

Online Mat Apprentice Course

# COURSE PACKET



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# *Fusion Mat Apprentice Course Packet*

## **How to Use This Document**

### **MAKE A BINDER**

Print this entire document on 3holed paper, place it in a 3 ring binder, and fill it in by hand. This makes it easy to work on your documents as you watch the videos. *Tip: Want to save your printer ink? Send the PDF to FedEx Office and have them print on 3holed paper.*

### **LOG EVERYTHING!**

Make sure to use your Master Log and initial and date each session. You must turn this log in at the end of the course in order to receive your certificate of completion and PMA CECs.

### **LONGHAND VS. TYPING**

If you'd prefer to type your answers and notes, feel free to create your own Word document to use for this purpose. Make sure to reference the session and/or question numbers to stay organized. The Master Log must be filled in and initialed by hand.

## **About the Material in this Course Packet**

Everything in this packet is labeled with a Session number, which will make it easy for you to stay organized and to match the printed document with the Session number on the website.

## **About the Video Trail Guides**

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

For each InstaStudio PopUp Video (these are your observation videos), you will notice a corresponding Video Trail Guide section of this packet. Please read through these *before* watching the videos for an introduction and overview of the section's theme. We will also offer suggestions on what to look for and focus on in the video. Take advantage of the space for questions and notes on each session. Pause, rewind, and rewatch the video to get the most out of it and take plenty of notes. If questions come up that you'd like to ask our instructors during one of your two phone/Skype conferences, please note those as well.

## About Let's Discuss

The Let's Discuss questions are meant to train your focus on the aspects of the work that we believe will be most helpful to you. You will not be turning these in, but we hope that you will take some time with them. As with anything, the more you put into this, the more you will get out. We are providing you with the tools to think outside the traditional Pilates box and to expand on your knowledge about the body in movement.

Again, please use the space provided to keep your notes and questions organized so that you can reference them during your phone meetings with our instructors.

And remember: Use our online forum to ask questions or discuss what you are seeing with our online community and/or a master teacher.

# MAT APPRENTICE MASTER LOG

Please use this document to log your hours during the course of the Mat Apprentice Module.

<b>The Honor System</b>  This course will only be helpful if you put in the required time and effort.  I hereby state that by dating and initialing the rows of this form I am confirming that I have completed the associated observation, teaching, or practice hour, and have read all associated content, and have completed any associated assignments in full.		
SIGNATURE	PRINTED NAME	DATE

Breathing & Release Work	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES							
Introduction							
Session 1	Observation Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 2	Video & Article	N/A	13	N/A	N/A		
Session 3	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 3	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 3	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 4	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 5	Let's Discuss Video & Article	N/A	9	N/A	N/A		
Session 6	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 6	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 6	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
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Breathing & Release Work			Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours		

Core Activation	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES							
Session 7	Observation Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 8	Video & Article	N/A	8	N/A	N/A		
Session 9	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 9	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 9	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 10	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 11	Let's Discuss Video & Article	N/A	5	N/A	N/A		
Session 12	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 12	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
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Core Activation			Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours		

Neutral Pelvis/Spine & Lumbo Pelvic Stability	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
<b>LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES</b>							
Session 13	Observation Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 14	Video & Article	N/A	8	N/A	N/A		
Session 15	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 15	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 15	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 16	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 17	Let's Discuss Video & Article	N/A	8	N/A	N/A		
Session 18	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 18	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 18	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
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<b>Neutral Pelvis/Spine &amp; Lumbo Pelvic Stability</b>			<b>Observation Hours</b>	<b>Practice Hours</b>	<b>Teaching Hours</b>		

Ab Strength & Spinal Stability/Mobility	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
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Session 19	Observation Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 20	Video & Article	N/A	6	N/A	N/A		
Session 21	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 21	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 21	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 22	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 23	Let's Discuss Video & Article	N/A	5	N/A	N/A		
Session 24	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 24	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 24	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 25	Video Send In		N/A	N/A	60		
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Scapular Stability/Mobility & Stretching	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES							
Session 26	Observation Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 27	Video & Article	N/A	8	N/A	N/A		
Session 28	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 28	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 28	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 29	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 30	Let's Discuss Video & Article	N/A	7	N/A	N/A		
Session 31	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 31	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 31	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
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Scapular Stability/Mobility & Stretching			Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours		



Feet, Lower Limbs, & Gait	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES							
Session 32	Observation Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 33	Video & Article	N/A	6	N/A	N/A		
Session 34	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 34	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 34	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 34	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 35	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 36	Let's Discuss Video & Article	N/A	7	N/A	N/A		
Session 37	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 37	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 37	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 37	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
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Feet, Lower Limbs, & Gait			Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours		

