



## Pilates Origins Workshop

Skillful Teaching with Chantill Lopez

### Working w/ Original Orders, Programs & Repeating Frameworks

"Success is neither magical nor mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying basic fundamentals." — Jim Rohn

"Continuity of training is the general means of making the nervous system act infallibly right." — William James, "The Principles of Psychology"

### The Power of Consistency

Consistency is one of the greatest gifts we can give our students. Although we may find ourselves getting bored, feeling like our teaching becomes rote even after short periods of time, it is important to keep in mind that the material for our students is almost always strange, complex and challenging. Too, in the beginning of our teaching we can be driven by our excitement to spice things up, get creative, add new things each session or class. We are bubbling over with enthusiasm. But ultimately simplicity, consistency and repetition are going to create the strongest foundation for us and our students.

### Research and Data on Consistency

Human performance in almost any cognitive skill improves with practice. Both the amount of improvement is dramatically increased when subjects are able to deal consistently with their task. In detection paradigms, research has shown that extended practice at consistently attending to a subset of stimuli results in quantitative and qualitative changes in performance (e.g. Moray, 1959, 1975; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977). Reaction times are faster (e.g. Kristofferson, 1972a; Neisser, 1963; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977), detection performance is less affected by memory load (e.g., Logan, 1979; Neisser, 1963; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977) or

number of channels (e.g. Duncan, 1980; Moray, 1975; Shiffrin, 1975), and performance becomes much less sensitive to attentional resource demands (LaBerge, 1973; Logan, 1979; Schneider & Fisk, Note 1).

However, in conditions in which subjects cannot consistently attend to a subset of stimuli, extended practice results in little, if any, improvement in performance. Performance may improve somewhat due to familiarization with the task, understanding of instructions, etc., but, performance does not improve as profoundly as when stimuli are dealt with consistently.<sup>1</sup>

## **Variables Affecting Motor Learning**

Schmidt (1988) defined motor learning as "a set of processes associated with practice or experience leading to relatively permanent changes in the capability for responding" (p.346). The relatively permanent change in behavior is what differentiates learning from temporary improvements in performance. For example, after practicing a transfer several times, a patient may remember how to do it and thus exhibit an improvement in performance. If the patient cannot remember how to execute the transfer the next day, however, the task has not been learned. Thus, to estimate learning or relatively permanent changes, performance should be assessed again later (Schmidt, 1988).

Four factors influence motor learning: (a) the stages of learning, (b) the type of task, © feedback, and (d) practice. Although all of these factors must be considered by therapists in designing treatment programs, feedback and practice are thought to be the two most potent learning variables (Schmidt, 1988)<sup>2</sup>

## **Higher-Order, Rule-Based Consistency**

The concept of consistency is an important cornerstone of the theory of automatic and controlled processing. Think back for a moment about learning to drive a manual shift automobile. Imagine how difficult learning how to shift would have been if the location of each gear changed every time you drove the car. This would necessitate the continuous devotion of attention to remembering where the gears were; the task of shifting gears would never become automatic. This example illustrates the importance of consistency for the development of automatic processing, namely, if a task is inconsistent, or varied, automatic processing will not develop.<sup>3</sup>

Consistency is only one of the values of working within the framework of the original or "classical" method.

---

<sup>1</sup> Article "Perception & Psychophysics" 1982, 31 (2) 160-168, by Walter Schneider and Arthur D. Fisk

<sup>2</sup> The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, "Application of Motor Learning Principles in Occupational Therapy" Janet L. Poole, Jan. 24, 1991

<sup>3</sup> Book "Cognitive Approaches To Automated Instruction" 173-174, Edited by J. Wesley Regian and Valerie J. Shute

Repeating cues - both verbal and hands-on, reinforcing principles, reiterating key actions and goals, as well as practicing breathing patterns and choreography consistently sets the stage for the following things to occur:

For our students:

- Feelings of success
- Enhanced motivation
- Rapid skill acquisition & competencies
- A more relaxed nervous system, which promotes listening, focus, & learning
- Greater chance of personal responsibility & ownership of the work
- Greater likelihood for long term commitment and practice

For us as teachers:

- A sense of confidence and ease in our teaching
- An ability to assess and reassess skill acquisition and competencies
- Greater focus and attention to subtle shifts and changes in our students (less distraction)
- Ability to progress students with clarity and success in reaching their goals
- A framework for sharing students and comparing progress
- A framework for delineating class levels and progressions
- An ability to trust the method
- Lessens performance anxiety & alleviates pressure to constantly create new and interesting variations

Pilates has a built-in framework that helps us to safely guide a student from novice to expert. Although we have to be discerning with regard to whether or not a movement or exercise is appropriate for any given individual, by following the orders we have a built-in roadmap of where to go and how to get there.

