

Studio Spirit: Tips for a Festive Holiday

By: Zoey Trap

The holidays give us an opportunity to come together with our students and express our gratitude, joy and love. When we join in the holiday fun, spirits rise, community is created, and our students understand how much we appreciate them. At the InnerSpace in Avon, Connecticut, we established a tradition of holding a Jingle All the Way class. We have ribbons, bells and many other great holiday decorations up for students as they arrive. With wrists and ankles decked out and holiday carols playing, we would all ring the season in together. Afterwards, we'd enjoy cookies, punch and chatting. This tradition was so well received that when we sold the studio to Kim Johnson, she kept it alive.

Our Peak Pilates Master Instructors heard of this celebration at the InnerSpace and brought these fun ideas to studios around the world:

In Wales, Karen Ingram dresses as Father Christmas and leads a candle lit mat class with her teachers all taking turns leading. Pilates exercises are renamed to 'Rolling like a Christmas Pudding,' 'Roast Potatoes,' and 'Snow Angels.' After class, students then enjoy a party with a Yule tide log, minced pies and mulled wine.

In Finland, MI Mikko Utecht hosts a Christmas Carol Circuit decked out in Santa hats that uses every apparatus. After a hard charging workout, they celebrate with mulled wine, ginger bread and traditional puff pastries.

Carla Vercoe, MI at StudioBe in Fairfax, Virginia, leads a charity fundraiser every year. This year, they have selected two charities for students and teachers to support, and rather

than do a gift exchange, they do a 'give back' to raise money for these local organizations.

At the Reston, Virginia Life Time Fitness, MIs Kathryn Coyle and Jessica Sullivan put their students through the paces with a lively Christmas Eve morning circuit that spills out into the hall. Students start together with an inspirational warm-up before groups separate to do mat on the wall in the hall, chair and tower before coming back together for an uplifting and joyful group ending. Students are then treated to homemade cookies from the teachers!

When choosing how to celebrate this holiday season, you will want to include all of your students, so plan out a multi-leveled, easily adjustable workout. Remember that not everyone celebrates Christmas, but most people celebrate something around the holidays and it is easy to stay non-denominational. Keep the theme fun and light and think out of the box. Yes, we teach Classical Pilates, but adding holiday music once a year will certainly brighten your class. You might choose holiday music from a wide variety of faiths and cultures to make all feel welcome and create a truly global vibe. Find a way to create social time afterward. Having students chat over delicious snacks and beverages is a great way for them to connect and get to know each other outside of their passion for Pilates.

We have so much to celebrate this holiday season, and the time to get planning is now!