

The Center FOR WOMEN'S FITNESS

Pre/postnatal Pilates Instructor Mary Bange's Work with her Clients.

by Carolyne Sidhu Anthony, Mar 6, 2014



My Pilates career has been enriched by two certifications currently offered by the Center for Women's Fitness: Pre/Post Natal Specialist and the Pink Ribbon Program. With this training I work with women during two life-changing but very different events – becoming a mother and living as a cancer survivor. These programs are tailored to target specific muscle groups to meet the needs of these clients. The prenatal program strengthens muscles that assist in giving birth and prepares their bodies for labor. The postnatal and the Pink Ribbon programs both help my clients' bodies to realign and strengthen with a goal of the clients progressing to regular exercise sessions.

Pre/Post Natal Specialist Program

Within a couple weeks in the fall of 2011, four of my clients informed me that they were pregnant. I became certified as a Pre/Post Natal Specialist in January 2012. Having never given birth myself, this was the perfect opportunity for me to learn exercise do's and don'ts but more importantly to learn what changes a woman's body goes through during this time, how to help them prepare for birth, and to recover from it.

My prenatal clients consist of both existing clients who become pregnant and new clients who want Pilates to be part of their pregnancy conditioning program. Unless put on restricted activity for medical reasons, they continue with Pilates throughout their pregnancy.

These clients find Pilates to be a "fantastic investment." When an existing client found out that she was pregnant she "did not hesitate to continue my workouts with Mary. I knew I was in very capable hands. She is meticulous in her guidance of each Pilates move and is in-tune with my needs as they vary each visit. As my pregnancy progressed, my Pilates sessions evolved to safely challenge me and always left me feeling refreshed. I truly believe that the focus and strength I gained during Pilates allowed me to have an unmedicated birth of my daughter."

Most prenatal clients return to their Pilates sessions once cleared by their doctor postpartum. Many are astonished at how difficult exercises they did easily pre-baby can be. They know that our Pilates sessions will "safely challenge" them, allowing their bodies to recover and return to their pre-pregnancy fitness levels at an appropriate pace. When they return, setting a standing

appointment helps them maintain a disciplined workout routine. For one of my clients “Tuesday night is always Pilates night and my husband has been very respectful of that routine.”

Pink Ribbon Program (PRP)

The Pink Ribbon Program was not part of the Center for Women’s Fitness curriculum when I became certified in 2006. After losing my mother to breast cancer, witnessing her struggles to regain movement, I felt a strong personal connection to this program. I took the certification course right after my Peak Pilates Level 1 training. I became a Master Trainer for the program in 2010.

Most of my PRP clients come to me when they discover that they do not have the strength to take a yoga class or a regular Pilates class or they are overwhelmed when they attempt to return to the gym to work out. Many of them were discharged from hospitals with barely a mention of physical rehabilitation. With no guidance, they often find themselves discouraged and uncertain of how to begin or resume an exercise routine. One of my clients (a former collegiate athlete) described her situation: “I found the Pink Ribbon Program at a time when I was mentally tapped out, physically drained, in constant pain and discomfort, and didn’t know what to do now that I had beaten breast cancer. I had been given a second chance at life, but didn’t know how to start living it.”

My PRP clients not only experience reduced pain but regain muscular strength, flexibility, and range of motion. The program restores a feeling of control over their bodies and how they will feel going forward, which has often been missing during treatment. They also gain the confidence to begin normal exercises – something that seemed impossible following surgery.

One of my goals has been to raise awareness of the PRP and find ways for survivors to participate in it. This effort led to my teaming up with Memorial Hermann Memorial City’s Bobetta Lindig Breast Center to offer a six-week class to their patients

Carry Over to Other Clients

Many other clients benefit from my knowledge and experience with these two programs. For example, I use the PRP exercises with a client who suffered neck and shoulder injuries in a traffic accident several years ago. In the short time she has been working with me, she has experienced significant increase in strength, range of motion, and decreased pain. The prenatal workouts are good for clients with back issues who cannot do flexion as well as seniors (and de-conditioned clients) who want to regain strength and flexibility but often need workouts that start from a seated position.

Mary Bange Ph.D., PMA-CPT

- See more at: <http://thecenterforwomensfitness.com/2014/prepostnatal-pilates-instructor-mary-banges-work-with-her-clients/#sHASH.6wDTn14P.dpuf>