## Trust & Discernment

In many ways we must trust the method just as it is first, explore it as a system that is extremely effective, and develop a deep understanding of what it is meant to do. Then with experience, insight, and practice we are gradually able to lead our students into greater freedom and creativity without having to sacrifice any of the original intent.

Holding safety, knowledge, curiosity, and integrity as our primary objectives allows us to accept the method as-is AND see it in the light of current medical, physiological, kinesiological and biological understanding. **It is possible to fully use the Pilates method as Joe intended without treating the body as if we still believed the spine was flat.**

Following the original orders helps us keep things simple, concise and allows us to get out of our own way as well as build confidence.

*Caveat:* The following orders come from a variety of sources and you may find that they vary slightly from other orders labeled as "original". This is a great opportunity to be open and discerning and remember never to take anything at face value.

What the orders do & why you should trust them:

- Warm up the body in a holistic way by pumping blood and oxygen into the system
- Progress students from simple to complex choreography
- Progress students from greatest to least amount of support
- Vary ranges of motion and spatial orientations
- Warm up the core, develop the core, and challenge the core progressively
- Focus on stimulating the breath vigorously
- Supports optimal mobility in the spine and major joints of the hips and shoulders
- Demands a high level of focus and body awareness via transitions and overall organization of movements
- Builds dynamic spinal extension and flexion through static and active movements
- Focuses on and cultivates quality as a priority over quantity (working with low repetitions)

#### Original Beginning Mat Order

Hundred

Roll Up

Single Leg Circle

Rolling Back (rolling like a ball)

Single Leg Stretch

Double Leg Stretch

Spine Stretch

Saw

Single Leg Kick

Double Leg Kick

Side Kick

Seal

#### Original Intermediate Mat Order

Hundred

Roll Up

Roll Over

Single Leg Circle

Rolling Back (rolling like a ball)  
Single Leg Stretch  
Double Leg Stretch  
Scissors (single straight leg stretch)  
Double Leg Lower & Raise  
Criss-Cross  
Spine Stretch  
Rocker with Open Legs  
Saw  
Swan-Dive  
Single Leg Kick  
Double Leg Kick  
Neck Pull  
Spine Twist  
Side Kick  
Teaser  
Swimming  
Seal

### Original Full Mat Order

Hundred  
Roll Up  
Roll Over  
Single Leg Circle  
Rolling Back (rolling like a ball)  
Single Leg Stretch  
Double Leg Stretch  
Scissors (single straight leg stretch)  
Double Leg Lower & Raise  
Criss-Cross  
Spine Stretch  
Rocker with Open Legs  
Cork-Screw  
Saw  
Swan-Dive  
Single Leg Kick  
Double Leg Kick  
Neck Pull

Scissors  
Bicycle  
Shoulder Bridge  
Spine Twist  
Jack Knife  
Side Kick  
Teaser  
Hip Circles  
Swimming  
Leg Pull - Front  
Leg Pull - Back  
Side Kick Kneeling  
Side Bend Series  
Boomerang  
Seal  
Crab  
Rocking  
Control Balance  
Push Up

Level 1 Introductory Session (Carol Apple, Body Kinetics)

*(Suggested for Establishing Practice - Repeated 5 Sessions)*

**Reformer:**

Footwork

100s

Supine Arm Series:

Overhead lat pull down

Triceps

Angel Wings

Long Box:

Chest expansion - seated facing risers

Arm scoops - seated facing footbar

Elephant

Leg Circles

Scooter

Running

### **Chair:**

Sitting leg pumps: Double & Single  
Mermaid

### **Mat:**

Modified roll up  
Modified leg circle  
Rolling in a ball  
Single leg stretch  
Spine Stretch  
Side kicks  
Modified swimming  
Rest

### **Cadillac:**

Roll downs  
Breathing coordination  
Leg springs:  
    Flutters  
    Beats  
    Circles

### **Wall exercises:**

90/90 sit  
Roll downs

### **Pedipole:**

Arm circles

### **Introductory Level Reformer Order (By Carol Appel, Body Kinetics)<sup>4</sup>**

Footwork  
Hundred  
Lat series (Overhead Arm Series Supine)  
    Overhead pull  
    Triceps  
    Angel wings  
Long box  
    Chest expansion

---

<sup>4</sup> Carol Appel is a Romana Kryzanowska trained Classical teacher. This program comes from her teacher training program, Body Kinetics  
Copyright © 2015 Chantill Lopez & Skillful Teaching

Arm scoop  
Elephant  
Leg Circles (Feet in the straps)  
Scissors  
Leg lowers  
Circles  
Scooter (optional add Scooter stretch)  
Running

### Beginning Level Reformer Order

Footwork  
Hundred  
Short spine stretch  
Stomach massage  
Round  
Flat  
Long Box  
Pulling straps  
T-pull  
Short box  
Round  
Flat  
Side bend  
Modified twist  
Climb-a-tree

