

What has Dr. Shook Been reading?

*The Little Pilates Book*

By Erika Dillman (Warner Books 2001)

*The Little Pilates Book* is an introduction to a form of exercise based on a combination of eastern and western exercise philosophies. Pilates, developed over 70 years ago by Joseph H. Pilates, requires no special attire or fancy equipment and can be performed anywhere there is enough floor space to lie down. (Cushioned carpeting or an exercise mat could be useful)

According to Erika Dillman, the primary focus of Pilates is to strengthen the body's "core muscles" the abdomen, thighs and buttocks. By developing the of control, coordination, strength and flexibility of that area of the body between the hips and sternum, the Pilates enthusiast and practioner will gain the internal support necessary for balanced posture and a strong base from which to move the rest of the body.

*The Little Pilates Book* is a brief introduction. There is a little history, a little anatomy and a lot about posture and alignment. There is a section titled "Pilatespeak" introducing the reader to the terms and descriptions used in Pilates exercise books and classes. 15 different mat exercises are described and illustrated. Breathing, posture, centering and mindful body awareness are just a few of the guiding principles of this deceptively simple form of exercise. Practiced regularly with correct form, Pilates can help develop strong abdominal muscles, improve posture, and increase flexibility.

The beginner, especially the exercise novice, or anyone with an injury is encouraged to first consult with their physician before beginning any exercise program and it is further recommended the beginner seek the guidance of a qualified Pilates instructor.

I do not consider myself an exercise novice and I do think of myself as a fairly strong and flexible individual, so I tried a few of the exercises and was duly humbled and very impressed by the work out.

I think this would be an excellent book to introduce yourself, a friend or your physician to the exercise known as Pilates.

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