

James Raaff & Associates

International Pilates Education and Training



Thank you for your interest in the Pilates education and training we offer to fitness and health industry professionals. With the sharp rise in interest in Pilates and recognition of its benefits worldwide in recent years, there has never been a better time to learn skills in this exercise discipline. Personal trainers, fitness instructors, dance teachers, coaches and athletic trainers are among those now using this relatively new exercise method in South Africa to boost their clients' performance and give themselves a competitive edge. Medical practitioners including biokineticists, physiotherapists, chiropractors and doctors are also taking up Pilates training to promote wellness among patients or as a tool to use in injury rehabilitation.



Driven by science

At James Raaff & Associates our primary focus is to **train career professionals** to exacting standards so that they are able to pass on to their own clients or patients the very best that Pilates can deliver, thereby helping them to achieve their desired fitness or health goals.

Building on the mind-body techniques that have evolved from the original work of Joseph Pilates, we have integrated knowledge from many disciplines into our courses to give our students a depth of understanding that goes far beyond merely perfecting the exercises and movements of Pilates. We educate trainers about what goes on within the human body, changing their thought paradigms and the way they approach clients to bring about desired change. If they understand what happens scientifically, they can do this better.

Pilates is a principle-based way of learning healthy postural habits. It is a form of movement that develops a functional balance of strength, power, endurance, flexibility, co-ordination, balance, agility and speed to create a body that moves with grace and ease at any age. To enhance understanding of its various applications and benefits, we teach motor learning concepts and look at how the brain adapts and learns on a neurological level. Students also study the biomechanics and

physics that Pilates instructors need to understand. This does not mean reteaching anatomy or physiology that students have learnt in other disciplines: we focus instead on the more specific anatomical skills that Pilates and other mind-body instructors must have to provide good training. What it does mean is that every student must have a recognised certificate, diploma or degree in basic health or fitness studies before they can be admitted to our courses, to ensure that all trainees are able to learn at a higher level. We work closely with the Exercise Teachers Academy, a recognised leader in health and fitness education, which provides foundation courses that can lead to our training.

Our course facilitators are qualified to teach at an advanced level, and have a broad knowledge in related fields outside the context of Pilates, enabling them to answer questions with authority. Cape Town students have the benefit of the company founder James Raaff's knowledge of exercise science and rehabilitation, and a medical doctor runs the courses at our Pretoria studio.

As clients' safety during training is paramount, we stress to our graduates the importance of being skilled enough to recognise when they need to refer clients to doctors, physiotherapists, chiropractors and other medical professionals for injury rehabilitation.



Our beginnings

James Raaff, a top-level gymnast at school, studied sports science and physiology after completing matric. After three years of study, he went on to read biokinetics, earning his second honours degree and then a master's degree at Stellenbosch University.

After chancing across Cape Town's first Pilates studio, Raaff offered his assistance as a biokineticist. As his conviction of the power and benefits of Pilates grew, he trained as an instructor and later became the co-owner of another Pilates studio.

There he ran classes and worked for several years with a highly experienced Canadian-trained Pilates instructor, Miriane Braaf. A talented ballet dancer, Braaf switched careers to become a Pilates trainer, after a Pilates exercise regime enabled her to return to the stage following a back injury so severe that she had been told she would never dance again.

Raaff established James Raaff & Associates in 2001 to specialise in training Pilates instructors.

Our training courses

In this field, it is essential to **keep progressing**: if you apply the same techniques you were using a year ago, you need to examine your offering as an instructor. To comply with rigorous education standards, all our training is designed around **outcomes-based learning**.

Recognising the time constraints of busy working professionals, our courses are presented in modular format, and trainees may begin at a level appropriate to their current knowledge and experience. Each module combines **theoretical knowledge** and **practical training**.

The first two course units focus on **mat-based exercises**. The entry level module is designed to increase body awareness and introduces six basic Pilates principles. In the second module students learn specific teaching methods, **advanced evaluation techniques** and more **complex exercise progressions**.

The third course prepares students to teach a broad range of exercises on the Reformer, a primary piece of **resistance equipment**. This course includes safety, set-up and care procedures.

Students then progress onto the Trapeze Table, learning techniques for teaching more challenging exercises using springs and bars. Further courses include Stability Chair work for strength training, and Barrels for enhanced flexibility and improved posture.

Most of our **full-time courses** are **two or three days** long, and a competency assessment is carried out at the end of each course. After completing our instructor certification courses, graduates may register on the **SA Directory of Certified Pilates Instructors**.



Our workshops

We offer various workshops for Pilates instructors with special interests. Our Pilates for **Seniors workshop** will teach trainers how to adapt Pilates exercises for a receptive older market that has been largely forgotten by the fitness industry, and can benefit positively from a carefully planned Pilates exercise regime.

The **Postural and Movement Assessment** workshop teaches simple, scientific methods to properly assess the needs of new clients and test for specific movement disorders - a critical first step to ensure that a Pilates programme will be effective.

The **Accessories in Pilates Exercise Modification** workshop develops skill in the use of several Pilates accessories, so that instructors can add excitement and challenging modifications in their classes. The **Peri-Natal Pilates** teaches how to modify Pilates mat exercises for women during and after pregnancy.

We also offer a **Flexibility Training** workshop, focusing on the science of stretching to increase the range of motion. Our Myofascial Meridians workshop helps instructors understand the connectedness of the body's tissues, and aims to shift the paradigms of students' understanding of body shape and posture.

The **Business Solutions** for the Pilates Studio workshop is designed to help aspiring or existing studio owners turn their businesses into profitable, well-run ventures. Presenter Anita Vos, an MBA graduate, Pilates instructor, and former associate director at Deloitte & Touche, aims to give studio owners a structure on which to base important business and financial decisions, and to address problem areas.



Long-term sustainability

As Pilates exercises are **suitable for people of all ages**, the Pilates instructor or studio owner need not stop teaching or sell up their business when they grow older. They can simply adapt their classes or business to specialise in the training needs of clients in the same age group as themselves. People in their 60s and 70s, for example, can use Pilates exercise to **build the strength and flexibility** needed to continue carrying out everyday tasks without strain. As a career or business venture, Pilates therefore **offers long-term sustainability over many decades**.

Your interest in our training may be your first step towards a rewarding career or successful business, and it is one we believe you will never regret.



Contact us

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