

## Pilates by Rael Isacowitz

This rather hefty book is promoted as “Your complete guide to mat work and apparatus exercises” so I am hoping it is the bible of Pilates exercises! The back page states “ Following mat work, where most books stops entirely, *Pilates* just gets going. The same depth of instruction and photo illustrations are applied to the full range of Pilates apparatus” so this should be everything I need from a Pilates book.

Rael Isacowitz is one of the most well known Pilates trainers and is the owner and founder of Body Arts and Science International (BASI). He often appears on Pilates Anytime and is a contributor to Pilates Style magazine. I have always admired his use of imagery to enhance movement and the creative adaptations he presents.



*So onto the book.....*

The first few chapters delve deeply into the principles and application of the Pilates method, thoroughly and in detail explaining Rael's beliefs and approach to Pilates, for example he names 3 higher principles and 10 movement principles to work from. Very early in these chapters he states that while he strives to remain true to the essence of Pilates, he allows the application of his own approach and processes.

*So onto the actual exercises.....*

The exercises are then split into the apparatus, Mat, Reformer, Cadillac, Wunda Chair, Barrels, Ped-a-Pul, Arm Chair and Magic Circle. Immediately I noticed that the exercises are not in the original sequence and there are many non Pilates or prep moves. In an earlier chapter, Rael explains how he use a *block system* to structure the exercises rather than the system which Joe Pilates insisted we follow. I do feel this is a shame as it appears to contradict his stated intention of solidly grounding his structure in the Pilates Method but it offers an alternative to the contemporary instructor.

Each exercise is then explained in incredible depth and detail. Each exercise is given a description, imagery, muscular focus, objective, instruction and photo illustrations. There are no modifications offered and Rael explains that this is purposefully done to avoid information overload and to allow creativity. Some of the exercises are not taught to the full level, for example the Corkscrew and Jackknife, with no explanation why., just as some are dated according to his beliefs.

The one criticism I have is that he appears to gradually lose interest and detail as the book unfolds, with a lot of detail for Mat and Reformer and then progressively less for the other pieces.

This book is a good, alternative resource to more classical books but if you are looking for a book which contains the full range of Apparatus exercises you will be slightly disappointed.

I would give the book 3/5!

You can find the book on Amazon and other sites.