



Fitness Facts

Pilates: Hollywood's Hottest Workout—Is It For You?

(NAPSA)—What do Madonna, Courtney Cox-Arquette and Halle Berry have in common? They swear by an easy and effective exercise routine that helps them sculpt and maintain their strong, lean, sexy bodies—a routine that may help put the fun back in fitness for you as well.

Called Pilates (that's pronounced puh-LAH-teez), it's a unique method of strengthening the body by focusing on its core—the muscles of the abdominals and back. Developed by Joseph Pilates, who applied his methods to rehabilitate soldiers injured in World War I, the exercise regimen is now used by America's fittest and most glamorous stars.

Why is Pilates so popular? Fitness expert and star of the new *Pilates for Dummies*® video, Michelle Dozois, offers these five reasons:

1. *Look slimmer, instantly.* Pilates makes you contract your abdominals and lengthen your spine like a ballet dancer, so you immediately look slimmer and more graceful. You relieve pressure from the lower back, so you gain energy, too.

2. *Do it anywhere.* Mat exercises, such as those in Dozois' video, can be done in a space no larger than an exercise mat, without any equipment.

3. *No sweat, no impact.* Pilates is a no-impact form of exercise that throws the old adage, "No pain, no gain" out the window. It's gentle on the body's joints and muscles and requires a minimal amount of repetitions, so it's easy to learn and fun to do.



Michelle Dozois, the star of the *Pilates For Dummies* video, demonstrates the Saw.

4. *Anyone can do it.* A "Pilates body" looks great on people of all ages, even folks in their seventies. Says Dozois: "Most get hooked on Pilates because it helps them look and feel better. I've also got clients who find it helps them recover from surgeries such as mastectomies. Pilates helps restore energy drained from chemotherapy. My clients also find it improves their balance and keeps their bodies moving freely."

5. *Those in the know, know it works.* Two of the most important names in dance, George Balanchine and Martha Graham, made it an integral part of their dancers' training. Currently, Pilates is the fastest-growing class in health clubs, according to the International Dance and Exercise Association. Hollywood's best bodies swear by it.

If you'd like to give Pilates a try, Dozois' *Pilates for Dummies* video (\$9.99 VHS/\$14.98 DVD) offers simple, yet effective Pilates mat exercises plus tips, myth-busters and modifications for all fitness levels. You can order a copy by calling (800) 546-1949, or by visiting www.collagevideo.com/fordummies.