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Introduction



At the heart of this document is safety of the instructor and client. By outlining what Pilates Instructors should aim to consider when buying equipment Instructors can minimise accidents caused by Pilates equipment malfunction or inadequate Pilates equipment design.

The aim of this document is to educate the Pilates community and any one interested in purchasing Pilates equipment on the basic OH&S safety requirements of Pilates Equipment.

Throughout this document, Pilates and Professional Pilates is interchangeable and refers to Instructors that have undergone thorough classical Pilates or contemporary Pilates training, training that is recognized by the Australian Pilates Method Association.

Pilates Equipment needs to first and foremost be safe. Safe for the user and the Instructor (If an Instructor is involved, hopefully a well-trained Pilates Method Instructor). Pilates Equipment is not your bog-standard fitness equipment. Understanding the Pilates Method is paramount where Pilates Equipment sold for the Pilates Method is concerned.

If Pilates Equipment is sold for fitness alone then it should be specifically sold as "Fitness Pilates" not "Pilates".

The Australian Consumer Law (ACL) should be considered when advertising, as it is not "Fit for Purpose" if advertised for "Pilates". Fitness Pilates is a totally different ball game. Buyers should be informed at the outset what they are buying.

Pilates Equipment is not your regular Gym Equipment, Springs attached to any equipment and any ill-considered Spring load & applied to any exercise, without the appropriate level of Pilates Method knowledge. Performed incorrectly an exercise with any load is developing incorrect muscle patterning in your own body. Incorrect Muscle Patterning that promotes inefficient movement and load distribution in our muscles and joints - the very opposite to what you are wanting to achieve in your Pilates Practice.

Manufacturers of Pilates Equipment Need to work with Properly Qualified and Registered Pilates Method Instructors. Instructors that have studied the Pilates Method over several years & possess adequate qualifications in the Pilates Method Industry, before trying to sell Equipment that is potentially not Safe.

I look forward to the day when Equipment sold in the Australian Pilates Market needs to meet ACCC guidelines of "Fit for purpose". If it does not meet Pilates Method Safety standards as well as Consumer Protection Guarantees, it cannot and should not be sold & Marketed as Pilates Equipment.

Always consult a well-qualified Diploma Qualified and registered with the Australian Pilates Method Association Instructor or Pilates Alliance of Australasia for advice on what equipment to buy. Attend a few classes in a proper Pilates Studio with a Diploma Qualified Pilates Method Instructor, and then venture out and explore your options When using the Pilates Equipment, a fundamental understanding of the Pilates exercise and why the use of Pilates equipment is used needs to be understood. Pilates Equipment is not your regular fitness equipment, as it is not just any spring attached to any position & material. It is not any spring load then applied to anybody.

Anyone considering purchasing equipment today needs to be well informed with Pilates and what to look for in Pilates equipment before any purchase, as not all Pilates equipment meets Professional Pilates requirements.

Pilates Client Safety

The Pilates care of a client follows the same protocols with a well-qualified practitioner, they are undergoing:

- Your client is safe
- Your client's limitations and strengths are considered
- Your client's fears and concerns are taken on board and acted upon so as to not aggravate or damage your client further
- You listen to your client and take on board what other practitioners as well as medical practitioners have said
- **The equipment you use in Pilates should not injure/re-injure your client**
- Work with your client and make sure they do not work through pain – An Instructor is there to manage pain and manage injury as well as support

Safety of a client should be included in every Pilates education system, as a Mandatory subject and not just as an OH&S add on. One should not be able to be accredited or registered with any body **unless safety of client and Pilates equipment is taught** and understood completely as a standalone Pilates module. Pilates Equipment safety information goes hand in hand with Pilates repertoire.

Pilates Equipment



Pilates Equipment should not injure your client by law in Australia.¹ In the state of Victoria: “All Victorian health services must:

- Be accessible
- Be safe and of high quality
- Provide their services with appropriate care and attention
- Treat consumers and their carers with respect, dignity and consideration
- Provide adequate and clear information about treatments, costs and other options
- Apply an inclusive approach with consumers when making decisions about healthcare
- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of personal information
- Ensure comments or complaints about the service can be made easily and that any comments or complaints are addressed.”²

Pilates equipment uses resistance for challenging or assisting client stability. Pilates Equipment used by Professional Pilates Instructors is regularly OH&S tested and maintained before any client uses equipment. These regular checks ensure safety and not the source of any injury and consequent instructor liability.

Over the years companies that manufacture and sell Pilates equipment to the Professional Pilates audience such as, and not limited to, BalancedBody³ and PilatesEquip⁴ in Australia have undergone significant design manufacture by consulting with Professional Pilates Instructors in a studio environment. They are well aware of the requirements and considerations of Pilates Equipment.