Contrast & Flow	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES							
Session 38	Observation Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 39	Video & Article	N/A	4	N/A	N/A		
Session 39	Video & Article	N/A	2	N/A	N/A		
Session 40	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 40	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 40	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 40	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 41	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 42	Let's Discuss Video & Article	N/A	4	N/A	N/A		
Session 43	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 43	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 43	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 43	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 44	Final Video Send In		N/A	N/A	60		
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Contrast & Flow			Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours		

Connecting the Dots (Mat Private)	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES							
Session 45	Observation Video (Private Mat)	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 46	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 46	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 46	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 46	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 47	Commentary Video	N/A	60	N/A	N/A		
Session 48	Let's Discuss Video	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Session 49	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 49	Practice Hour		N/A	60	N/A		
Session 49	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
Session 49	Teaching Hour		N/A	N/A	60		
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Connecting the Dots (Mat Private)			Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours		

Test Out Prep	Description	Who did you teach?	Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours	Date	Initial
LOG ALL TIME IN MINUTES							
Session 50	Mock Test Out	N/A	70	N/A	N/A		
Session 51	Practice Written Exam	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Session 52	Test Tips Video	N/A	6	N/A	N/A		
Session 53	Mock Test Out with Commentary	N/A	70	N/A	N/A		
Session 54	Practice Written Exam Answers & Let's Discuss Video	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Session 55	Final Instructor Conference	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Session 56	Comment Form	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
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Test Out Prep			Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours		

# Total Your Hours!

		Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours
Breathing & Release Work	Total Minutes from Page 1			
Core Activation	Total Minutes from Page 2			
Neutral Pelvis/Spine & Lumbo Pelvic Stability	Total Minutes from Page 3			
Ab Strength & Spinal Stability/Mobility	Total Minutes from Page 4			
Scapular Stability/Mobility & Stretching	Total Minutes from Page 5			
Feet, Lower Limbs, & Gait	Total Minutes from Page 6			
Contrast & Flow	Total Minutes from Page 7			
Connecting the Dots	Total Minutes from Page 8			
Test Out Prep	Total Minutes from Page 9			
<b>TOTAL MINUTES FROM MAT APPRENTICE MODULE</b>	Total of columns above			
<b>TOTAL HOURS</b>	Divide rows above by 60			
		Observation Hours	Practice Hours	Teaching Hours

## Session 1 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Breathing & Release Work

Breathing is the most important principle in the Pilates work. Most people are unaware that breathing is a vital component to their movement success, but the constant undulating rhythm of our breath focuses movement and awareness. It is our job as Pilates instructors to share our knowledge of the interconnectedness between breath, release work, and exercise success with our clients.

Without the breath, it is impossible to correctly fire the core stabilizing structures in the body. Until a client learns how to properly use their breath, they will continue to try to find every ab curl, leg circle, and articulation through compensatory patterns, rather than through the proper integrated movement from the core. This key principle of muscle activation through the proper inhalation and exhalation patterns and techniques is the cornerstone of the Pilates repertoire as a whole, and should be focused on and reinforced in every movement, classical or contemporary.

Release work is an equally important factor in building better breathers, as well as better movers. Most clients need release work before they can move on to strength training. It is impossible to progress in the work without the releasing of habitual tension patterns in the body. By pairing the breath with the release, we can explore and move through the body's tightness in order to clear tension, and unlock a wider range of motion in our clients.

Layering these foundational principles in class helps our clients to establish a balanced baseline onto which we can then layer movement.

Note the movements and exercises in the video that resonate with you, and investigate them as you log your practice hours. There are so many ways to feel and experience better breath, and the resulting release in the whole body. Experiment with these exercises in your body and in your practice.

### Focus On: Greeting & Setting a Tone

Your greeting and introduction at the beginning of the class should give an overview of the experience that your clients can expect to have for the next hour. Whether the clients are new or have been coming for a while, it is important to greet them warmly and introduce them to the theme of your class. Take some time to make sure everyone has the necessary props, and touch base with each client about any pain or issues they are having with their bodies. Showing that you are attentive to each client's individual needs, even in a group class, is how you build trust. You want everyone to feel comfortable and to know they're

going to be supported. Any class created with this compassion and understanding will be successful.

Then, clearly state your intentions for the session. Let them know what they are going to get out of the hour with you. It helps a client become more involved and more present in a class if they know what the goal is.

