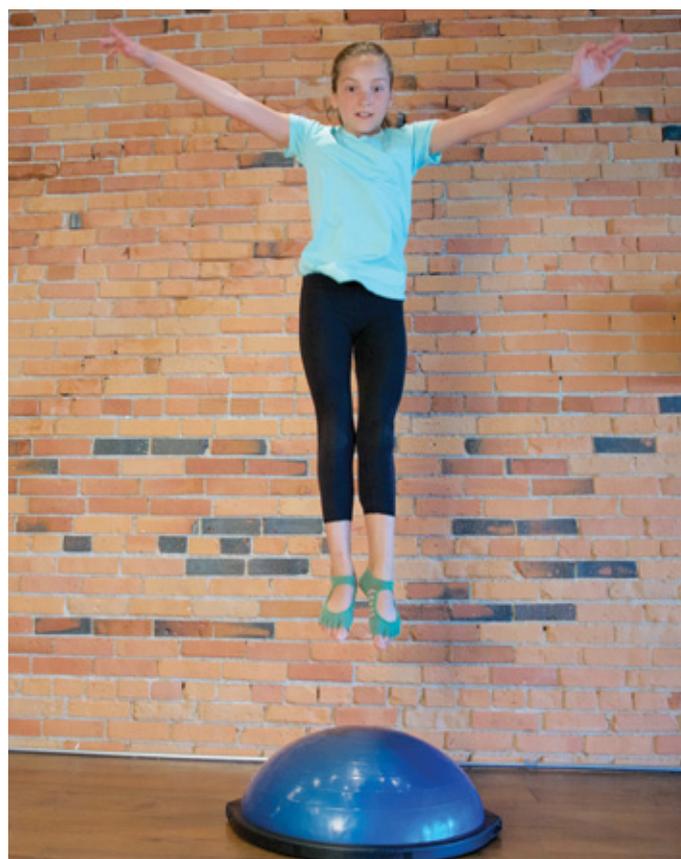
MODIFY- Cater to their level of fitness and ability. Kids and teens have a hard time focusing. Make exercises simple and build upon them like Algebra. When working with a group its important to encourage progress and not perfection. Try to build confidence and not create a competitive environment. There are plenty of places where kids competition levels will be hightened outside of their Pilates routine.

KEEP CLASSES SMALL- Limit classes to 10 or less especially with young children so that you can give them individual attention. This will also ensure that everyone is working safely and having fun.

KEEP IT POSITIVE – Talk about the benefits of health and fitness. Refrain from negative comments and discussing weight. Pilates and fitness in general should be about concentration, posture, flexibility and good habits. Kids want to be stronger just like their athlete roll models. Help them focus on those positive goals.

ENCOURAGE TEAM WORK- Let them teach each other. Kids will naturally want to help and nurture and they love to learn from their peers.

USE THEIR LANGUAGE – Don't use big words and expressions they can't begin to understand. Remember that you were a kid and a teen once. Use that experience to develop phrases and examples they will understand.



EXHALE PILATES+ is excited to announce our first ever **Summer Camps**.

Kids Ages 8-11 and Teens Ages 12-14. Visit our website for more information and links for registration. www.exhalepilates.com