

# Pilates For Athletes: The Winning Edge

*By Jamie Isaac*

While traditional strength training and conditioning are standard components of athletic training regimes, it's the power of Pilates that is increasingly recognized as a transformative addition for those looking for the winning edge. It's not all about pushing the limits of performance either. Pilates provides numerous ingredients that can be added to our training regime, and like any great recipe, even the smallest ingredient can make the biggest difference!

## **Core Power – The Pilates Powerhouse**

It's widely accepted that Pilates builds the foundations of a strong core. In the classical world we take the core one step further by referring to the Powerhouse. This Core-plus-more approach includes all the stabilizing core muscles of the deep abdominals, but adds in the glutes, inner thighs and shoulder girdle. This stable and connected foundation allows for more control of movement, reduces the risk of injury, and increases the potential power output from the rest of the body. For athletes, this means moving from a more stable and efficient center. Running feels stronger with increased endurance, pivoting and controlled movements feel easier and more precise, and strength-based sports gain drive and explosive power.

## **Mobile and Dynamic**

The ingenious aspect of Pilates is how it stretches and strengthens with each exercise. This not only helps prevent injuries by promoting elasticity in the muscles but also develops our athlete's range of motion. The injury reduction in tackle sports or wrestling-type arts from improved

flexibility is a game changer, with many professional football teams now adding Pilates to their training regimes.

Increased range of movement also benefits more obvious sports, such as gymnastics or dance, where control and precision are key. This also translates into refined technique or increased torque to deliver power in realms that involve swinging motions or striking action. Imagine the increased power in a golf swing when we increase the rotational capacity of our torso. All generating from a strong stable core. Boom!

### **Less Injuries and Stronger Recoveries**

This is my favorite element that Pilates power provides... My initial training was in Clinical Pilates, where the focus was on rehabilitation and injury prevention. This, along with many conversations with physiotherapists (not to mention my own injury collection from my sporting life), has provided a diverse toolbox of exercises to utilize for students both athletes and non...

Repetitive stress (or as I like to refer to it as “repetitive misuse”) and years of training for one-sided sports, seen in many fighting arts, board sports or throwing actions, can lead to strength and flexibility imbalances in the body. This makes athletes more prone to injuries or future physical issues. Pilates’ power to bring balance to our students has an incredible impact on both performance and career longevity. It also plays an important role in rehabilitation from injuries, providing gentle but strengthening exercises that help bring the body back to form and function. Many of these rehabilitation exercises can also be used as ‘prehab’ or training to prevent injury or avoid an ongoing issue from flaring up.

### **Get Connected!**

The precise and subtle movements within our Pilates exercises also help our athletes to connect better with their bodies.

We've already discussed the power of connecting to a strong core, but there's more connections to be discovered and these subtle patterns can bring a new level of control, focus and precision to any performance across all sporting domains. This results in faster skill acquisition, more precise and efficient technique, improved reaction and response, and overall body awareness.

Whatever your athletic pursuit and the level you are performing at, Pilates could be the missing ingredient in your training recipe to support optimal performance and longevity. As more athletes and coaches recognize these benefits, Pilates continues to grow in popularity, becoming a vital part of sports training programs across the globe.

So, join me for my virtual workshop!

[\*\*Athletic Training – Designing Effective Pilates Programs for Athletes\*\*](#)

**May 07, 2024 @ 2-4PM Eastern**