Buying Pilates Equipment

Studio Pilates equipment used in a Professional Pilates Studio should have various adjustable parts. For client safety, a fully qualified Professional Pilates Method instructor that is eligible to register with APMA or PAA should be present to guide a client through safe, proper usage and effective technique.

¹ "Small business | Safe Work Australia." 27 Mar. 2017, <https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/small-business>.

² "What to expect from a health service | Health Complaints Commissioner." <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/public/what-expect-health-service>.

³ "Company | Balanced Body." <https://www.pilates.com/BBAPP/V/company/index.html>.

⁴ "PilatesEquip™- The Joint Workshop | Manufacturer of the Finest" <http://www.pilatesequip.com/>.

In Australia Balanced Body , PilatesEquip™, BASI, Gratz™ , Pilates Design and Stott/Merrithew™ are some of the very good suppliers of professional quality Pilates equipment for a studio environment and for Rehabilitation Pilates Equipment.

Safety Checks

Minimal Safety Requirements for all equipment

For any piece of equipment you buy the bare minimum should be:

Safety of a client must be considered everytime, the equipment should not injure a client; make sure you are aware of a clients medical history and any injuries every session.

Always make sure the equipment being used is appropriate for client ability

Durability of material used

All equipment needs to be secure, especially moveable parts when not in use.

All attachments should be secure , and moveable parts need to be able to be secured e.g by a locking mechanism

Springs attachments must be secure and be able to support a bodies weight

All attachments used on any piece of equipment needs to to be strong and able to handle human weight. Flimsy attachments can easily release and injure a client.

The equipment should be easily adjustable & be able to cater for varying ability and biomechanics of a client

The equipment should have anodized metal attachments. Anodizing increases resistance to corrosion and wear, and provides better adhesion for paint primers and glues than bare metal does.

The Spring attachments should have adequate tensile strength to cater for varying Spring loads for safe use by a human body.

The standing platforms should all be even on equipment and be able to handle a good of feet size

Equipment should be solid, have a stable frame and be made of quality materials

Equipment should have durable upholstery that can be wiped down after each use

Equipment should have moveable parts that slide smoothly

Equipment should have non-slip grips on all bars

Equipment should have a variety of springs for different levels of resistance, that can be adjusted for client ability , for both height and strength

All equipment must make sure clients that it can function without body parts or clothing are kept clear of metal where accidents

Maintenance & OH&S Checks

Make sure you keep small apps in an area where it will not be a hazard when not in use.

Make sure your First Aid Kit is nearby and well stocked

Make sure you write client notes after every session for client healthcare

Make sure equipment upholstery has been wiped with mild solution, before each session to prevent cross contamination

Make sure all equipment attachments are locked and secure

All Equipment and components are in good working order, with no sharp edges that could harm clients

The equipment is your partner, it should not force an instructor to work in a manner where no consideration for ability has been taken

A balanced board or another uneven item used for balance must be placed in a position where there is client support

No metal must be rusting

Ensure all standing platforms are safe for standing and clients cannot fall down because of dangerous equipment or gaps in equipment

Ensure ample room around equipment, and all unnecessary equipment or attachments are secured, and not a tripping hazard

Clean upholstery after Client Use with mild solution to prevent cross contamination

Clean and oil equipment regularly to remove dust build up

Control equipment when releasing and prevent spring loaded components from flinging back and causing injury.

Use appropriate Springs for Pilates Exercises and for dimensions, healthcare & ability of client on the day of a session

Make sure Client feels steady and supported in every exercise

Make sure equipment component release does not injure a client

Make sure all equipment used does not slip when using, secure equipment

Ensure clients hair is not 'loose' when doing exercises where head moves near the springs.

Ensure that your client neutral position, if this is the preferred start point for your client, is not being altered by Pilates Equipment Surface, Spring and Strap settings.

Ensure spring/equipment settings do not force bad Pilates positioning, over your own corrective instruction.

Steps to take if anything goes wrong

1. Prevention is the key; use a reputable supplier; use a credit card if paying outright; be clear with what you require; keep all correspondence; backup any SMS & Emails etc do your research, ask other instructors
2. Be aware of your rights as a consumer, visit the ACCC and your State Office of fair Trading web sites.
3. Contact the company with photographs and initial order specification and what was delivered/incorrect with delivery etc
4. Contact ACCC and Office of fair Trading.
5. Contact your financial institution
6. Contact Civil Actions Tribunal in your state if still not satisfied
7. Inform the relevant authorities and regulation bodies.
8. There is a group on FaceBook called AustralianSafeRehabPilatesEquipmntPromotion&Sales APMA accredited instructors can join and ask about Pilates equipment.

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