This is also your opportunity to set the tone of your class. Mentioning a few gentle ground rules or simply displaying confidence in your command of the class can go a long way in keeping a class focused and efficient. There is no use cueing if no one is listening to you.

## **Session 1 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.



## **Session 2 Article & Video**

Watch the video and article, and record notes and questions here.

## **Session 3 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 4 Mentor's Cut / Session 5 Let's Discuss

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here.

*Reference minute 14:10.*

The spiky ball release work on the wall helps a client easily pinpoint the parts of their body that are tight. Notice how Casey asks the clients to heighten their awareness by linking to other places in the body that respond to the release work.

1. How does linking the tightness in the body help bring about better movement? What is our goal in having a client reach this elevated sense of awareness? In what ways would these skills help clients within the Pilates repertoire?

*Reference minute 25:49.*

In this exercise, the clients are moving through an active release in the gluteus and piriformis. Not only are they finding a trigger point release, but they are learning to move the leg without gripping in the back of the pelvis.

2. Why is it important to learn to move the leg without building extra tension elsewhere in the body? What exercises would be directly helped by this enhanced freedom of the leg from the pelvis?

*Reference minute 39:19.*

Touch cueing is an important aspect of teaching a body to move in a different way. Getting up off the mat and facilitating the class by making one on one contact is extremely important.

3. How does this type of active teaching enhance the client's experience in the class? What does tactile cueing give to the client that verbal cues often miss?

*Reference minute 51:59.*

Breath is the cornerstone of the Pilates repertoire. Notice how the overball is being used to cue the glide of the diaphragm and the opening of the ribs in the ab curl.

4. How does this prop, and the breath cues that go with it, build a better ab curl? How would this translate later down the line in more difficult exercises? What clientele would this type of prop be useful for?

## **Session 4 Mentor's Cut / Session 5 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.

## **Session 6 Assignment**

As you do your assignments, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 7 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Core Activation

The Pilates Method owes much of its staying power to the concept of Core Activation. This is why the popularity of our chosen career continues to rise amidst workout fads that come and go. As instructors, it is vital for us to understand the core structures and the role they play, not only in the repertoire, but also in daily life.

Core Activation gives the results that clients are most interested in: to become pain free, to be able to move freely in daytoday life, and in some cases, to excel as athletes in their particular sport or activity.

Most laymen think that core work is just about strengthening the abdominal wall. It is your job to inform your clients of the synergistic relationship between all of the core structures, not just the abs. By cueing the breath, the pelvic floor, multifidus, psoas, and the transverse abdominis, you will clearly illustrate and teach your clients how to move with and around these activations. These main core players are what ready the skeleton for movement, priming it for optimal alignment and movement success without fear of injury or failure.

In this video, you will see myriad different ways to explain and explore core activation. This is the center of work as a Pilates teacher. It is important not to rush into too much choreography too soon. We need to work from the inside out, and this deep internal understanding of our stability muscles is a primary focus.

### Focus On: Using Props

Choosing and using the most helpful props is an important part of every class you teach.

Every client will need some type of help along the way, especially during a mat class. Most people's lives are spent sitting for a majority of their day. So when they walk into the studio and begin to move their body in different gravitational planes, it is no surprise that they might run into alignment and leverage issues. This is where propping the body is essential.

By bringing the floor to your client, they will find ease in their preliminary positioning, which will set them up for movement success. In addition, props are a wonderful touch cue.

It can be difficult to have your hands in more than one place when giving directional cueing. Try using a ball, SmartSpine™, or pillow to signal your client's body to move in a more beneficial way. And this is the perfect place to begin to re educate your clients to find a better, easier alignment in the exercise. Watch this video and take notes on the different



props and how you saw the movements change when the instructor utilized these useful tools.

## **Session 7 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.

## **Session 8 Video & Article**

Watch the video and article, and record notes and questions here.

## **Session 9 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 10 Mentor's Cut / Session 11 Let's Discuss

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here.

*Reference minute 7:04.*

It is vital that your clients understand the nature of firing of the transverse abdominis. Here Jen demonstrates a simple, effective way to train this muscle network using a variety of different cueing methods.

1. What are the different types of cueing styles you are seeing or hearing? How does layering the information that you are giving to your clients help them to feel this muscle activation more readily?

*Reference minute 25:40.*

The Pilates repertoire is not just about the exercises you do on the mat; it is a training for everyday life. Bringing the core activation into upright moving posture helps to bridge the gap between the work and how the client moves outside the studio.

2. What are some of the ways that the awareness of the core musculature can help a client in everyday activities? How does this strength feed the other facets of the client's everyday life?

