

Five Ways to Keep Your Pilates Classes Full

By Carla Vercoe

You've been actively marketing your classes, and now your classes are starting to fill up with new faces. But you won't really know if your strategy is really working until you see those faces come back again and again. Here are five ways to keep your Pilates classes full and your students coming back for more.

Set Up Your Class to Succeed

You set the tone of the class, so create a warm and inviting atmosphere by greeting each of your students before class, introducing them to each other, if necessary. Speak with new students before class to address individual needs or physical challenges and limitations.

Consider arranging students by keeping new students together so that you can easily guide them, or ask a seasoned student to help out a new student by placing them side-by-side. Don't hesitate to separate clients that you know will get too chatty or distracted if they are together.

Remember, this is your class, so don't hesitate to dictate where you want to place each student. Maintain a pleasant persona and make it fun while keeping students accountable.

Most importantly, use each student's name at least once, praising each one as well as making corrections when needed. I always make it a point to recognize milestones or "aha" moments and share that moment with the entire class.

Communicate your cues clearly and directly using as few words as possible. Keep it simple so students understand what you're

asking of them.

Incorporate a Theme

Keep your classes fun and interesting by introducing a theme. Just be mindful of the class level when choosing your theme. For example, a theme that is appropriate for a beginner class would never work in an advanced class.

We have an entire library of themes from which to choose—Pilates Principles, Key Concepts, Transitions, or focusing on Strength, Stretching, Stability, or Stamina. To illustrate, let's take a closer look at Stamina, which would be appropriate for an advanced class.

In an advanced class with a focus on Stamina, I would first address transitions. Moving students through a series of transitions will keep their Powerhouse engaged and their minds and bodies moving.

Next, I would zero in on breath, cuing their breathing to keep them engaged and moving. I might choose to do fewer reps to get them through more exercises or eliminate some of the more difficult exercises to ensure their success and maintain their endurance throughout the entire class. For a beginner class, I would choose a different theme altogether – focusing on the Powerhouse or Centerline for example.

Remember, the class is for your students. Make it challenging but enjoyable for them. Getting applause at the end of class, whether it's because the class was great or that it's over, is a victory in my book.

Keep Students Moving

Keep your students moving throughout the class. After teaching Pilates for more than five years, I realized my students thought they were doing one individual exercise after another. They mistakenly thought each exercise had a clear start and

finish. Students would then rest their feet after each exercise or begin chatting with the person next to them.

My [classical training from Peak Pilates®](#) solved that problem. My students now know that they will keep moving in the classes I teach. They are sometimes intimidated at first, but after taking a few classes, they are hooked.

To keep students moving, you must first keep them focused. Students must learn to focus on what you are saying and doing and clear the clutter from their minds. Clear and concise cues will help, so don't try to get fancy. Simply name the exercise and the transition, and keep your students moving.

Help students develop their memory. Be consistent, and if they fall out of rhythm, stop and bring everyone back together. When everyone is moving as one, it makes it easier for you to cue and makes him or her feel more successful.

Establish Standards and Expectations

Students rise—or fall—to the level of your expectations. High but attainable standards motivate students to stretch themselves and work to their capacity. Your students want to be accountable and successful and they come to class looking for a great workout and wanting to learn something new, even if it's a better understanding of an exercise that they've been doing for years.

Keep the class energized from start to finish. Your voice and posture speaks volumes. Make sure it's sending the right message. Let your personality shine when you're teaching classes. I feel I'm on stage when I teach a class, and I let my enthusiasm show. I prod them and push them, and they leave class knowing they've worked hard.

After class, pick something new and exciting you plan to work on during their next class and tell them about it. When class

is over, stick around while they are cleaning their equipment. Speak to them individually about something they did well in class. Make a big deal about it, because it is a big deal!

When you do these things, you'll keep them coming back for more. For more about leading your Pilates classes and keeping them fresh for your students, [subscribe to our newsletter!](#)