

The Complete Book of Pilates for Men by Daniel Lyon Jnr

I am going to say it straight away *I love this book!* It is definitely one of my favourites for several reasons.

1. It's simplicity of language (no reflection on it being written for men! Joke!)
2. The fantastic variations
3. The succinct instructions
4. The illustrations

Within the first few pages the author makes the point that men and women are different, he further clarifies this by stating that certain tendencies can apply to both men and women but do manifest themselves more in one.

“ Men tend to have more body strength but not necessarily integrated strength, whereas women usually demonstrate more flexibility... Men tend to be tighter in the shoulders, back, legs, and throughout the hips, whereas women tend to have better ranges of motion..this book targets men's bodies and what they require within the Pilates Method”

Although this is a broad generalisation and as he has noted, we see these tendencies in both men and women, I do agree with this, not only due to the biological differences in our structures but also in the language we relate to and the atmosphere we connect to.

The book is split into 4 parts.

Part I deals with the expectations of the Method, a brief description of Joe's life and a wonderfully short explanation of Matwork Necessities. For example the Pilates Stance is described as “ heels together and your toes about 1 to 2 inches apart. Imagine fitting half of a pizza slice between your feet...”

Part II moves straight into the Mat Work in its original order. Each exercise is illustrated fantastically with pencil drawings which really seem to bring to life the actual movement. The benefits are simply written with no excessive muscular emphasis (a welcome change!) and the instructions are given for the original level. Each exercise has 3 sub headings. Teaching points are cleverly labelled as The Beast Within and further developed in the Mind in Motion. Each move is finished with Cautions.

Part III is a really fantastic resource of Reformer Exercises on the Mat. Here he demonstrates most of the Reformer Repertoire as Mat exercises without the use of any equipment. The variations are fantastic and inspiring and will give you so much material to add to your Mat classes.

Part IV briefly outlines safety guidelines for various injuries and conditions with regard to the featured exercises in the book.

Finally what struck me as being so unique is that the author does not feel the need to shout from the rooftops who he was trained by to promote his teaching credentials. How refreshing!!!

This book is wonderful. It's simplicity of language does not mean that it is not a thorough and progressive journey through the Method but rather that you do not need to wade through unnecessary visuals and muscular analysis to get to the heart of what you need to do and understand to perform each exercise effectively.