*Reference minute 37:37.*

Notice Jen's use of the same cueing and imagery of the femur heads into the lifeline of the multifidus throughout the class.

3. How does this image translate into core activation? What musculature does it talk to?  
How does changing the positioning on the mat change the experience of the cue in the client's body?

*Reference minute 53:28.*

The ultimate goal of core activation is to be able to move with fluidity, and without restriction.

4. What are the benefits of a stable pelvis and spine—and, in addition, what are the benefits of a more mobile lumbo/pelvic area?

## **Session 10 Mentor's Cut / Session 11 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.

## **Session 12 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.



## Session 13 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Neutral Pelvis/Spine & Lumbo Pelvic Stability

Neutral pelvic placement is the starting point to setting the body up for balanced strength throughout. The body is elegant in its design of the spine, which has been refined through many thousands of years as humans have evolved. The curves of the spine give it strength and stability. It is only through working from this neutral placement that can we activate the core musculature to establish easy lumbo pelvic stability.

The optimal neutral pelvic alignment happens when the apex of the curve of the sacrum is stable on the mat. This allows the sitting bones to be wide and ungripped, and allows free space between the low back and the mat. As you move up the spine, the T8 vertebra (bra strap height) should also be heavy on the floor, and there should be a feeling of width in the collarbone. From here the neck should maintain its healthy secondary curve while the head rests gently and evenly on the mat. Many clients will need propping to find this alignment, and some people's curves are more pronounced than others. Once this alignment is found, the next goal is to teach the client how to stabilize around it, thus creating lumbo pelvic stability.

Mastering differentiation between the torso and the limbs is vital when we are refining the movement of the body. The only way to discover this freedom is to explore what it is like to move in a true neutral placement, without gripping or forcing. By accessing the already explored themes of the breath, release, and core activation, it becomes easy to stabilize around neutral spine placement. And from this point, many exercises can be layered on top of this strength and stability.

### Focus On: Layering of Cues

Effective cueing is an essential skill that you must have in your tool bag as a Pilates teacher. It isn't the easiest craft to master, but being a powerful, engaging teacher depends on this.

There are many ways to cue, and one you will want to pay attention to is layering. What this entails is that you start with an easy baseline cue. As the clients move and master that, you then add on another.

This is about being careful not to overload the clients with too much, but also having them move progressively—better and more easily—as you cue. This method helps the clients to tackle the work one step at a time without being overwhelmed. As you prompt, you get more and more detail oriented, thus bringing them into precise movement, which is the

essence of the Pilates repertoire. Watch this class and see how the layering of cues helps to paint a more vivid picture of the work and theme.

## **Session 13 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.

## **Session 14 Video & Article**

Watch the video and article, and record notes and questions here.

## **Session 15 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 16 Mentor's Cut / Session 17 Let's Discuss

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here.

*Reference minute 13:05.*

The clocking exercise that you see here is a simple way to illustrate the different ranges of motion that can be performed in the pelvis.

1. How does the ball under the pelvis affect the client's awareness and movement? What tactile cues does the ball give to the client that clocking on the mat wouldn't?

*Reference minute 22:40.*

Mobility of the spine and pelvis is essential to obtain clear, easy movements of the torso. If the abdominal wall is over trained, it will greatly limit the movement in and around the spine.

2. How does stretching the abdominal affect the body? What are some exercises that would require the clients to have suppleness in the abs? What major core muscle needs to move in and around the abdominal wall to work effectively?

*Reference minute 35:06.*

You see here that the clients are doing knee folds with their pelvis elevated on the overball.

3. What does keeping the pelvis on the ball train in the body? How does this help the client find abdominal strength and lumbo pelvic stability? What type of client would benefit from this variation of the exercise?

*Reference minute 46:45.*

4. Why is finding a neutral seated position an important skill for your clients to understand? How does mobilizing the pelvis on the stool transfer to movements on the mat? Can you link this stool work to any of the work that has already been done in the class?

## **Session 16 Mentor's Cut / Session 17 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.



## **Session 18 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 19 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Ab Strength & Spinal Stability/Mobility

The old yogi saying that you are only as young as your spine is flexible is the absolute truth. Once rigidity enters the spine, pain and misalignment are sure to follow. It is our job as movement facilitators to encourage our clients to expand their awareness, and challenge their tightness with movement and fluidity. This is most important in the spine. The strength of the abdominal wall directly affects the movement and the stability of the back body.

