

Pilates vs. Yoga: Which One is Right For You?

Pilates

Though Pilates benefits the entire body, it's very much focused on the core and abdominals. So if you would like to develop more core strength, shrink your waistline very specifically or discover ways of stabilizing for a healthier back, Pilates exercises might be perfect.

Pilates uses the breath differently. Since the focus is very much about the core, motions of curling up which involves effort let's out an exhale. The more passive release moments require an inhale.

Yoga

Yoga builds strength not only in the core, but very much in the arms and legs for an all over feeling of tone. If you are also looking for the added experience of meditation and relaxation, yoga may offer you that as well.

For example, in Vinyasa yoga you use one breath per movement: the exhale is usually used to release, relax or in many cases lower out of a pose, while the inhale is used to fill up, energize and to come up into a pose.

How to Choose?

Both Pilates and yoga offer attention to coordination, flexibility, body awareness and strength, most importantly, what you learn in class translates out of the classroom and into your daily movements. One of the main differences between contemporary Pilates and yoga is that Pilates begins with small range of motion and progresses toward end range joint movement, while yoga tends to hold postures at end range of joint motion and muscle length. This tends to make yoga postures more risky for the beginner or injured student.

There seems to be an easy fix to this dilemma in that the teacher might suggest to the yoga student to go to 75% of their range of motion and hold there. This would build strength in the musculature that supports the joints, protect joint structures such as capsules and ligaments from getting overstretched, thus, reduce the risk for injury.

You will notice that your movement is more controlled, or your posture taller at your desk or that your back holds less tension.

Both Pilates and yoga have very obvious positive results in how your body will feel on a daily basis. You may want to experience both practices to see which appeals more to you. Perhaps they both have something to offer.



