

# STOTT PILATES® Approach and the Original Pilates Method

## History of Joseph Pilates

- ▶ Born 1880 in Germany. A sickly child determined to overcome his various afflictions.
- ▶ Studied yoga, Zen meditation and rigorous exercise regimens of ancient Greeks and Romans.
- ▶ By age 14, gained enough strength to become accomplished skin diver, skier and gymnast.
- ▶ Went to England in 1912 and became a boxer, worked as a circus performer and trained detectives in self-defense.
- ▶ Was interned, along with other Germans, at outbreak of World War I. Taught fellow prisoners a series of exercises combining physical fitness with breath control and mental acuity to increase strength and flexibility.
- ▶ Spent latter part of war on Isle of Man working as a hospital orderly; helped rehabilitate patients through resistance exercise using equipment fashioned from bedsprings, among other things.
- ▶ Returned to Germany after war and continued pioneering unique approach to physical fitness. When government insisted he train the new German army, he immigrated to the United States and established the Pilates studio in New York City with his wife Clara.
- ▶ Designed a series of more than 500 mind-body movements or exercises to develop strong, flexible muscles without adding bulk. An emphasis on breathing and torso strength ensured improved posture, reduced stress and risk of injury.
- ▶ Early devotees of Joseph Pilates included such dance legends as George Balanchine, Hanya Holm and Martha Graham. Today followers include dancers, athletes, physiotherapists, fitness trainers, elite athletes, health care professionals and those interested in optimal health and fitness.
- ▶ It is said that Mr. Pilates believed "we are as old as our spines."
- ▶ Died 1967.

## Joseph Pilates Principles

STOTT PILATES maintains the important principles of Joseph Pilates original teachings

- 1. breathing**, strong emphasis on continuous breath.
- 2. centering**, working from the center of the body, "powerhouse"
- 3. control**, every movement is controlled from beginning to end.
- 4. precision**, performing less repetitions but with more concentration to ensure the correct muscles are utilized during the exercises.
- 5. fluidity**, maintaining a smooth movement pattern, not jerking or jarring, never holding a position.
- 6. concentration**, the mind-body connection.

## **STOTT PILATES™, the contemporary approach to the original works of Joseph H. Pilates.**

Moira Merrithew, co-founder with her husband, Lindsay Merrithew of STOTT PILATES, trained extensively in Mr. Pilates' method at his studio in New York City. The STOTT PILATES approach preserves the essence of Mr. Pilates' teachings while enhancing them with contemporary knowledge about the body and how it functions.

Moira Merrithew, a former professional dancer, originally trained with Romana Kryzanowska in New York City in 1986. Romana had studied with Joseph Pilates. Upon returning to Canada, Moira and Lindsay contemporized Joseph Pilates original approach to exercises by enhancing them with today's knowledge of body mechanics and athletic performance enhancement.

As adapted by a team of professionals under the direction of Ms Merrithew, the system of mind-body exercise known as STOTT PILATES involves more initial pelvic and shoulder girdle stabilization exercises than were present in the original method. As well, the anatomically-based concepts of "neutral" spine and pelvis are incorporated to help restore the natural curves of the spine – a departure from the original technique and other forms of fitness that incorporate a "pelvic tilt" to flatten the back.

### **Summary of differences between the original Pilates and the STOTT PILATES™ approach:**

1. STOTT PILATES is anatomically based, evolved and updated. STOTT PILATES is a contemporary approach in accordance with modern biomechanics.
2. STOTT PILATES breaks down exercises into essential, intermediate, advanced to allow for a progression.
3. In STOTT PILATES the breathing is related to spinal movement. STOTT PILATES breathing more closely emulates the natural breath pattern of the body. This will be discussed in more detail during the Basic Principles used throughout the STOTT PILATES approach. In the original method inhale was always on "exertion".
4. STOTT PILATES emphasizes neutral pelvis and restoration of natural spinal curves to provide the strongest and most shock absorbing position of body, Originally Joseph Pilates belief was to create a flat spine.
5. STOTT PILATES emphasizes shoulder girdle stabilization.

We refer to this approach as STOTT PILATES to differentiate it from the original method, which still maintains the same principles developed in the 1920s.

We also have very high standards in our training and want to maintain STOTT PILATES® Instructors as an elite group of well trained Instructors in their field.