Balanced ab strength—as well as activation of the other core structures—provides the spine with the perfect protection and support to explore a full range of motion. But you must be careful not to over train this musculature to the point of tension. Remember that the trunk needs a very wide range of motion to be balanced and to perform its many tasks. If the abdominal wall is overtrained, it can cause just as many alignment problems as if there were no strength at all. It is important to have equal emphasis on the stability *and* the mobility of the spine. This is the only way to have true core strength.

### Focus On: Voice

Your voice is one of the most powerful tools you can use to guide a class to better movement. Whether you are teaching a group class or a private client, it is imperative that you speak with authority and command attention, while at the same time remaining soft and compassionate. The inflection, tone, and volume of your voice can all be used to cue and guide your clients through changes in intensity, tempo, and focus.

It is important to be yourself and use your authentic voice. So many teachers put on their “Instructor Hat” and take on a different persona while teaching. Nothing turns off clients more than an instructor who seems fake or gimmicky. Tape yourself teaching to see how you sound to your clients.

Watch the following video and listen to how the teacher’s voice orchestrates the class.

## **Session 19 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.

## **Session 20 Video & Article**

Watch the video and article, and record notes and questions here.

## **Session 21 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 22 Mentor's Cut / Session 23 Let's Discuss

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here.

*Reference minute 7:45.*

Bridging can be done in a variety of different ways, and with emphasis on different themes.

1. What is the difference between a flat back bridge and a bridge with an articulating spine? What is the main goal of each variation?

*Reference minute 19:46.*

Firing the deep transverse abdominal muscles is a must when stabilizing the pelvis and spine.

2. In this knee float exercise, what postural keys should you watch out for to make sure your clients are using the correct musculature to perform the exercise? What are some ways you can add to the challenge?

*Reference minute 36:01.*

Preparing the body for movement should be a top priority when teaching skills like the ab curl. Using the overball in the way you see here helps to inform the tissue of where it should move from—and to.

3. How is this prop helpful, and what cues do you hear that help to paint a vivid picture of what the client should be feeling and sensing?

*Reference minute 53:40.*

Slowing an exercise down can be useful in dissecting the various components and details that can easily be left out when tempo is increased.

4. What are the main principles of this exercise, and what do the clients need to know how to do with ease to execute it correctly?

## **Session 22 Mentor's Cut / Session 23 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.



## **Session 24 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## **Session 25 Video SendIn & Instructor Conference**

Please follow the instructions in this Session on the website and submit your first Video SendIn.

Also, to prepare for your upcoming instructor conference, please review all of your notes and questions in this Course Packet. List the most pressing issues and questions here so that you know exactly what you'd like to cover during your call.

## Session 26 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Scapular Stability/Mobility & Stretching

The movement of the scapula on the rib cage is an important dynamic that needs to be fully understood. There is a common misconception, held by clients and teachers alike, that there is only one place for the scapula to be: retracted and at the back of the rib cage.

Yes, this is an area that the shoulder blades need to be able to slide to, but they also need to have a full range of motion to move around the sides of the rib cage. The stability and range of motion in the torso and arms is directly linked to how far the shoulder blades can move on the ribcage. We want to be on the lookout for elevated shoulders, or shoulders that roll forward due to tight pectoral muscles. The main idea with scapular stability and mobility is that the muscle activation around the joint has to move with the long lever of the arm. This is the only way to build a well balanced shoulder girdle.

If you over stabilize without the addition of stretching and mobility, you will cause stagnation around the rib cage and spine. Also, the health of the arm and the innate humoral rotation depends on the movement and glide of the scapula. These are of primary concern when we are dealing with many exercises in the Pilates repertoire that require stability in the torso, and full range of motion in the arms. The complexity of the shoulder girdle and its many functions need to be fully explored in our classes with our clients. Watch this video to see the many ways to prime this area for movement and fluidity.

### Focus On: Juggling a Class

This can be one of the hardest parts of becoming a Pilates teacher. Not only do you need to teach a safe and effective class, but you have to learn how to teach different types of learners with their own particular issues and goals. Make no mistake, this is a monumental undertaking.

It takes time to be able to juggle clients with cueing, while maintaining the flow of the class. Being prepared is paramount when teaching a group class. Notice how we have props laid out and sometimes even have notes to refer to if need be. Thinking about and visualizing your class before it starts can help you to feel more comfortable with a larger group of people.

Even though there is only one of you, you can still give hands on directional cueing, as well. There are many times when you will notice us giving a hands on cue for one person who needs help, while directing the rest of the class with tempo and ease. Focus on the different ways the teacher cues in this video, and take notes on how you can incorporate and practice it yourself.



## **Session 26 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.

## **Session 27 Video & Article**

Watch the video and article, and record notes and questions here.

