

Foam Roller Fun

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By Julia Hughes

For years, I've had a collection of foam rollers in both my home and my studio. The sizes and density vary, but each serves a purpose. The smaller one is perfect to cart as a carry on when traveling, the blue marbled one works best on my quads. My family has added to the collection over the years, too. As someone who spends a lot of time pounding the pavement while walking my dogs, my quads have a love/strong dislike relationship with the foam roller.

Years ago, I took a class at PES with my now colleague, Scott Samford. My mind opened to possibilities, while my legs begged me to stop rolling. I didn't stop using the foam roller. In fact, I started pulling mine away from the corner more consistently to find new ways to challenge my practice and ease my muscles.

In 2020, like so many of us, I began teaching clients virtually. I still do. Not everyone has access to a spine corrector or small barrel. However, many people have at least one foam roller lying around their home. The foam roller is a great way to add some stretch into students' practice and help open them – combating forward flexion in daily life.

This prop can easily be used to explore various key concepts.

The mind body connection must be present when working with the foam roller, as it does exactly what its name implies: rolls. I find this prop to be quite helpful when focusing on concentration, centerline, and three anchors. It offers the student opportunities for stretch and challenges stability.

As an instructor, my students know the foam roller is among my favorite props. Their reactions when I make a beeline for

where they are stored always makes me smile. I enjoy finding creative ways to use it throughout the session. That said, I often use it at the beginning of sessions. This helps make sure my students feel the work as they take their practice away from the studio.

Register today to join me Friday, Thursday, February 20, 2025 from 2:00-4:00PM EST to learn more about how to use this prop in your practice and teaching and simultaneously release the fear of and have fun with the foam roller.

Register now:

Date/ Time: February 20, 2025, 2:00-4:00pm EST(New York)

USA/

Asia:

<https://peakpilates.com/foam-roller-fun-virtual-workshop-february-20-2025/>

EMA: www.peakpilates.eu- search foam roller fun

Need a foam roller- check out our EVA foam roller – covered with soft foam for easier rolling!
<https://peakpilates.com/peak-pilates-eva-foam-roller/>

Help! My client can't.....

Pilates for Special Populations: Navigating Challenges with Expertise

As Pilates instructors, we often encounter clients with specific physical limitations or conditions that require thoughtful modifications. While Classical Pilates offers a comprehensive and adaptable system, understanding how to tailor sessions for unique needs is crucial. In this post, we'll explore three common challenges: working with clients who cannot forward flex or have limited flexion, those with vertigo or postural hypotension, and clients dealing with shoulder impingements or frozen shoulder.

1. Working with Clients Who Lack the Ability to Flex Forward
Forward flexion is a key element in many Classical Pilates exercises, but some clients may have conditions—such as osteoporosis, spinal stenosis, or certain back injuries—that contraindicate this movement. Here's how to approach these situations:

Focus on Neutral Spine and Extension

- Replace forward flexion exercises with those emphasizing flat elongated spine and spinal extension. For example, substitute The Hundred in flexion with a spine variation.
- Incorporate exercises like Swan, Swimming, and Breaststroke to strengthen the posterior chain and promote spinal stability.

2. Clients Working with Vertigo or Postural Hypotension

Clients with vertigo or postural hypotension face challenges with exercises that involve rapid changes in position or head movements. Safety and comfort are paramount when designing sessions for these individuals.

Stabilize Head Position

- Minimize exercises requiring frequent head lifting, such as Head Nods and Neck Curls. Instead, focus on keeping the head supported with props or in a neutral position.
- Avoid exercises where the head is lower than the heart, such as inversions or Roll Over.

3. Working with Shoulder Impingements or Frozen Shoulder

Clients with shoulder impingements or frozen shoulder often experience limited range of motion, pain, and discomfort. Gentle, progressive movement is key to improving mobility and reducing symptoms.

Avoid Overhead Movements

- Skip exercises like Arm Circles or Pulling Straps I & II if they cause pain or discomfort. Instead, work within the client's pain-free range.
- Use modifications such as side-lying arm work or assisted shoulder stretches with the Tower or Reformer.

Focus on Scapular Stability

- Exercises like Push Through with Bar (keeping arms below shoulder height) or Seated Arm Work can help stabilize and strengthen the shoulder girdle.
- Cue clients to draw their scapulae down and away from their ears to reduce strain.

Incorporate Gentle Mobility Work

- Start with small, controlled shoulder movements, such as shoulder rolls or pendulum swings, to increase circulation and range of motion.
- Gradually introduce exercises like Chest Expansion and Rowing (only within a pain-free range).

