

Spice Up Your Pilates Classes with Circuits

By Cherry Herzog

Circuit training was first developed by R.E. Morgan and G.T. Anderson in 1953 at the University of Leeds in England. The term “circuit” refers to a few carefully selected exercises that are arranged consecutively. In its original format, a circuit was made up of 9-12 stations, and this number varied according to the circuit’s design. Each participant moved from one station to the next with little (15-30 seconds) or no rest, performing a 15-45 second work bout of 8-20 repetitions at each station (using a resistance of about 40-60% of what would be a person’s one-repetition maximum [1RM]). Since then, circuit workout designs have evolved into many exercise regimens giving circuit workouts a wide possibility of variations.

Traditionally, in Joe Pilates’ studio there were no group classes as we know them today. People came to work out and basically did a “circuit” class. Each client had their own workout to complete, and they would move around the “circuit” of the studio to complete their assigned exercises. Joe and Clara would oversee all the clients in the studio and assist them to ensure they were completing the exercises as instructed.

Benefits of a Pilates Circuit

- Offers a full body workout
- Is time efficient
- Gives clients variety
- Improves exercise adherence
- Provides additional revenue source

Circuit training is an excellent way to maximize time in your

Pilates studio while utilizing different equipment and props. It's also a nice way to help clients through a mental plateau, because circuit training combats boredom and shifts neuromuscular patterns. Many of our clients supplement their private sessions with group classes and circuit classes are among their favorites. Circuits keep the clients and instructors on their toes.

Circuit classes are creative and can be endlessly varied, keeping workouts interesting and challenging. Even in a very small studio space, a circuit class can be offered. At Pilates Connection in Dallas-Ft. Worth the front studio has four reformers and four towers. They bring in chairs and add prop stations to create their circuits depending on the class size. This increases the revenue potential from 4 as is a standard tower or reformer class to 8-12 participants.

When leading a circuit training class, it is important to recognize that circuits are different than normal group exercise offerings. Some considerations for circuit classes:

- Circuit classes require more attention from the instructor, because in a circuit training session, everyone is doing something different at the same time. You need to develop a knack for keeping an eye on all the "moving parts" to keep everyone safe and successful.
- Circuits should be designed so that they do not require too much equipment adjustment at each station. It is important that the participants be able to transition easily from station to station and keep the workout flowing.
- Circuit training should be motivating and physically challenging. This doesn't mean that technique and form aren't a priority. Your clients will achieve better results if safety and technique are at the top of the list.
- Class design should alternate sequences between muscle groups to allow adequate recovery time.

- Cueing should be as direct as possible with a continued focus on the Pilates key concepts.

As with any Pilates program, focus on quality of movement rather than number of repetitions. You may be surprised to see how some heart rates pick up.

Intrigued? Join us July 14, 2023, 1pm-3pm Central Time for a very informative and explorative virtual workshop on designing successful and profitable circuit classes in your studio.

To register: [Spice Up Your Classes – Circuits – Virtual Workshop – July 14, 2023](#)

Date and Time: July 14, 2023 – 1:00pm – 3:00pm Central Time