## **Session 28 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 29 Mentor's Cut / Session 30 Let's Discuss

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here

*Reference minute 10:32.*

Tightness in the pectoral region moves the shoulder girdle up and forward on the ribcage. This in turn causes tightness in the trapezius muscles, strain in the neck, and a forward head posture.

1. What are some cues you have heard in this class that can minimize this misalignment in the body? What exercises and release techniques help to support a wider range of motion in the shoulder girdle?

*Reference minute 23:28.*

Swinging the arm bone with the weight in hand helps to traction the shoulder girdle and pull on the fascial slings.

2. How can swinging the arm like this be beneficial for the upper body as a whole? Which exercises require a wide range of motion in the arms and shoulders, on a stable torso?

*Reference minute 37:25.*



Buoyancy in the shoulder region is the mark of a strong, stable support system.

3. How does testing the movement of the shoulder blades on the ribs in stability exercises like plank challenge the body?

*Reference minute 45:54.*

4. How did the release and mobility work from earlier in the class prep the body for the ab curl sequence seen here? What needs to happen in the shoulder girdle for the ab curl to remain solid as the arms swing freely? What cues have you heard in this session that help describe the complex set of skills needed to execute this exercise properly?

## **Session 29 Mentor's Cut / Session 30 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.

## **Session 31 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 32 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Feet, Lower Limbs, & Gait

The lower locomotive system is important to the overall health and vitality of the human body. There are many intricacies that go into this system to achieve optimal alignment, as well as range of motion through the joints. For the body to move through space without pain or misalignment, the bones must be lined up so that the vibration of every step can travel up the body without obstruction. This is where most people have the hardest time figuring out where they are in space in general. The lower body is where our pelvic and spinal posture is derived from. If this isn't in the correct placement, the core structures are sure to fail in their effectiveness to stabilize and mobilize the spine.

This is the area where the body begins to absorb force and gravity first through the feet, then lower leg, upper leg, and eventually the hip and spine. If any joint in this complex network has an issue, the others are all affected, all the way to the skull. This is why paying attention to the alignment of the lower body while doing Pilates is so important. We can help our clients to find a more natural moving posture that puts a spring in their step, as well as support in their body. Gravity is our true teacher in life, and our primary concern is to inform our clients how to move within it with ease and grace. This process starts with the feet and moves up the chain.

### Focus On: Step Outside the Box

In the videos you've seen thus far, there has been a good mix of classical exercises with a healthy dose of contemporary movement. Being able to straddle these two worlds is essential when teaching the public. Many clients have little to no movement experience, and they have a good deal of skill building to do before they can even think about performing a classical exercise. Your job as a teacher is to be creative, to know exactly what your clients need, and how to most effectively help them learn it. This is the core of being a teacher.

Many times you will be called on to step outside what is in the manual, to translate the essence of an exercise into a client's body. Don't be afraid to experiment, as long as you are safe. Exploring the different avenues of movement with contemporary work is also a great way to keep your clients coming back for more, and it will help you avoid getting stuck in the same old routine.

Focus on the movements in this class and draw parallels between the contemporary movement work and the classical repertoire, and take note on how this feeds and influences the body.



## **Session 32 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.

## **Session 33 Video & Article**

Watch the video and article, and record notes and questions here.

## **Session 34 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.



## Session 35 Mentor's Cut / Session 36 Let's Discuss

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here.

*Reference minute 6:52.*

How we negotiate on our feet has so much to do with the alignment of the body up the kinetic chain.

1. How does simply swaying forwards, backwards, and side to side on the feet stimulate the core musculature of the body? What exercises in the mat repertoire does this fundamental movement truth speak to?

*Reference minute 26:34.*

The bone rhythms of the femur and the pelvis are a very important piece of the puzzle when it comes to how our legs move in the socket. Sensing this in the body through movement frees up space and creates better range of motion.

2. Why is this important to bring into movement education? What exercises can you see this being helpful for?

*Reference minute 40:25.*

Yoga block footwork trains the standing position one leg at a time.

3. What Pilates principles does this set of exercises work on? How does this translate to gait?

*Reference minute 52:30.*

Release work is vital when it comes to training and working with the strength of the leg.

4. How does release work heighten body awareness? What can a client come to expect from consistently rolling out the legs and hips? How does this lead to better body balance?

## **Session 35 Mentor's Cut / Session 36 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.

## **Session 37 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 38 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Contrast & Flow

Every single Pilates class should have contrast and flow as a main cueing focus. The best classes are those where every movement has a purpose and each exercise builds on the one before it. The classical repertoire has these key elements built in, but you can also infuse your beginner or contemporary classes with these principles.