Integrate Core Engagement

- Many shoulder issues stem from poor posture or lack of core support. Strengthen the Powerhouse with exercises like Leg Pull Front – Support Only or Elbow Planks (modifying as needed

to avoid excessive strain on the shoulders).

Use Props and Assistance

- Incorporate TheraBands, foam rollers, or a magic circle to provide support and feedback during shoulder-focused exercises.
- The Tower's spring-loaded resistance can offer gentle assistance and help guide the joint through safe movement patterns.

Conclusion

Every client brings unique needs to the Pilates studio, and as instructors, it's our job to adapt Classical Pilates principles to support them safely and effectively. By understanding the specific challenges of clients, we can help them build strength, mobility, and confidence in their bodies. Remember, the key is to prioritize safety, move mindfully, and celebrate progress, no matter how small.

To learn what to focus on, what to incorporate in a lesson, how to cue and use props for these issues join the workshop, "Help My Client Can't _____!" on February 14th, from 2:00-4:00 EST. This session will be recorded and you will have 2 weeks viewing time.

To register in the USA / Asia:
https://peakpilates.com/help-my-client-cant-_____-virtual-workshop-february-14-2025/

To register in Europe/ Middle East/ Africa:
<https://peaku.peakpilates.eu/p/help-my-client-cant?instance=67851353077619e94e0d356a>

PES ASIA 2024

The first PES Asia held in Tokyo was a huge success! Over 200 attendees came in from all over Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, and Australia for a full docket of sessions to explore new technique and teaching skills and to gain inspiration from presenters from Asia and the USA. The event was also attended virtually by students from Japan, and sessions were available as recordings.

Under the leadership of Kayoko Takada, the Pilates Alliance of Tokyo did a great job organizing and hosting the event. Asked how she felt about the event Kayoko shared, “It can be summed up in one word: wonderful. Being able to come together across various languages with the keyword “Peak” was a time that greatly inspired the spiritual realm within my heart. We are grateful to Zoey for leading us to this point.”

It was a wonderful chance to come together as a community to renew bonds and create new friendships. While this was the first PES Asia, we’re sure it won’t be the last!





Keep it Fresh with FitCore™

Stay inspired teaching groups and keep your classes fun and fresh with Fitcore™ – Pilates fusion. FitCore™ is a blend of Pilates inspired movement and traditional body weight fitness exercises. Workouts are designed for the mat, chair and reformer.

We combine the foundations of Pilates; moving from the powerhouse, Pilates key concepts and alignment tools with the fun factor of group fitness; energy, music and camaraderie for a flowing, sweaty workout.

FitCore™ is pre-designed in a block format. Each block, approximately 6-8 minutes, has a specific focus or body position such as, standing strength, supine ab activators or prone extension. Choreography updates follow the same blocks with innovative and balanced exercise flow. The block format makes it easy for instructors and takes the guesswork out of teaching. The FitCore™ innovative use of pre-designed choreography also allows instructors to mix and match options to create a variety of well-balanced workouts that utilize

different equipment pieces, all in one workout. Instructors receive workout updates that keep classes varied and students excited to learn more. In that way, every instructor can be successful.

Just as group classes have participants of various fitness and experience levels, FitCore™ blocks are progressive with multi-level exercise options, appealing to most fitness levels. For example, a standing strength chair progression block looks like this:

Stand in parallel facing the pedal.

- Lunge back and return legs to parallel
- Lunge back and tap the pedal
- Lunge back and press the pedal down

The combination starts $\frac{1}{2}$ time and moves to tempo and includes arms for the more advanced participants.

Join Courtney Weis on November 22, 2024 for “Keep it Fresh with FitCore™.” Get a taste of all three fusion formats – mat, chair and reformer. Practice the new block choreography and learn more about the fusion program.

Freshen up your groups by adding FitCore™ fusion to your classes. Enhance your class with a block of FitCore mat, offer a circuit class with all 3 FitCore™ formats – mat, chair and reformer or add a full FitCore™ class to you your group schedule. Your students will be inspired and want to come back for more!

Keep it Fresh with FitCore™ – Virtual Workshop – November 22, 2024

Location: Online

Date and Time: November 22, 2024 – 1:00pm – 3:00pm (Central)

To register:

<https://peakpilates.com/keep-it-fresh-with-fitcore-virtual-wor>

Keep It Simple: 5 Tips for Making Your Cues Count!

By Jamie Isaac

As Pilates teachers we want to share our knowledge, experience and ultimately our passion for the amazing method that we have no doubt fallen in love with. Maybe we're fresh out of teacher training, or just back from an inspiring conference like PES, or maybe we've just taken a workshop and have so many new and inspiring ideas and insights that we just know will 100% help our clients!

