

Partner Pilates – Perfect for Valentine's Day

Are you looking for a special event to offer for Valentine's Day that will build community and share the passion of Pilates? Partner Pilates can be a great event to celebrate this holiday!

Partner Pilates classes can encompass everything from beginner exercises to extremely intense variations. When students pair up and use their bodies to create strength and balance challenges, we can modify exercise selections that just about any Pilates or fitness level can enjoy. Your studio will benefit by encouraging regulars to bring a friend or significant other, and new students might be just be enticed by Pilates.

Here are some easy steps for planning your own Pilates Partners sessions:

Set the date! Think out of the box, maybe a Sunday afternoon around Valentine's Day would be better than February 14th which can be busy.

Outline how you will market the class: After all, if no one comes you will have done a lot of work for nothing. You might incentivize attendance by making it a "bring-a-friend" for free workout, attaching a champagne reception to follow, or a Pilates and wine social.

Now let your students know: Announce it before class, put up a flyer, at the desk and bathroom and spread the word on social media. Don't forget to set a deadline for registration.

Plan the workout: This is the fun part and will take the most time. Here are some ways to get started with your session...

- Start with a theme. Share Your Love of Pilates, Passionate about Pilates, Couples Connect...
- Experiment. There is a lot that goes into a good partner class. Students have to cooperate with their partner or they will knock them over. How do you set up and transition from exercise to exercise to keep people moving? What partner variation adds to the exercise experience vs. detracts from it? How does an instructor communicate the right amount of resistance vs. assistance? What is safe and fun, what might be too risky?
- Really think about who will be there. If you are going after romance snuggling side to side for the side kick series can be fun; but if people are bringing friends it could be odd. For the "non romantics" class, have students place their base leg feet end to end to stabilize the work and activate the bottom leg.
- Choose exercises and sequence. Think out of the box with partner classes. Don't limit yourself to just mat. For example, you can move from Spine Stretch Forward where students are back to back and enjoying the proprioception and feedback of each other to sit up and tall and articulate down and up to small barrel arm stretch and circles. Have students bring their legs together and when one folds forward the other articulates back extending the spine and reaching the arms. When they lift up they fold forward and the other student gets to enjoy the opening and stretch. To optimize flow sequence to limit body position changes.
- Practice cueing the class. Even though you might teach

every day, you probably don't teach Partner work every day. It helps to have a partner with you to demonstrate. Rehearse not only your set up and execution cues, powerhouse cues, but also what they should focus on in terms of working with a partner. In simple terms, let them know what they are providing in terms of resistance, assistance, and opposition.

- Once you deliver your class, listen to feedback and take some time to reflect on what worked well and what might work better for next time!

Make Partner Pilates a special class that students looked forward to sharing with one another and that special someone!

Partner Ideas To Get You Started!

Standing

- *Posture work:* Students face each other in Pilates Stance, one has hands up and the other palms down. Light pressure into the palms helps to activate the Powerhouse. Cue students to provide light resistance and scoop! Add relevés, pliés.
- *Moving to the floor:* Students cross one foot behind the other and hold hands as they sit to the floor.
- *Squats:* Holding hands or clasping forearms students, squat deeply sitting away from one another.
- *Push Ups:* This is a little more advanced. One student takes the other's feet. Partner does a push up. Holding partner then does a lift picking their partners legs up higher.

Supine Work

- Work foot-to-foot with the soles of the feet pressed against each other.
- One person grips outside of shins, one on inside (be

- sure to reverse half way through).
- For an alternative, one person bending knees and one person extending legs (think Frog).
- Ball pass back and forth in exercises like Roll Up and Teaser.

Prone Work

- With a ball under one student's hand, complete passes and rolls between partners.
- One partner's hands press in while other partner's hand press out; or one presses down lightly while the other presses up.

Seated

- Back-to-back as though performing Spine Stretch Forward against a wall, or Saw with arms bent and held together.
- Face-to-face with ankles hooked inside/outside.

Side Lying Work

- Back-to-back
- Foot-to-foot
- Foot over foot to press against each other

Table Top Work

- Face in toward each other.
- One arm balancing with forearms clasped. Add alternating leg lifts. Progress to plank.

Basing Work (One Student Supports the Other's Weight)

- *Knees bent to offer a base:* Use in exercises such as Teaser One Leg. Each student bends their right leg, and the student's extended left leg goes on their partner's

knee to offer support. Or for Teaser I, you might have one student sit with both knees bent and reach their arms up and down as other student rolls down and up keeping their legs on their partner's knees.

- *Barrel work:* Students are back-to-back. One student folds forward while the other extends. Cue students to deepen abs as they fold and support their weight as they extend rather than push down into their partner's back.
- *Bridge bases require more strength:* One student has feet on the floor in Bridge while the other has feet on their partner's knees.
- *Supine basing:* One student lies on their back and holds the other student in the air with their legs. This requires great strength and stability on the part of both students.

Relaxation

One student lies on the floor, the other picks up their partner's lower legs. Small swinging arcs and gentle pulsing motions forward and backward can feel so good. Be sure to remind the standing partner to use good biomechanics. Be sure to have them trade places.

Social Time

End with some social time, chocolates, wine, cheese – and enjoy!

If you are hosting any special classes or workouts for Valentine's Day, share them with our community on the official [Peak](#)

Pilates® Facebook page!

Zoey Trap, MS is a life long observer of movement, a Jivamukti Certified Yoga Instructor and Peak Pilates® Director of Education. Zoey can be reached at zoeytrap@gmail.com or through her Facebook Page: Pilates Solutions.