

Pilates for Women with “Not-So-Everyday” Jobs

By Carla Vercoe, Peak Pilates® Master Instructor

Not everyone is cut out for traditional 9-to-5 jobs. For women who have chosen non-traditional occupations, strength and resilience are often required. What better way to gain the strength they need than with Pilates?

Here’s a look at three women in non-traditional jobs and the ways in which Pilates has helped them stay strong while carrying out their day-to-day responsibilities.

Counter-Intelligence Specialist with NCIS

Meet Heather, a Counter Intelligence Specialist with NCIS. According to Heather, “Pilates should be a go-to for anyone in law enforcement as well as first responders.”

In her profession, Heather—like many women—has had to overcome social bias and use her body to be physically intimidating in law enforcement scenarios. “Exercises like rebounding and rollbacks have been especially helpful,” she says, “teaching me to engage my core fully, stand taller, and assume an authoritative stance.”.

Heather has also found Pilates helpful in threatening environments, which require her to assume crouching or prone positions for long periods of time. It also aids in dynamic, multiple-muscle coordinated movements that she needs to avoid enemy engagement.

As Heather’s Pilates instructor, I’ve worked with her on lengthening and strengthening exercises. In addition to the Comprehensive Level II Reformer repertoire, we concentrate on [chair](#) and [tower](#) exercises. Stretching her spine and

strengthening her glutes are a major focus. On a weekly basis, we work on the Standing One Leg Pumping series, focusing on both going up the front and to the side.

Washer Woman and Low Chair Push Down One Arm Side are great for opening up Heather's low back and stretching and strengthening her spine. Due to the nature of her work, it's important to keep her spine as mobile as possible, so we try to work on all planes of motion.

Pull Ups and Side Pull Ups are also great choices. Exercises like these are especially helpful when she has to bend around corners and flatten against walls in surveillance situations.

Professional Violinist

Tina, a professional violinist, has also found Pilates helpful, enabling her to do the work she loves.

"Pilates is the main reason my body is still able to withstand the physical demands of being a full-time violinist," Tina explains.

Playing the violin for hours each day requires her to suspend both arms in oppositely rotated positions, causing the musculature in the shoulders, back, and neck to develop unevenly. Developing good core strength through Pilates helps the shoulders align over the hips, which allows the arms to move from a more neutral position.

Core strength also stabilizes the shoulder and collarbone area, which serves as a shelf for the violin. Developing strong back muscles, especially between the shoulder blades and in the lower back, helps Tina stay upright while playing in a seated position.

The small, intricate and flowing movements of Pilates are important for Tina's practice and training. Every session includes the full Rowing Series and Pulling Straps to

strengthen her back muscles and move her arms in opposition.

We often end our sessions with Standing Arm Springs/Side Pull, Push Ups, and Raise and Salute, all of which help with stabilizing the shoulder girdle. We also concentrate on Seating Pumping and Seated Pumping One Leg so she can focus on sitting upright while strengthening her legs and stabilizing the pelvis.

“Having better body awareness and good core strength helps me move with greater ease and confidence, whether I’m playing a concert or walking my dog,” Tina explains.

Pilates gives Tina what she needs for work and for life.

Special Agent, Federal Law Enforcement

Allison, another one of my clients, is a Special Agent who uses Pilates to help her meet the physical demands of her job.

“The first time I shot a shotgun, it nearly knocked me off my feet,” she says. “For my job, I’m required to qualify with my duty carry weapon four times a year. Pilates has helped to strengthen my core, which enables me to fire weapons that have a higher degree of recoil.”

Periodically, Allison takes classes on tactical movement, also known as the “use of force” to ensure she can defend herself should the need arise. She affirms that “core strength is an important factor when facing adversaries.”

According to Allison, the tactical aspect also comes into play when she makes an arrest. “If the person I’m arresting is non-compliant, I use my core strength to subdue them and place them in handcuffs.” Pilates has taught her efficiency of movement and gives her the strength she needs to manage difficult arrests.

Some of Allison’s favorite exercises are the Standing Arm

Springs series: Boxing, Fencing, and Butterfly. She also sees great benefit in Hip Opener, as it stretches and opens the hips as well as strengthens her glutes. In addition, it helps her move quickly from a squat to a run and stabilize herself in odd stances.

While Pilates is beneficial for most women, it is often vital for women in more non-traditional jobs. Pilates not only keeps these women strong, but in many cases, it also keeps them safe.

Three different women, three different jobs, and one simple solution that helps them meet the demands they all face: Pilates.

Did Pilates help you in your job? We want to hear from you! Contact us at info@peakpilates.com or [subscribe](#) to our newsletter!