

NEUROPLASTICITY: Brain Training Pilates

"We retire too early and we die too young, our prime of life should be in the 70s and old age should not come until we are almost 100" Joseph Pilates



Challenging the way you move and recruit your muscles can help build new connections in your brain- yes really!! We call it neuroplasticity.

When we ask our brain to move our body in new and different ways this unique sensory input causes our brain to create new neural pathways in order to perform these movements.

This is a great 2 minute video explaining the phenomenon.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELpfYCZa87g>

If we *only* ever move our body in habitual ways, we only process information in the same way. When you come to Pilates class we like to add in specific challenges to help promote this process.

Things such as crossing the midline work such as we do in preparation phase and exercises like "Single Leg Stretch" and "Criss Cross" all help with the forming of new neural connections.

Neuroplasticity may actually be an important key to the optimal function and long-term healthy aging of our brain. So think Anti-Aging Exercise!

Do you ever struggle when you are asked to co-ordinate your arms and legs in an exercise? Well the Pilates Method deliberately adds in these challenges, so as a beginner you may start off with either just arms or legs moving and then as you "learn" the exercises you can start to add the limb actions together- think about Heel Slides and See Saw arms- often an exercise we use at the beginning of class to tune you in both mentally and physically which over time becomes easy to do but can be a real challenge to get the left and right hand sides of the brain talking to one another.



As you build these connections you are then helping your brain stay active and working well – so when your instructor gives you a complicated co-ordination exercise, don't get frustrated with yourself just focus on the fantastic brain positive work you are doing!

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