

# Pilates Day is May 1st – Celebrate in Style

This year has brought many changes, so as we look ahead to Pilates Day on May 1<sup>st</sup>, we have new considerations to factor into our celebrations. And of course, safety is at the top of the list.

There are 3 ways to celebrate and keep things COVID-safe; host a free virtual event, take it to the great outdoors, and/or have an open house. Here are suggestions for pulling off each with gusto!

## **Your Virtual Event**

Determine date, time and hosting platform. Once you have the schedule specifics, shout it out on social media. How will you create a personal connection virtually? Plan your welcome, the “look” you want your set to have, how many instructors lead the event, and how to use the chat box for questions and comments. Think about how to offer an incentive prize, such as a free lesson, new prop for home use, or gift certificate for the student who brings the most friends, is the oldest, newest etc.

## **Outdoor Celebrations**

There is nothing better than Pilates, except Pilates outside! Take advantage of a beautiful park, beach or natural setting. Set an alternative weather plan in place that either offers an alternate date or an indoor/covered location in case of rain. Outdoor teaching can be a challenge so plan for a sound system students can hear, and be sure to have extra teachers on the side and back to demonstrate and provide visual support. Take your cues from nature and weave in imagery that suits your setting. End with a picnic or fun sharing time that is

socially distanced. Peak Pilates MI, Nancy Hurd, takes part in a collaborative outdoor event every year that involves students and instructors from other studios joining together in one big class.

## **Open Houses**

In order to maximize the number of students you can safely accommodate in your studio, host an open house. Schedule classes all day. Have a mix of mat and apparatus, and mark a few for new students only to try Pilates. We did this one year and had a drawing for prizes, balloons, live music – lots of fun and energy – and this led to attracting new students to group and private classes.

Whatever method you choose for your event here are some tips:

- Make your event accessible. You want your event to appeal to current students and attract new students. Use the “bring a friend” strategy in your marketing; then submit to local events websites, such as your local papers or Eventbrite. You might also create an event on your Facebook page!
- Get the word out. No event is successful without hard work behind the scenes. What have you tried for promotion that has worked and what hasn't? Write an article on Pilates and give it an angle that would be appealing to the media, such as Pilates as a way to deal with COVID stress. Reach out to local podcasters or bloggers to see if they will interview you. Use your own social media channels to share your event and make it appealing. If you have a blog for your studio or personal practice, update it with details about your event.
- Incentivize students to attend with giveaways like a drawing for a free class, Resistance Bands etc. It doesn't have to be big.
- Partner with like-minded businesses if you are having an

open house. Workout clothing, nutrition, massage.

- Make your workout all-levels or hold a special new student class offering to attract new students to Pilates.

Whichever way you choose to promote Pilates on May 1<sup>st</sup> – celebrate its bountiful benefits in style!