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Gluten Free Exercise Series - [Pilates](#)

Dr. O: Hi, this is Dr. Osborne and today I have a very special guest for you.

Sylvia Favela is an expert in Pilates and an expert in home-based Pilates programs for people who have a challenging time getting the exercise done in a gym.

She's actually Comprehensive Certified in Pilates and she has been performing Pilates for the last decade so she's very highly qualified. I'm really looking forward to her introducing us to the world of Pilates and what it has to offer in terms of exercise.

First of all, thank you for coming and taking the time out of your busy schedule to be with me today. Can you tell my audience a little bit more about yourself and what Pilates is all about and what that means?

Sylvia: Definitely, and thank you Dr. O for having me on today.

First let me explain what Comprehensive Certified means. Pilates is based on mat work. This is work that is done on the floor. Then there is equipment that is accompanied with Pilates.

I'm certified across the board so it's not just mat, it's everything. It's a fully extensive program where a lot of people very commonly know Pilates as just mat work. That's just to give you a little point of what exactly comprehensive is.

It's been a fun ride teaching people Pilates because a lot of people don't quite know what it is yet so I'm excited to share.



Dr. O: I'm going to join that group of people who have never tried Pilates. I've heard a lot of great things about it from patients of mine. This is actually quite timely for me because I would really like to know a lot more about it and potentially give it a try and see what it has to offer.

My idea of it, and you correct me if I'm wrong, is that it's kind of a hybrid between yoga and weightlifting. Maybe you can elaborate a little bit more on that.

Sylvia: A lot of people do confuse Pilates and yoga. A lot of people think Pilates is just breathing or just a lot of stretching. Actually, no, Pilates does borrow a lot of thought of breathing from yoga, however, when I describe and explain Pilates it is movement based. You're breathing through each movement where it's been said that yoga is more just breathing and relaxing.

Not to say that Pilates isn't relaxing but you're actually working muscles in your entire body.

When you talk about Pilates being similar to weight training and resistance training it is very similar because you are using a lot of your own body resistance to give you that extra little something when you're doing a particular move. It's really learning and being more aware of your body and what your body is doing.

When you're doing a Pilates move you really can't fake it. When I explain that people kind of look at me a little funny and think what do you mean fake it?

With Pilates you have to keep your mind on what you're doing. You have to keep your abdominals working. You have to keep your legs working. Everything is all working together so there is no veering off and getting on



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your phone or thinking about something else. You're in the moment with Pilates.

Dr. O: It's not like a treadmill where you get to watch TV and exercise at the same time?

Sylvia: Not at all. That's one thing with Pilates. A lot of clients notice their stress level does reduce because they're in the moment and they're not thinking about what they have to do when they're done. They're there, it's their time, and they're breathing through each moment. That helps. The oxygen will flow completely through the body and it actually does make you feel better after but a good workout. You will feel muscles that you never even knew existed in your body.

Dr. O: It sounds mentally as well as physically challenging. You can't just show up and go at it partially. You have to show up and be ready to do it. It sounds like the benefit might be that it takes you away from all the things that most of us seek to get away from on a daily basis in terms of stress relief, just in and of itself, not necessarily the exercise but just where it takes your mind.

Sylvia: Exactly. The program that I have when you're aware and you're thinking about what you're doing you literally cut out 30 minutes off your workout because it's an intense workout because you're there and you're present.

Like you mentioned, it's not like getting on a treadmill where you waste all this time just kind of looking around. When you're doing a Pilates workout and you're doing a particular move you'll feel the work and it's highly more effective because you're in it and you just basically can't fake it. That's why you don't have to be doing a Pilates workout for hours and hours. It's very effective in a short amount of time.

Dr. O: That's a good point and it brings up a question. I'm a big promoter of trying to get a workout done in small fractions of time just because the average person will never comply to a 90 minute workout on a regular basis.



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Run me through the time frame of a Pilates workout. From start to finish how long are we talking?

Sylvia: If you're doing something early in the morning or mid-day or even before you get to bed you can actually get a good Pilates workout in 20 minutes; 30 minutes at the most.

Block out your 20 or 30 minutes a day and you will start to see changes in your body and you will start to feel better. You'll start noticing you're standing up taller and your posture is changing. You carry yourself differently.

Normally a lot of people walk around with their shoulders rounded forward because we're sitting in front of a computer or we're driving for a long time. You'll notice with continued practice of your Pilates moves in 20 or 30 minutes a day your whole posture changes. You become addicted in a very good way to doing your workout and when you miss the workout you'll feel it. Your body will feel it when you do miss it.

