

# CLAIN PILATES+



## Pilates for everyone!

I believe that Pilates exercises can be modified for every body type and physical conditions. Take my experience with Jane for example....

In 2002, Jane told me she was diagnosed with Systemic Scleroderma, an arthritic autoimmune disease that attacks organs and makes them fibrotic. The skin being the most obvious. She has written a book titled *The Wizard Within*, telling of her experience. When she started to work out, her ability to smile had left her face and her hands and feet were just beginning to stiffen. As the disease progressed to her lungs she was eligible for an adult stem cell transplant operation with stem cells harvested from her own body.

I decided to get her moving to see if we could maintain her mobility. She was still working as a music teacher at a local high school. Jane performed Basic Reformer exercises twice a week for 2 months. We started out slow. Jane seemed quite happy to see what was possible and what she had difficulty with, which we would then work to improve. After 3 weeks, she could get up and down off the floor easily.

*"I had always hated exercise because it was boring... I couldn't wait to come back."*

Jane's left side did not respond as well as her right. We noticed seated exercises with her raising her arms with a pole helped her breathing. She liked bending to the side while seated as it was like rowing. So she tried to Kayak

with a friend. She was afraid to get out of the Kayak, that was the big problem. So we started doing triceps dips inside the well of the reformer to lift herself out of the kayak. Within no time she bought a Kayak and started to row. This was in 2003.

*"I didn't know how to communicate with my body...you were able to make me understand...it was all mental..."*



We added basic mat exercises. Simple neck rolls, easing up and then practicing the roll down (lying back by controlling the abdominal muscles) with bent knees lying down against the Spine Corrector. (another Pilates Apparatus). Then leg lifts and circles with one leg while the other knee is bent and her foot was on the floor. We started the Stomach Series (Abdominal exercises performed lying her back), the first 2 exercises (modified of course), with a pillow under her head, and bent knees, graduating to Russian kicks (modified Crisscross, w/arms crossed). Later we added the side series. (Leg movements while lying on her side.) This sometimes took us 25 minutes to half an hour just for the mat exercises.

Throughout all I was very patient and had to hold her back a bit because she was determined to work so hard. She was motivated.

*"This was a whole new world to me and to experience success mentally and physically..."*

Unfortunately by 2004, her lungs were failing from the disease. We would walk around a neighborhood track and I would carry her oxygen tank taking up to 30 minutes doing a mile. We were getting her strength up for the operation..