

Pilates for Runners

Pilates has long been established as a great form of exercise for working on the core and stabilising system of muscles of the body. While Pilates is often considered a gentle form of exercise and thus traditionally attended much less regularly by the male sporting population, the truth is that Pilates can be as hard or gentle as you would like to make it. While most would tend to think of Pilates primarily as a program of core strength exercises, much of the benefit of Pilates when done well is in teaching the brain better, more efficient movement patterns.



With its dual focus on strength and control, Pilates is increasingly being recognised as a great form of exercise for building a base of strength and stability to improve athletic performance across a range of sports. Running requires stability particularly of the back and hip and good strength of the muscles of the lower leg for efficient movement and avoidance of injury. Due to the high volume of repetition with running, even a small imbalance in movement may lead to overload and injury. A small improvement in movement patterns and control can make a huge difference to performance.

Closed chain Pilates exercises on the reformer and combo chair are great for enabling a strong focus on correcting the alignment of the hip, knee and back. The ability to alter the resistance of the springs to provide more or less support, assists in



allowing good, controlled movement patterns through a range which would not otherwise be possible. This often allows for a greater challenge and training effect to the muscles of the trunk and leg.

With the addition of the jump board to the reformer, we can incorporate some great plyometric load to the legs, working on control of the joints with higher level, explosive contractions of the muscles, while also working on ensuring good shock absorption by the muscles when the foot impacts the ground.[h](#)

<https://vimeo.com/325299777>

It appears that the benefits of Pilates for runners, may go beyond simply improving strength and movement patterns. In a recent study published in [Plos One](#) , trained runners who took part in a 12-week course of Pilates (two one-hour sessions each week) significantly improved their 5K time, VO2 max and the metabolic cost of running.

So if you are a runner who has struggled to overcome running related injury or are simply looking to increase your running efficiency for increased performance, Pilates is a great form of exercise to consider. If you would like to speak to one of our highly experienced physio or get some more information on our classes, call the practice and get on your way to better health.

Article by Jim Burke