Dr. O: That's good. It's a short timeframe and you're saying that one of the benefits as well is that it helps improve posture. One of the things that I treat a lot of is musculoskeletal conditions. The number one reason people go see a doctor outside of a cold or a flu is pain. I think a lot of that is our society today is so linked to staring at computers in fixed positions for long periods of time.

What you're saying is Pilates, because of its focus, it really helps with posture, it helps with the core, and it helps with the person's ability to create a better balance around the muscles of their spine and around the muscles of their posture.

Sylvia: Exactly, and I'm glad that you brought that up because with Pilates the main focus is the core; it's the deep abdominals. If you don't have a strong foundation everything else is going to fall apart.



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With Pilates, when you're working these deep abdominal muscles and controlling what your body is doing you reduce the risk of injuries. A lot of physical therapists and a lot of chiropractors send me people because of a car accident, because of low back pain, because of the day to day activities that we are a part of that puts the wear and tear on the body.

Pilates is definitely a functional move that helps just better your life overall and helps you to continue doing your favorite activities and keep up with your kids. That's huge.

Dr. O: Is Pilates more of a focus for women? Is it more a focus for men? What kind of clientele do you typically work with and who is going to get the benefit?

Sylvia: Actually a lot of women gravitate to Pilates because when people think of Pilates they think of dancers and they think of ballet dancers and think it's so pretty and elegant. However, the main focus of Pilates is the functional aspect of it and the guys that I do have that come in are surprised with just how beneficial Pilates is.

More guys should actually be doing it. Guys in general lose their flexibility earlier on than women. Boys tend to get into sports at an earlier age than girls so men tend to lose that flexibility. If guys are going into a gym and lifting heavy weights and not doing anything to balance the muscles and strengthen that core they're going to end up with injuries. That's why Pilates is for men and for women but I encourage more and more men and slowly more and more men are finding Pilates to be beneficial.

It's not just Pilates that they're doing. They're doing Pilates and then they're taking that into the gym when they're weight training, or they're CrossFit, or they're in boot camps and they're finding that their performance has actually increased and their workouts have gotten even better. It's just a whole roundabout better thing to add to your program.



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Dr. O: I know you mentioned dancers and I can't think of a more fit group of individuals; more in shape group of individuals than dancers. They're typically in top physical shape. I wouldn't want to be put up against one of them pound for pound.

Sylvia: I've trained dancers, gymnasts, CrossFit level one coaches, and to be quite honest with you it is a challenge for every single one. I have my three top coaches from CrossFit that I train and they are strong amazing athletes. However, with this work it does bring out the weaknesses that they do have in their core. Somebody can be and look completely fit and strong but the small intricate moves that Pilates has to offer with the exercises takes them to another level and actually challenges their fitness level.

That's one thing that I do get questioned about. Maybe I need to be strong first before I start. My answer is definitely not. You just want to start. You will be surprised. Definitely it surprises people once they start the program. They can't believe that they can now do a particular move that they couldn't do two weeks ago. They can feel that difference. It's this tight feeling in their midsection that they start to feel and it makes them feel great.

Dr. O: I find that one of the biggest mistakes that I see people make is they want to wait to start a program and they want to pre-train for a program so that they can start a program. To me what always usually ends up happening is they never pre-train so they never really ever even get started in the first place.

Sylvia: Right. I've seen that a lot and sometimes people are a little hesitant with Pilates because it's this unknown workout. Maybe it's not for me. That's why this particular program you can do at home and you can just practice at home. If you're going into a gym you'll start doing these workouts at the gym on the mat or you'll start holding your position in your body differently



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and even with that it's a surprising thing. After a while you're just doing it out of habit which is actually really great.

Dr. O: You mentioned a minute ago incorporating Pilates as part of a workout routine so it sounded to me that almost you were inferring that Pilates could be done either on its own, but it could also be done as just a dynamic change-up to a traditional workout regimen.

Sylvia: Yes. With Pilates some of my clients it is all that they do. There are some that this is what they do and then they go weight train. Again, my CrossFit coaches, my gymnasts that come in, they add the workout in to help them with other workouts or some stick with it and then they do see the benefits of it from there on.

It's just an amazing workout and the way that the body changes is very different. It's not as if you're going into a gym and lifting weights. Your body changes in a very different way. Your body tightens up and stands up taller, if that makes any sense at all.