Within every exercise you cue, there should be stable and moving parts. You need to explain to your clients where they need to ground, and/or where they need to animate. The best movement imagery comes from directional cues that pull one part of the body in one direction, while another body part gets cued the opposite way. This brings awareness to the whole body while in the exercise, which is the basis of creative body contrast. Props are often useful to help guide the body in this exploration of contraction and expansion.

The flow part comes in when the body can fluidly move in and out of every exercise with equal parts ease and work. This is the soul of the Pilates work, and it takes great skill and focus to accomplish. With a teacher's diligent cueing and sharp eye, any client can feel these principles in their body. It is our job to guide them to this skill.

### Focus On: Theme

Building a class around a given theme is essential in becoming an effective Pilates teacher. There are so many different skills to learn within the repertoire, and it is our job to present these in a way that is easy to understand.

Presenting your class with a theme is an amazing way to reinforce a key principle to movement, and to explore it on many different planes. Clients love to know and understand what they are doing and why. This empowers them to think more about how their body moves in space, and stimulates the mind as well as the body. By presenting a theme at the beginning of class, you establish intent and provide a touchstone to refer back to throughout the class.

Even if you are teaching a class strictly in the classical sequencing, you can still establish a throughline to tie everything together. Watch this class to see how the theme is introduced, and how it is referred to throughout the hour.

## **Session 38 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.

## **Session 39 Video & Article**

Watch the video and article, and record notes and questions here.

## **Session 40 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.



## Session 41 Mentor's Cut / Session 42 Let's Discuss

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here.

*Reference minute 13:49.*

Notice that the instructor is making rounds to the clients as she is cueing the class through leg circles.

1. What are the different ways she is multitasking to effectively teach her class? How does this class differ from one that is taught by someone who is in front of the class demonstrating each move?

*Reference minute 22:49.*

The set up for an exercise is just as important as going through the motions. Setting the stage for success starts with cueing the correct home positioning.

2. What are some of the cues that Jen gives her clients to help them set up in this prone position? What exercises would these cues be helpful for in the Pilates repertoire?

*Reference minute 35:37.*

It is important to have awareness of what the entire body is doing, even when doing side body work.

3. Where are the contrast and stability points in sidekicks? What needs to be working in order to find an easy range of motion in the top leg?

*Reference minute 50:01.*

Side leg lifts are a difficult exercise for many to do. They take a good amount of core training to execute without shifting out of alignment in the torso.

4. Where are the areas of strength that need to be cued here? What are some skills that the client needs to have command of to be able to execute it correctly?

## **Session 41 Mentor's Cut / Session 42 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.

## **Session 43 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## **Session 44 Video SendIn**

Please follow the instructions in this Session on the website to submit your final Video SendIn.

## Session 45 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Connecting the Dots

It is important to understand how all of the skill building that you are seeing feeds into the bigger picture. By connecting the dots between smaller movement building blocks and classical work, you will understand what true progression looks like when working with real life clients. Being able to consistently translate what is in your manual to your clients is essential, and there may be many steps to go through before they reach this goal.

But once they do, you will see the efficiency of movement in the classical sequencing without tension or stress. It is still a workout, but it is also a workin. Meaning, you have built strength and mobility from the inside out, leaving no stone unturned. By marrying all of the themes and concepts that we have explored in this apprentice module, the repertoire comes to life with more depth, detail, and accessibility. Without the background work of the skill building, many of the classical exercises would be unattainable or lack their full potential.

### Focus On: Owning the Work

This concept of owning the work is imperative to your success as a teacher. We often hear teachers mimicking what they have heard from courses or from other teachers, with no real inspiration of their own. Teaching in this manner is a lost opportunity for all involved. It is *you*, as the teacher, who gives color and vibrancy to the work. It is you the teacher who has the opportunity to become the creative fuel for others, and to share and experience the freedom of movement with them.

No one can be you. There is no competition when you teach in this manner. Being genuine, and speaking about what you know and have passion about, will attract clients who are drawn to your strengths. It makes the work human and real. Watch how the teachers have their own tone, intent, and cadence when teaching, how their styles differ, and yet how they still come to the same end of healthy, happy movement.

## **Session 45 Notes & Questions**

As you watch this session's video, take notes and list questions here.

## **Session 46 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.



## **Session 47 Mentor's Cut / Session 48 Let's Discuss**

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here. \

*Reference minute 6:15.*

There are many different ways to teach the feel and flow of an exercise. Body language is a powerful tool for the teacher to use.

