



It may look like yoga but Pilates focuses more on breathing, postures and concentration.

Photographer: Konthee Laungararm

Bend me shape me

PILATES EXERCISES CAN STRENGTHEN MUSCLES AND IMPROVE POSTURE

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The Nation

Throughout an hour-long Pilates class, you hear deep breathing – almost like sighing – every five seconds.

That's because rhythmic breathing is at the core of the exercises. Pilates concentrates on inhaling and exhaling and strengthening the abdominal muscles, says Kultida Puranaputra, an actress and one of the nine instructors at Pilatestudio.

"Your mind has to relate to your body," she says. Kultida and the other instructors earned their certificates at the Physicalmind Institute in New York City.

"At first, you might not think much of it. But when you try, you realise it isn't easy," says Thareerat Duangpetch, a 27-year-old secretary.

"You've got to concentrate a lot. I have to control my breathing and perform the posture correctly. It's quite tiring," Thareerat says.

Beginners at the Pilatestudio on

Ploenchit Road start exercising on a mat and use a flexible belt, ball or small flexible wheel to bend in certain postures to stretch and strengthen their bodies. An

instructor talks students through the programme, explaining how to move and breathe. Students inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Instructors demonstrate each posture. Students follow step by step.

Each Pilatestudio class is limited

"If you don't exercise your entire body, it means you're training improperly. A good instructor will choose and adjust your session to get maximum benefits," Kultida says.

One of the students at Pilatestudio described the regimen as a one-stop exercise service. "If you go to a fitness centre, you might use several different pieces of equipment to exercise your entire body. But if you join a Pilates class, you exercise every part of your body in just one hour," says Pechjarin Kanjanaprasatpoom, a 28-year-old IT site manager.

Although weight reduction isn't one of its claimed benefits, many women say they discover they lose weight when practising Pilates. "I recovered from a shoulder injury because of it," says Pen Suwannarat, who has been practising Pilates for a month.

A single beginner's Pilates class at Pilatestudio costs Bt400. Four classes over a two-week period cost

Bt1,500. Ten classes in two months are Bt3,000. Call (02) 650 7797 or go to www.pilatesbangkok.com to get a class schedule. The Pilatestudio is in Mahatun Plaza at the corner of Ploenchit and Wireless roads, near the Ploenchit BTS Station.



to 15 students so they can be closely supervised. With more than 500 exercises, students learn new postures in almost every class. Each instructor teaches different postures and movements, but they're all bound by the same principle: train every part of your body.