Elephant  
Mermaid/Side stretch  
Leg Circles (Feet in the straps)  
Scissors  
Leg lowers  
Circles

Knee Stretches  
Round  
Flat  
Round (*Building to round back knees off*)

Running  
Bottom lift (Pelvic lift/Bridging)

### Intermediate Level Reformer Order

Footwork



Hundred

Short spine stretch

Coordination

Stomach massage

Round

Flat

Reach

Twist

Long Box

Pulling straps

T-pull

Backstroke

Teaser

Swan

Horseback

Short box

Round

Flat

Side bend

Modified twist

Climb-a-tree

Long Stretch Series

Long stretch

Down stretch

Up stretch

Elephant

Arabesque

Long back stretch

Semi-circle

Chest expansion

Mermaid

Long spine stretch

Rowing

Front 1 & 2

Salute

Hug-a-tree

Knee Stretches

Round

Flat

Knees off

Running  
Bottom lift (Pelvic lift/Bridging)  
Side splits  
Front splits

Advanced Level Reformer Order

Footwork  
Hundred  
Short spine stretch  
Coordination  
Rowing  
    Front 1 & 2  
    Back 1 & 2  
Long Box  
    Backstroke  
    Teaser  
    Breaststroke  
Long Stretch Series  
    Long stretch  
    Down stretch  
    Up stretch  
    Elephant  
        Arabesque  
    Long back stretch  
Stomach massage  
    Round  
    Flat  
    Reach  
    Twist  
Tendon stretch  
Jackknife  
Semi-circle  
Chest expansion  
Thigh stretch  
Twist/snake  
Corkscrew  
Short box  
    Round  
    Flat  
    Twist/obliques

Climb-a-tree  
Long spine stretch  
Knee Stretches  
    Round  
    Flat  
    Knees off  
Running  
Bottom lift (Pelvic lift/Bridging)  
Side splits  
Front splits  
Mermaid

Super Advanced Level Reformer Order (Romana Kryzanowska)

Footwork  
Hundred  
Jackknife  
Corkscrew  
Rowing  
    Front 1 & 2  
    Back 1 & 2  
Long Box  
    Backstroke  
    Teaser  
    Breaststroke  
    Horseback  
    Swan dive  
Long Stretch Series  
    Long stretch  
    Down stretch  
    Up stretch  
    Elephant  
        Arabesque  
    Long back stretch  
Stomach massage  
    Round  
    Flat  
    Reach  
    Twist  
Tendon stretch  
Short spine

Semi-circle  
Chest expansion  
Thigh stretch  
Kneeling side arms  
    Pull across  
    Draw a sword  
    Overhead press  
    Side bend press  
Twist/snake  
Corkscrew  
Long box  
    Rocking  
    Swimming  
Short box  
    Round (Fire baton)  
    Oblique (Spear a fish)  
    Climb-a-tree  
Long spine stretch  
Knee Stretches  
    Round  
    Flat  
    Knees off  
Running  
Bottom lift (Pelvic lift/Bridging)  
Side splits  
Front splits  
Control front & back  
Star  
Mermaid