That's why it can be beyond frustrating when we return all lit up and ready to share, but for some reason our students are just not connecting with what we're sharing. Well, whatever the level of practice your student has, it can be a helpful thought to stop, take a moment and remember the classic line "It's not you, it's me."

No, I don't mean break up with your student. I mean, if your cue is not getting through, perhaps consider that it's our responsibility as teachers to refine our communication and a different approach may be the answer.

Here are 5 tips I encourage us to consider when cueing our students...

1. Focus on 1 thing at a time

Consider what the most important cue is that you want them to process. This is where we start. It will be different for

different levels of practitioner (or those with different movement backgrounds), but layering cue after cue without giving our students time to process it or feel it within their bodies will ensure the movement falls flat. This is especially the case with beginner students or when introducing new exercises with more complicated choreography.

2. Layman's, Not Latin

I get it! Any training course worth its salt included a time investment in deepening our understanding of anatomy. It can be tempting to want to make our students aware of the time we invested, but also to distinguish ourselves from those who maybe didn't, but in my humble opinion, the real win is to resist the urge and instead show your superpowers by being relatable. Even those with medical degrees may not connect the muscle to the feeling or the direction of the movement to how the body can make it happen. Instead use simple body parts or bones and give them a direction. An example would be encouraging your student to lengthen their spine while seated. A simple direction to reach the top of their head towards the ceiling will have them lifting their spine up from the very bottom vertebrae. For instance: "Shoulder blades into your back pockets," is far more relatable than "Downwardly rotate scapula in the AC joint using your Latissimus dorsi and Rhomboid minor and major."

3. The Other Left!

We've all been there. Mid Chest Expansion and you look left instead of right. Next thing you're in the dreaded zone of staring directly into another class members eyes like a startled Llama.

To avoid this common moment of terror, simply swap out your rights and lefts with objects such as "Look to the mirror." The same applies to moving limbs as well. Describing legs as the "nearest" or "top" leg for example will have a group class

moving together. I see this a lot when demonstrating or gesturing movement. Are they meant to mirror me, or move the same sided arm? Simply avoid these questions with direct, simple and external cues.

4. Stick the Cue Like Glue!

A precise and concise cue that is easy to understand once you have explained its full meaning has the potential to really stick with our students. This makes for a very useful and effective cue that can be used time and time again without any additional explanation or unnecessary words. For example, once we've established the concept of what the Powerhouse is and how it feels to engage it, the words "Powerhouse" will have a strong impact, without using too many words.

And this brings me on to my final tip...

5. Less Is Often More

This can be relevant for so many aspects of a Pilates practice, but from a teaching perspective I believe this is one of my favs. This tip can apply to both cueing and also our own movement as teachers. How many laps of the studio space do you complete each session? Challenging ourselves to 'stand and command' can be a great way to help us be sure we're teaching from a position where we can be seen or heard well by our students and also embody the posture or concepts that Pilates can bring to our students.

Now let's consider cueing. I recommend using as few cues as possible to get the movement or execution you are after. Too much verbal or physical cueing can simply become 'noise' and overwhelm and confuse our students.

Don't forget, sometimes it can be okay for the student to feel the incorrect motor pattern and be allowed time to self-correct. If we find the cues we're sharing aren't working, we can always take a short teaching moment to better explain the

meaning or to give an example of the result we are hoping for.

Consider this with touch cues. Too many in a short space of time makes it harder for our student to process the cue or understand where they should be feeling it, or to react to it. Often one well-considered touch cue can be more effective than one hundred verbal cues. (If our student learns that way.) But we'll save that discussion for another blog...

So next time that cue doesn't seem to be landing, or your group/class has interpreted your last direction into five unique and very different versions of the exercise you had in mind, why not give one of these points a try. Keeping it simple can often be the way to make even the most complicated exercises accessible and help our students towards effective progress.

Want to learn more? Register for Keep it Simple! Can't make it live? Recordings will be available!

Keep it Simple – Effective Cues & Building Blocks for Improved Progression – Virtual Workshop

Date + Time: October 08, 2024 from 2:00pm – 4:00pm Eastern

USA/

Asia:

<https://peakpilates.com/keep-it-simple-effective-cues-building-blocks-for-improved-progression-virtual-workshop-october-08-2024/>

Europe/

Middle

East/

Africa:

<https://peaku.peakpilates.eu/node/6164489?instance=65df50e5eca24a1a00009bdc>



Pilates AND Yoga – Not Pilates OR Yoga!

