



Pilates for Pink!

By Amy Dixon

People are often surprised at the vast clientele with different conditions and issues we see at Inner Strength Pilates. We have many gentleman golfers looking to shave a few points from their games, and elite athletes, including an Olympian-in-training. We have pre-teen dancers and gymnasts, and an 84-year-old great grandma (who is quite spunky, I might add – I hope to have half her energy at half her age!) We see expectant mothers who practice Pilates right up to their due dates and others actively receiving medical treatment (including post-operative clients just a few weeks out of mastectomies or hip replacement surgery, as well as patients with MS and Parkinson's disease). The clientele of Inner Strength Pilates is diverse!

As we approach October, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we hope to shed light on a different therapy for this diagnosis: Pilates to assist recovery. On the road through the journey of breast cancer, there are many things simply outside of one's control. Appointments to various specialists, mammograms, ultrasounds, biopsies, and surgeons suddenly top your priority list. Taking the reins in other areas of your life and body that you can control will help improve with the quality of your life. Rest, stress relief, a healthy diet and exercise are all crucial elements that you *can* control!

Create a team that will be available to you throughout this season. Health care professionals, specialized navigators, a physical therapist, a Pilates team, a massage therapist, and a lymphedema therapist are all components that will assist those dealing with the breast cancer journey. Enlist family and friends to take part in exercise with you, or ask them to take items off your plate so that you don't shoulder so many obligations.

Laying a strong foundation in any woman's life is important, but it is especially important when in recovery from cancer treatments and surgery. There are several issues that are commonly associated with breast cancer. Inner Strength Pilates can help with several, including:

- **Lymphedema** relates specifically to axillary lymph node dissection, axillary radiation or surgical infection (swelling of the arm). The swelling occurs when the lymph channels are altered and no longer able to properly drain lymph fluid from the arm back into the body's general circulation. While a hard workout produces lymph and further edema, a gentle movement series and breath work are greatly beneficial so that the muscles massage the lymphatic tissue and encourage it to drain.
- Breast cancer surgeries affect the **rotator cuff** muscles, resulting in faulty shoulder girdle mechanics, poor posture, increased stiffness, pain, and decreased range of motion. A vicious cycle often occurs, where the patient is fearful of pain and swelling, so they guard the arm, looking for a protective posture. It can become stiff from disuse, form scar tissue, leading to more pain, and potentially, a frozen shoulder. Early stretching and strengthening helps keep fluids moving, keeps scar tissue from forming, and encourages positive muscular patterning.
- Women who undergo chemotherapy or take certain breast cancer medications are often pushed into early menopause and **premature osteoporosis**. With one year of chemotherapy, there is a **5% loss of bone mass** – the normal amount of bone loss across a 5-year period. Resistance exercise is crucial to combat this loss. Further repercussions of osteoporosis include: postural imbalances, decreased balance and an increased risk of falling, all of which lead to a higher chance of bone fractures.

Please visit our website to learn about other aspects of breast cancer recovery that can be helped by Inner Strength Pilates (InnerStrengthPilatesNC.com). We offer a multi-faceted program to help women in their journey back to health.

The powerful environment in which we operate in our Pilates studio lends itself to tremendous flexibility in treating our clients. The Pilates equipment can provide clients assistance with movement that may be too fatiguing to execute on their own. It is the combined experience of breathing, core strengthening, and

controlled movement that Pilates provides that restores range of motion after surgery.

I have heard over the years how clients may step away from their program only to find the pain and limited movement return. A continued, consistent program of mobilizing and strengthening the tissue is important. Pilates is an excellent way for those affected to continue working towards, and maintaining, a healthy, balanced body.

During October, Inner Strength Pilates will offer Breast Cancer Survivors free sessions throughout the month! Please check our calendar for these

PINK PILATES classes!

ISP will be hosting a special afternoon dedicated to Winston's Survivors!

Pilates for PINK!!

October 4th from 5-7pm ~ floating Benefitting



Learn how Pilates can help you gain control again!

RSVP to us at 336.813.5320... space is limited!

PILATES BENEFITS FOR BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS

- improves lymphatic drainage with proper breathing techniques
- improves shoulder girdle mechanics, specifically scapulo-humeral rhythm, to aid in the breakdown of scar tissue and prevent frozen shoulder
- restores overall range of motion, flexibility, strength and endurance
- restores upright postural alignment and balance
- increases strength of local and global stabilizing muscles
- enhances core strength and endurance
- improves overall kinesthetic awareness
- re-establishes proper muscular firing patterns
- reduces both physiological and emotional stress
- improves appearance
- increases self-confidence and overall well-being