

The Glass Half Full: Rehabilitating an Injury

Whether you sustain an injury through a traumatic experience such as a fall or car accident or your condition is one that has developed over time through improper body mechanics--living with an injury can be mentally as well as physically daunting. And for those who are accustomed to a certain level of physical activity as part of their daily routine, it can be especially frustrating.

Fear not. Having an injury doesn't necessarily mean that you'll have to forgo working out altogether. Whether you've been practicing Pilates for years or you're stepping into the studio for the first time, depending on the injury Pilates can be a great way to continue an exercise regime as your body heals.

One of the many benefits people attain when practicing Pilates is an understanding of alignment and posture. A heightened awareness of your body's tendencies can be crucial in identifying faulty movement patterns thereby preventing and also rehabilitating injuries. Programming proper muscle memory and developing adequate strength and stretch are cornerstones for maintaining a balanced body.

Often clients with injuries get easily discouraged that they're not able to execute an exercise the way they "used to." It is normal to feel frustrated when you think that your leg should be straighter or you should be able to hold a position for longer.

And while it might not be a popular view, sometimes having an injury can be a blessing. It is a great time to slow down and refocus your energies. Take a step back. Give yourself permission to move with less range of motion or maybe less springs. Remember that sometimes it's better as you learn new, more effective ways of moving to use a modified variation of an exercise. Be patient and give yourself a break!

Pilates is all about quality over quantity. Use your time of rehabilitation to revisit some key principals of Pilates. It is amazing how something as seemingly basic as breathing can positively impact your injury and help you on your road to recovery. So while your injury may seem more like a hindrance than help, your ability to change your body can be an extremely empowering experience. Who knows? You might become even stronger than before your injury.

Source: Gina Axelson Pilates Instructor and Studio Owner