By Zoey Trap, MS

It's National Yoga Month! Celebrate. What???? This is a Pilates company! Peak Pilates® believes in movement in all forms to keep a body happy and healthy, and we believe that no single modality has all the answers. That's one of the reasons we launched the FitCore™ Certification Program...it provided us with an avenue to offer a high-caliber fusion program that blends Pilates, yoga, fitness, barre, and other modalities seamlessly and intelligently for those wanting everything in one workout!

We believe that it's not Pilates or Yoga, but that it can be Pilates and Yoga. Let's examine some of the similarities and differences between the practices. Since there are many types of Pilates and Yoga, for our purposes we are comparing

Classical Pilates with Vinyasa Yoga, as we believe they are the most similar. The chart below captures the main points of each and how they are different and where they overlap.

Classical Pilates	Both	Vinyasa Yoga
A Modern Practice		An Ancient Practice
Pilates Principles		Yamas/ Niyamas
Set orders for levels on mat/ reformer	Progressive and adaptable to meet students at their level	Classes usually include traditional sequences of Sun Salutations as well as creative vinyasa flows sequenced by the instructor
Mindful Movement	Benefits in Stress Reduction	Moving Meditation
Core Strengthening	Improved Posture	Balance
Exercises in a variety of body positions and relationships to gravity- Builds from supine to standing during a session	Increases in Stability, Strength, Flexibility, Stamina	Asanas offer a wide variety of body positions with multiple joint angles More standing work than in Pilates.
Focus on Exhalation	Enhanced Breath Awareness & Control	Ujayi Breath and Pranayama practices
Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation	Elevated Sense of Well-Being	Yoga Therapy for Mind & Body

Mat and/or Props, and/or Spring- Loaded Equipment to provide assistance, resistance		Props: Bricks, yoga straps, wedges, blankets, bolsters
One breath, one movement		Sun Salutations and flow sequences often are one breath one movement. Classes typically have held postures of anywhere from 3- 20 breaths.

Each practice, while distinctly different from the other, affords the student an avenue to grow in mindfulness and progress in physical and mental skills. Yoga includes much more standing work than does Pilates and chaturangas (similar to push-ups) are usually woven throughout the class in linking sequences.

The greatest difference is that yoga is inherently intended to be a spiritual practice, and most sessions include meditation and chanting. Of course, this can be school and instructor dependent.

While there is a different vocabulary or language to each practice, there is also much overlap. What we call centerline, a yogi calls midline; what we call length and opposition, they call lines of energy; what we call activating the powerhouse, they refer to as mulabandha or uddiyana bandha... and the list goes on.

A good instructor of either modality corrects alignment,

provides physical assists, inspires, and progresses students wisely. All good instructors stay committed to advancing their skills through practice, lessons, and continuing education. While yoga is most often taught in group classes, it can be taught to great benefit privately. Pilates is taught both through private and group classes. Some students are group lovers and never take privates, while others only take privates, and some mix it up.

Want to learn more? We will be holding a workshop that will provide the Pilates instructor with an opportunity to explore a yoga practice on the reformer. This is not a fusion or a Pilates class with yoga mixed in. Pure and simple, it is a yoga class delivered on reformers with carriages in motion. Whether you practice yoga or not, your students might. And you might wish to attract yoga students to your studio and want to understand the demands of their practice. We will spend 3 hours exploring the similarities of language, alignment concepts, shapes, and approaching yoga asana first on a mat and then on the reformer.

Amanda Meehan who recently took this class shares: “Yoga on the reformer was both fun and incredibly eye-opening. It gave me a deeper understanding of my Yoga practice like I’ve never experienced before—and I’ve been practicing for over 25 years. After the class, my body felt strong and aligned for days. The session was challenging yet playful, making it an enjoyable and rewarding experience.” We hope you will feel the same!

Yoga on the Reformer – Virtual Workshop

When: Friday, September 27, 2024 | 2:00-5:00 pm Eastern

Who: Zoey Trap is a Master Instructor as well as the Executive Director of Peak Pilates® Education and Training and a Certified Jivamukti Yoga Instructor. Zoey began practicing Yoga 35 years ago and took up Pilates shortly thereafter. She knows first-hand how complimentary these practices can be!

Zoey was a pioneer in fusing yoga and Pilates on mat and equipment.

USA/Canada/Asia

Registration:

<https://peakpilates.com/yoga-on-the-reformer-virtual-workshop-september-27-2024/>



Virtual Workshop! Pilates Fundamentals for Sound Movement

By Zoey Trap, MS

Fundamentals, also known as Pre-Pilates exercises, have a wealth of applications to enrich the movement experience. These mini exercises can be used to evaluate movement, repattern incorrect movement into healthy movement patterning, increase circulation, and create overall awareness of how the body or a body part moves. While Fundamentals seem simple, they are actually sophisticated teaching tools that require a teacher to really see what is happening in the body—otherwise the student will just continue to do the movement in their habituated manner and no positive change will occur.