1. How is Jen using her body to help her client execute the exercise correctly?

*Reference minute 19:11.*

There is always something more to work on, even with advanced clients. Postural cues that speak to problem areas of an exercise will help the client find deeper, more precise work.

2. How is Jen doing this during this ab work? In what areas of this oblique exercise will you need to look for a breakdown in movement?

*Reference minute 36:34.*

Rotation of the spine and ribcage on a stable pelvis can be a difficult skill to master. Knowing where to stabilize is important in order to unlock more range of motion elsewhere in the body.

3. How is the stability being cued in the body here? What areas should be working, and where should there be a letting go in the body?

*Reference minute 46:41.*

Taking the time to align your client is a must. Until they are more balanced in their own body, they will rely on you to tell them where they are in space.

4. What leads to asymmetry of the body on the mat? What are some ways clients can work on their alignment awareness? What are some ways you as a teacher can notice alignment issues on the mat?

## **Session 47 Mentor's Cut / Session 48 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.

## **Session 49 Assignment**

As you work on your assignment, record notes and/or questions here.

## Session 50 Video Trail Guide

Read the following and then watch the video in the corresponding session.

### Introduction to: Testing Out

Testing Out marks the end of your training process and the beginning of your career as an instructor. This is the time not only to show what you have learned about the repertoire, but also to show how you see and speak to bodies. So much more goes into a session than just the exercises and the order. From start to finish, you need to demonstrate how your client's safety, understanding, and needs are the forefront of your focus. There should be less emphasis on getting through all of the exercises, and more energy poured into watching your client's movement habits and alignment.

In this video you will see a mock test out. The Master Instructor should tell the student exactly what she wants to see and hear within the session. This is important to understand and take into account during your session, as it will help you to focus your intent. As you watch this video, you will see how the test out is really just a mat private session, and nothing to be too anxious about. With all of the hours that you have observed and logged, you will have more than enough preparation and experience to pass your test out with ease.

### Focus On: Maintaining Focus

Maintaining your focus is imperative when performing your test out. It can be extremely nerve wracking to teach while someone is watching and grading you. The key to staying calm is to lose yourself in the session. By focusing on your client, you will be able to easily get through the session and show the Master Instructor that you have the knowledge and abilities to be a Pilates instructor. If you get sidetracked or look to the teacher for approval, it will seem like you are ill prepared, or don't know what you are doing. If you are hitting a rough patch in the session, try to slow down and think about what you are seeing, or what the goal of the exercise is.

All teachers know that at times we have to stop and think about what we are saying and doing. And problem solving is the name of the teaching game. The test out session is not meant to be perfect, but staying focused on your client and their learning will show the Master Instructor that you are ready for the next stage of your career.

## **Session 51 Mock Written Test**

Please download and take the practice test in this Session on the website.

## **Session 52 Test Out Tips**

List any notes or questions about the Test Out Tips here.

## **Session 53 Mentor's Cut / Session 54 Let's Discuss**

Read through the following before watching the video in this session. Then watch the video and answer the questions here.

*Reference minute 00:01.*

Listening to what the Master Instructor is looking for in your test out will give you clues as to what skills need to be demonstrated to receive a passing score.

1. What are some of the points that are important to cover in the test out, as advised by the Master Instructor? How can this be displayed in your teaching?

*Reference minute 16:57.*

Notice how the student teacher assists her client with touch cueing throughout this ab curl sequence.

2. How does this show the supervising instructor that she is a detail oriented teacher?

*Reference minute 39:42.*



The use of props is so important when teaching the Pilates repertoire. By watching the body in front of you move in space, you will be able to determine which props need to be used.

3. What do the Theraband and towel do for the client performing roll downs? How do these props support the body?

*Reference minute 48:46.*

Being able to explain to a client exactly what you are looking for in an exercise is an important skill. You must have the essence of the exercise at the front of your brain, and at the tip of your tongue.

4. Why is a dialogue about the movement principles an important conversation to have with your clients? How does it enhance the work?

## **Session 53 Mentor's Cut / Session 54 Let's Discuss**

List any additional notes or questions here.

## **Session 55 Final Instructor Conference**

Follow the instructions in this Session on the website to set up your final Instructor Conference. Review all of your notes and questions in this Course Packet. List the most pressing issues and questions here so that you know exactly what you'd like to cover during your

## CONGRATULATIONS!

*You're finished!*

We sincerely hope that you have enjoyed this course, and that you got as much out of it as we put into creating it. Becoming your own teacher is a never ending process, and we hope to remain part of your growth as a Pilates instructor.

*Never Stop Learning!*

—Jennifer and Casey Marie