

# Sharing Pilates Across the Generations

It's hard to imagine a time when people weren't aware of Pilates existence and its many benefits. Today media provides us with daily stories about film stars, athletes and ordinary [people's lives improved by doing Pilates](#) – but that wasn't always the case. It wasn't until the early 2000's when Pilates burst into the public's attention, prior to that it was not very well-known.

## Debbie and Angela

Suzanne Meledeo, a [Peak Pilates MI](#) and [LifeTime Fitness](#) instructor in Texas, shared that 2 of her students, Debbie and Angela began taking Pilates several years ago as an opportunity to workout together. “They have consistently practiced and love the work as it unfolds in their bodies and as they progress through the levels.” Recently, Debbie fell off a horse and broke her humerus; after a few months of physical therapy she came right back to Pilates and has a complete range of motion on her arm now.

## Janet and Denise

This dynamic duo began Pilates 8 years ago and are now doing the Level III work! Janet just turned 70 and survived cancer last year. “Pilates kept me in such great shape and made a recovery easier,” she shared. Denise used Pilates to stay in shape after the birth of her 3<sup>rd</sup> child five years ago. “Janet always counts the reps, and Denise knows the quick set up and transitions- they are such a joy to work with!” enthuses Peak MI, Cathy Terrazas.

## Pam and Marie's

Team Leader and Senior Master Instructor, Pamela Garcia, has had the joy of introducing her Mother to Pilates in 2001 as a way of thanking her, of giving back, for being such a great Mom and Grandma. Her Mother, Marie, was always very fit and active and she loved Pilates as a complement to her active lifestyle. Unfortunately, as Marie continued in the aging process, she began to suffer from dementia. Today, in her 90's, she still does two workouts a week. Pam shares, "It is one of the things she remembers as her motor memory is better than her mental recall. One of my Mom's favorite sayings is that 'you have to keep moving.'" Pam credits Pilates for preserving her Mom's strength, balance, and coordination as well as providing a time for social interaction. "It is the one permanent thing, the one constant in her life that has not changed as dementia has resulted in her giving up so much." Today her Mom can still do a wide variety of Pilates exercises as you can see by the pictures!

## Carla and Rosann

Carla Vercoe, Peak Pilates Master Instructor's Mother was a tennis player who swam daily. In her 70's, Rosann was introduced to Pilates in 2008 when Carla opened Studio Be Pilates in Fairfax, Virginia, and it was love at first lesson, and she came twice a week regularly thereafter. In July 2012, Rosann suffered a massive stroke. "The hardest thing for her to accept was that she would not play tennis again. She kept asking the doctors when she would be able to play tennis. However, Pilates she can do." Today Rosann works out once a week with a teacher who is also a Physical Therapy Assistant. The high chair is a favorite as she can work her gluteals which became fragile after her stroke.

## Sharing Upward and Giving Back

That has led to a generation gap of sorts for those who are 60 and over and have a thorough understanding of Pilates, and its unique benefits. In fact, many Pilates students in that age range have begun to introduce their mothers and grandmothers to the method. A few years ago, I had a student who was so impressed with what Pilates was doing to improve her neck and back pain that she wanted her Mother to begin and asked if that was possible. Her Mother was in her 90s when she began to practice.

## Starting as 'Workout Buddies'

Sometimes, Mothers and daughters buddy up in a workout support system. They begin out of curiosity to try something new, as a way to do something together or to support each other's health and fitness goals. That is one of the great things about Pilates the work can be adjusted in intensity allowing people to work out side by side.

## Sharing with our Children

Missy Becker, a well-known Pilates and fitness expert, introduced her daughter Jolie to work. Today Jolie is a Peak Pilates MI and partner in the Pines Studio in Pennsylvania. Their studio has attracted other Mother-daughter duos to work out and even to journey into teaching together.

Pilates runs deep in this family. Kathy's mother was living in Toronto as she was certified through STOTT. She moved to New Jersey and opened her studio there. She had told Kathy all about Pilates, but Kathy was having a hard time finding a reputable studio to study with and take lessons in the Pittsburgh area. She found The Pines

Studio and began her journey on the Peak Pilates Education pathway. Kathy brought her daughter Lexi, who was 13 years old at the time. Lexi was a competitive figure skater with hip issues. She took lessons for years, and it helped keep her injury free.

Kathy finished her Comprehensive certificate and continues to spread her love of Pilates to her clients to this day. After graduating from college, Lexi moved home and was figuring out her next steps in life. She knew she wanted to help people and is a coach for young figure skaters. She remembered how much it helped her and she wanted to be able to help others. Lexi is currently a Level II instructor and is in nursing school.

## **Pilates Knows No Bounds**

“The less physically active a mother is, the more likely her child will be sedentary,” according to the Journal of American Academy of Pediatrics. In a study published in 2014, researchers found a direct correlation in physical activity levels among mothers and their children with children engaging in more activity if their own mothers made exercise a higher priority. This is a huge reason to start, and maintain, an active lifestyle.

For those of us who teach, sharing Pilates comes naturally. My daughter, Kathryn Coyle fell in love with Pilates as a teen and never looked back. Her early life had been filled with sports and hiking and it was a natural addition. My Mother, Sylvia, suffered from Peripheral Artery Disease, and teaching her Pilates was a way of offering her love and support and helping her to find ways of improving circulation which was vital to her health.

Whether your Grandmothers, Mothers, and/or daughters are healthy and fit or injured or deconditioned, Pilates offers a

pathway for successful activity and improves lives mind, body and spirit. So whether you teach or not, share your passion, share your Pilates!

***This article was researched and written by Zoey Trap,  
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