During your certification you probably learned a small number of Fundamentals and may be surprised to learn that there are so many more. Fundamentals teach a primary movement pattern and allow the student to focus on how they are moving while developing awareness of how to do things more efficiently. For this to occur, it requires the intention of the instructor to teach with touch, guiding the student into correct movement, or the integration of props with Fundamentals to help do the same. The important thing is to help the student to gain the ‘feel’ of the movement when done correctly. This can be difficult as students have developed movement strategies over time that have served them – albeit these same movement strategies may be contributing to pain or limiting performance.

Let’s take a common example and use a Fundamental most of you know well – Knee Folds. Susan, your student, is an athlete just starting Pilates and is gripping her hip flexors which is

causing pain in exercises such as One Leg Circle and limiting her performance. What's an instructor to do? You might introduce Knee Folds unilaterally allowing Susan to focus on correct patterning when flexing her hip. Guiding touch could help her feel how to lift up her leg and find the ease in the movement: teaching her how it feels when, as the femur comes up, it drops in the socket; and when the femur moves away, it slides forward and out. You might need to place a sponge ball at the back of her knee and ask Susan to engage her hamstrings to hold the ball as she executes the knee fold. This can 'turn off' the over engagement of her hip flexors and allow her to feel the movement with more ease; or you might lift Susan's hips up on a small barrel or Flexcushion™ to create that feel of ease and pelvic differentiation. What you want is for Susan to feel how to do it correctly, so she can replicate it in Pilates and in other movements in life.

So, as you can see Fundamentals are powerful tools for teaching that help an instructor to see and solve movement puzzles and to work with a plethora of individual needs! Of course, learning more Fundamentals provides instructors with more tools in their arsenal that can be used to help students avoid and work through injuries and improve performance and function. Pretty powerful stuff.

Join me Friday, August 23rd from 2:00-4:00 pm EDT (New York) for an in-depth exploration of Fundamentals that will give you not only more exercises to use in your teaching, but a deeper understanding of how to teach each Fundamental for maximal impact. If possible, bring a friend and work with each other. If are alone – don't worry – we will use a variety of props to change the feel and hone the execution. Can't make it? Register and request a recording.

Pre-Pilates Fundamentals: Tools for Teaching Movement & Helping the Body to Heal

Friday, August 23rd from 2:00-4:00 pm EDT (New York)

To Register: [USA/ Canada/ Asia](#)

Progressions, Regressions and Variations

By Zoey Trap, MS

Let's explore progressions, regressions, and variations through a new lens. Think of your studio as a giant playground. There are ladders, barrels, swings and springs; there are different surface shapes and sizes, and you can use all of them to help your student to progress in the classical system.

In Level II, you learned the Elements of Progression: center of gravity, base of support, surface stability exercise complexity, and rhythm and tempo. We can use one or a combination of elements to make the work more accessible or more challenging depending on a student's needs.

Let's look at Around the World, a common variation on the Short Box. We lift the spine, hinge back on a diagonal, rotate to the ceiling, to the other side, pull back up on the diagonal to center and reverse to the other side. A very complex and challenging combination of movements for the powerhouse and the brain. Where might we regress this? The Ladder Barrel is one place- and if the student is tight in the low back or pelvis this would be a great choice. You, the instructor, would also have better ability to support the movement.

Within the system we have many shapes in space that occur on different pieces of apparatus with different relationships to gravity. Using the shape in space concept in combination with the elements of progression is another way to create variations to meet progression needs. For example, you might have a student who loves spinal extensions and is really good at them. So you want to progress her to Rocking on the Spine Corrector, you can introduce it on the mat, move it up higher on the Short Box and finally progress it to the smaller curved surface of the Spine Corrector.

The beauty of the system is that there is always a way to go up and challenge the student and a means to regress and help them accomplish movements in a more suitable way.

Intrigued? Learn more! Register for the virtual CEC **Pilates Progressions Around the Studio** with Senior Master Instructor, **Pamela Garcia** and have fun playing with this concept and learning as you go. Recording available on request, but you must register in advance. The workshop is scheduled August 9, 2024 from 2:00-4:00pm EDT (New York).

Pilates Progressions Around the Studio

Location: Online

Date and Time: August 9, 2024 – 2:00pm – 4:00pm EDT

To register: [USA/Asia](#)