Dr. O: Yes, it makes perfect sense. I'm going to back up just a little bit because I want to make sure that I'm clear. This is something I think I'm going to start or at least attempt adding a couple times a week.

Right now I currently do yoga a couple times a week but I've been looking for something to give me a little dynamic change.

Sylvia: You'll definitely enjoy it because it is that dynamic change and it will give you almost like that little missing piece of the puzzle. Once you plug that in you'll see a change.

Dr. O: The biggest difference between Pilates and yoga is that yoga, depending on the type of yoga, but mainstream yoga is going to focus more on a lot of stretching and balance where it sounds more like Pilates focuses on stretching, balance, but at the same time using body weight as a resistance tool?



Sylvia: That is correct. With the yoga a lot of the yoga is holding positions and breathing and then you transition from one position to another and you hold. With Pilates you do transition however it's a hold but you're actually moving. It's similar but different because it is addressing the body's own weight as resistance. That's where it kind of lends over to the body resistance and almost like weight training but its all body weight.

Dr. O: At some of the gyms I see these big reformer machines and I think that's one of the reasons why I personally have never done Pilates because I've always been under the impression that you have to have one of these reformers to be able to do Pilates; and people fear change.

Is that something that you need or is that just a tool that can be used.

Sylvia: It's just a tool that can be used if you want to really dive in and get really serious with Pilates. There is more equipment. The reformer is the one that is commonly seen and used. There is other equipment in the Pilates world. There is quite a bit. Some of them look like a mini trapeze. There are quite a few of them however with Pilates the main focus, the main work is on the mat on the floor.

All you really need to get a good workout in is yourself on the floor. You can grab a mat and if you want to add any resistance to it one of those stretch bands that have a bit of a resistance on it is all you really need. You don't necessarily need to get onto the reformer.

The reformer looks intimidating. Some of the Pilates equipment looks intimidating. Walking into a Pilates studio looks very intimidating but you can avoid that intimidation and you can do this at home just with you, your mat, and your workout. That's it; that's all you need.

Dr. O: A good solid bodyweight workout that helps improve posture, dynamic strength, and flexibility in 20 to 30 minutes or less.

Sylvia: That is correct.



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Dr. O: That sounds about my speed. You've convinced me. I'm definitely going to give it a shot so that I can speak more from experience.

Sylvia: That is awesome. You'll really enjoy it. People are leery about it but once they do it one time just the look on their face like, "Wow, I didn't know this was what Pilates is." It just completely changes their mind.

I've had people that will come in and say, "Oh I'm just going to do this for a few weeks." They get hooked. It's a great addiction. You'll definitely enjoy it Dr. O.

Dr. O: I know you have your own studio. I have listeners all over the world. Can you give us information so that if somebody listening is local to you they know where to find you?

Sylvia: My studio is in Chino Hills in California. That website to that is ChinoHillsPilates.com.

Dr. O: I know you also have a home program which I'm going to get ready to pick up and check out. If somebody was interested in starting a home-based program with you what would they need to do or where would they need to go to find that?

Sylvia: They can go to BodyWeightPilates.com and they would want all follow along workouts. They are all video tutorials. There is another great one as well which is PilatesWorkoutSolution.com.

Dr. O: I'm going to be busy doing my homework now. The next time I talk to you I'll have tried Pilates and I'll let you know.

Sylvia: And then you're going to tell me, "Wait a minute. I'm feeling my ribs like I can feel this whole area really tight." You'll like it.

I do want to say this: once you get into a workout and once you're continuously doing it the soreness feels a little different. It's not like a gym



sore. It's more of a deep muscle sore so you know you've gotten in there and got some serious work done.

Dr. O: Okay, awesome. Is there any kind of barrier for people in starting a Pilates program that you feel like it might be comforting to hear?

Sylvia: The important thing is to just start it. The hardest part is like you said: people thinking they have to get strong or they have to get ready for the program. Start it and continue it and practice it gradually. Since all the workouts are all home-based you can do these at home. If you feel like you look funny doing this no one is going to be around you; you'll be at home. Try it. You won't regret one minute doing this workout.

Dr. O: Okay, excellent. Thank you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to enlighten us today with another great form, I think, of exercise. Again, next time I talk to you I will have taken a bite of the Pilates apple and I will let you know all about it.

Sylvia: Definitely, and I thank you for letting me share this information with you and with all of your followers as well. Try Pilates; you'll love it.

Dr. O: All right, thanks again Sylvia. You have a very wonderful afternoon and we'll talk soon.

Sylvia: Thank you. Have a good day.