



SIOBHAN O'CONNOR

...keeping up appearances

FEELING jealous of that friend with washboard abs? Chances are they are part of the ever-increasing pilates brigade.

From sports rehabilitation to injury prevention to getting that dream bod, the number of Irish people understanding the benefits of the physical fitness system is on the up.

Taken up by top teams all over the world, from rugby stars to GAA players, they're all at it.

Kieran O'Reilly, physiotherapist to the Dublin senior football squad and Irish international cricket team, is working alongside Bodyfirm studios in the capital to give clients an integrated system for injury diagnosis, treatment and a full rehabilitation program.

He said: "I recommend pilates to my clients from the weekend warrior to the sedentary back pain patients to the elite sportsperson."

"Pilates benefits everyone and it can be used to help with postural issues and muscle imbalance and gives us the ability to target stability and flexibility, balance and coordination."

Emma McCarthy owns Bodyfirm and has a BSc in sport rehabilitation and sport science and advanced remedial massage.

She said: "Pilates is a mind-body workout emphasising proper breathing, correct spinal and pelvic alignment."

"Quality of the movement is the key and athletes are discovering its importance for flexibility and body awareness through a range of motion."

"This not only improves performance but reduces the risk of injury."

Emma cautions that when it comes to pilates the classes must be small,

Stretch yourself and have a go at pilates..



Its improves performance and reduces risk of injury

BALANCING ACT
Emma McCarthy doing pilates on reformer machine



ensuring personal attention. She added: "Pilates is all about developing a strong core, abdominals and back."

INJURY PREVENTION

"It creates an evenly conditioned body,

improves sports performance and prevents injuries.

"Prevention is key and pilates focuses on core muscles but strengthens the whole body, leading to greater control and balance of movement. What you

are gaining is long, lean muscles and flexibility.

"Pilates elongates and strengthens, leaving the body less prone to injury, training the body from the inside out."

REHABILITATION

Emma advises: "The pilates system being low-impact makes it a powerful rehabilitation tool to rebalance the muscular system following injury."

■ Visit www.bodyfirm-studios.com.

ABS NO REASON WHY YOU CAN'T BOOST CORE

GETTING A GRIP
Rosanna Davison at Pilates Plus Dublin

STRIKING A POSE
Model on Proformer

KNEESY DOES IT
Rosanna works out

PILATES Plus, run by Emma Forsyth, uses a different system of the exercise based on the LaGree Method using Proformer machines.

One of the studio's hardest working clients is model and nutritionist Rosanna Davison.

Is pilates the secret to her washboard abs?

Emma said: "Rosanna is extremely focused when she's in class and pushes herself but then of course we push her that

little bit extra as we do with all our clients.

"She works hard at keeping very fit and healthy with a lot of effort put into both her fitness and her nutrition."

"Rosanna loves the results she gets from the classes and you can really see the abdominal results in her photos."

How important is resistance training for women?

Emma said: "Rosanna and women with her great physique

know just how important resistance training is for both men and women.

"Many women just focus on cardio and don't realise how much we need to do strength training from a health point of view without even thinking of the aesthetic results."

"As women's bone density can decrease as they get older it is so important to introduce it into their fitness regime."

Rosanna added: "I've noticed a

big change in my body's strength, flexibility and composition after doing pilates."

"Pilates Plus is different to regular pilates as it's more of a full body strength and conditioning workout with a big focus on abs and core."

"It has definitely made a big difference to my abs but your diet too, of course, for your abs to show."

■ For more details see www.pilatesplusdublin.com.