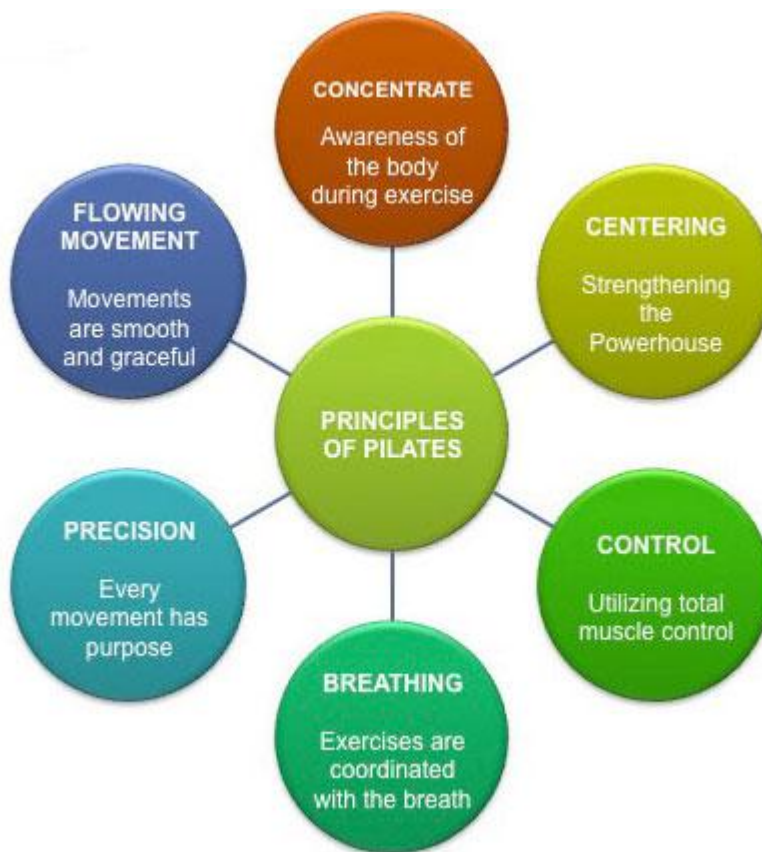
Clarifying Intent

### **Philosophy and Original Intent**

Do you teach Pilates? If you teach from a place of making the following principles and philosophical viewpoints the foundation of your teaching, I believe it is safe to say you teach Pilates, whether classic, contemporary, therapeutic, or otherwise.

- Principles:

- Breath
- Control
- Precision
- Flow (Flowing Motion)
- Centering
- Concentration



- Philosophical Viewpoints *(as interpreted from J.P.'s original texts. Many reflect the 6 principles listed above.)*
  - Opposition/dynamic movement
  - Reaching for/accessing full potential
  - Whole body strength, flexibility & balance
  - Personal ownership
  - Practice/dedication/perseverance/patience
  - Peace of mind/quieting of the mind/spiritual equanimity
  - Physical, mental and emotional vitality
  - Optimizing body and mind, posture and breath
  - Prevention
  - Knowledge – art & science of the method/fully knowing, understanding

- Dedicated effort

If you ask yourself what your intent is by teaching the Pilates method, what your primary goal with regard to your students is and you can anchor yourself in the qualities and principles above then you are staying true to the original method regardless if you teach “classically” or not.

Get in the habit of questioning yourself to see how you are in alignment with the method itself or where and if your priorities have consciously or unconsciously shifted. Like with everything we will prioritize our commitments and decide to focus on any number of these intentions and principles throughout our teaching career. All of that is fine. However, when we move away from whole body development, showing and guiding our students toward their full potential, we fail to promote personal ownership and practice then perhaps our intent is not in alignment with the Pilates method. There is no right or wrong to this, just clarity and awareness.

Exploring “Return To Life Through Contrology” and “Your Health”

### General Impressions

Q What are your general impressions of Joe? Of the books themselves?

Q What do you think he wanted for people and for his work?

Q Insights gained? Confusion cleared up? Confusion created?

In reading “Return To Life Through Contrology” here are some words, phrases and thoughts that stand out:

- Uniformly developed body
- Constantly strive to acquire strong, healthy bodies and develop our minds to the limit of our ability\*
- Spontaneous zest and pleasure
- Play
- Pleasurable living
- Corrects wrong postures, restores physical vitality, invigorates the mind, and elevates the spirit
- Suppleness, natural grace, and skill that will be unmistakably reflected in the way you walk, in the way you play, and in the way you work.\*
- One of the major results of Contrology is gaining the mastery of your mind over the complete control of your body.\*
- The only unchanging rules you must conscientiously obey are that you must always faithfully and without deviation follow the instructions accompanying the exercises and always keep your mind wholly concentrated on the purpose of the exercises as you perform them.\*\*
- Patience and persistence
- Unalterable determination

- Decide to remain true to yourself
- Ten minutes without fail
- Stirred your sluggish circulation into action
- Bodily house cleaning with blood circulation
- To breathe correctly you must completely exhale and inhale, always trying very hard to “squeeze” every atom of impure air from your lungs\*
- True heart control follows correct breathing
- Never repeat the selected exercise(s) more than the prescribed number of times
- Muscular fatigue – poison
- Judicious selection of special Contrology exercises will accomplish more for your health and bodily condition, in conjunction with the foregoing advice, than all else combined.\*
- Each succeeding exercise should be mastered before proceeding progressively
- Harmonious structure

### Topics and areas of focus:

- Body, mind, spirit, breath, diet, daily life, play, dedication, repetition, vitality, flexibility, posture, the spine, prevention, art & science

### Inquiry

Q Do you have a strong point of view on the work that you do?

- Come up with as many ways as you can think of that you take a clear, firm, passionate, or meaningful stand on your teaching.

Q How can you embody the vision that J.P. had for people to truly love and appreciate their lives by being unfailingly dedicated to their own health?

“Generally speaking, the less the average person merely talks about health, the better it is for his health. Not only is health a normal condition, but it is a duty not only to attain but to maintain it.

“How many of us, or rather how few of us, realize what life really is?”

- Come up with several ways you *are* an example of this and are *not*.
- Does it feel important to embody this aspect of the Pilates philosophy in order to be an effective teacher?

Q How can you use the Pilates principles to achieve one of the primary goals of Pilates – the balance of mind and body?