

CHRISTMAS IS COMING...and here's what's in store over the festive period

Reflections on the year.....Thank you all so much for your continued commitment to your own health and also to our classes. It's your presence that makes the unique atmosphere in class and makes 'More than Pilates' just that... more than.

It feels like it has been a huge year of growth and change. A number of you have come back to class after illness or a break... some have had to cope with the circle of life and make time for your own healing. I am grateful that you find the Pilates helpful in your body and I trust / hope it helps your mind too. On a personal level the boys have settled into their new (ish) school. They're wonderful kids actually. Mike and I have coped with the house 'sagas' and enjoyed a beautiful summer in the South facing garden; boy do I LOVE the light. Bless the Georgians! We have continued to grow a significant business with 'Forever' alongside all this mayhem by helping others achieve their amazing goals. At least 3 of the team have been able to give up their full time employment because of their success. We too have qualified to go to Singapore next year to pick up a profit share cheque - and the future is very rosy. Building self belief, staying focussed and making the effort.....are vital to success, for all of us in whatever we do. No it's not always easy... but I am thankful for living in a positive and supportive world. I have wonderful clients, special people I see each week (that's you!) and I feel very grateful for all that you bring to our healthy community.

We've put together a Christmas event, some special offers and a healthy start to 2015. Read on.



**Charity Class @
Linton Village Hall
on Monday 29th
December 6.45pm**

Our annual charity class is here!

Want to keep moving over the festive break?

- Do join us for a Pilates session 6.45-8.00pm
- FIT promotion and drinks from 8.15-8.45pm
- A Stretch Therapy Class from 9-10ish.

With only 18 places available in each session be sure not to miss out.

You will need your own mat.

Bring cushions, yoga blocks or a pillow.

Donations of £7 (or over!) per class to book place: all proceeds go to charity.

Email to book your place

nicky.healthylife@virginmedia.com

Stretch Therapy. What is it?

I just can't do it! Teach one method and one method only - why on earth would I encourage just one way of doing something? Things are only right for someone's body when it feels right for their body. And when I say 'right' I don't mean comfortable either! I've always taught in a slightly different way to just one form of exercise. To me... movement is about exploring the way your body feels, the way your energy is and learning what helps you to release tension to provide an ease from within. Conversely movement should generate a feeling of power and strength from within too... of structural support. I like to teach people so they know a bit more about their body and also feel alive... So when Kate, a Pilates teacher and former pupil, told me of the Kit Laughlin workshop coming to York, I was delighted to find a kindred spirit in this gentleman's approach. Stretch Therapy™ isn't a final destination...

but is a well thought out approach that incorporates yoga, Pilates, deep stretches and fascial release work. Given our busy, stressful and often far too static lives I was keen to learn more.

I arrived in York and met the group. A Danish doctor, who no longer wanted to be a medic; a pole dancer and aerial artist (scarily strong), oodles of Pilates and yoga teachers.... and therapists.

So what did I learn? And what are you seeing more of in class?

We learned that yes, stretching is good, taking time is important... but most importantly we learned that as the body comes out of a deep stretch, this is when the re-modeling of the brain's perception of what is possible happens. When we are in a deep stretch that can be a bit sore.... our brain says 'yikes this is tough' and we are exploring the boundaries of our historical range of movement. But our flexibility has often been restricted / formed by our lifestyles... so what feels 'sore' isn't what is possible. Stretching beyond the 'norm' is vital to regain ease in the skeleton. And teaching the body this new perception of itself is key.

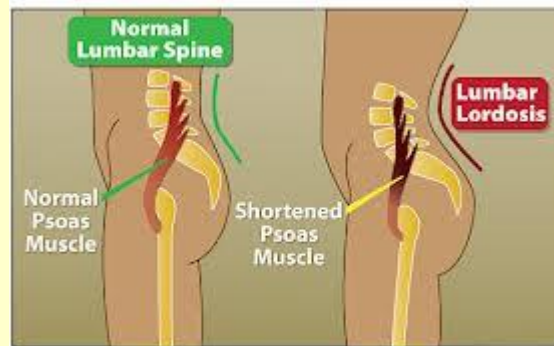
So what will you see in class? More deep stretches and very slow releases from them.

We learned that having the body supported or propped in a stretch position allows it to rest / relax more fully in that place. That when we are in the 'air' stretching there isn't a reference point for our muscles and skin... and our fear of the stretch restricts us as much as our 'old' range of movement.

So what will you see in class? Encouragement to bring a couple of cushions and use the yoga blocks I bring.... or to lean on chairs, so you can feel supported and 'let go' more readily.

We learned that the hips, pelvis and lower back are often the seat of tightness throughout the body.

In class? Expect more front thigh stretches and hip openers.



We learned about fascia... the sheath that weaves through every muscle, tendon and ligament in your body and is multi layers deep and more than just a surface 'sheath' on a muscle. This inter-connectedness of every part of us means that tight fascia in a remote part of our body, say our calves.... can be having an impact in another part of our body, like our neck. Whilst our muscles have a start and an end point... our fascia does not. We are one continuum. And recent research shows far more clearly how we need to be open to an holistic all body approach.

We learned that softness in the muscles is a good sign and that strong muscles that are rock hard is a bad thing. Imagine a cat. It can be lying floppy on the floor one minute... but when startled, can leap into action in such a fluid and dynamic way that looks easy and effortless. We aim to be like cats. Soft at rest, but lithe and fluid when required to move.

*"Stretch Therapy (ST)** is a comprehensive system that includes stretching, fascial re-modelling, strengthening, neural re-patterning, and relaxation. The goals are grace and ease, and this is experienced as enhanced awareness and elegance in movement.*

As one starts to work with the body, new needs will be uncovered and you

will find yourself pulling on one of the many strands of the ST approach. Everyone's path is unique, and our approaches reflect this reality."

There are specific sequences of stretches and movements for feet, hands, spine, etc.... and wearing the Toesox is helpful as a way to get the extremities moving as they should. After all, our feet are our foundation. The thinking behind 'barefoot' (whether using the socks or the shoes too) is that from an early age we are put in socks... where the feet / toes move as a unit. Our walking action is altered slightly and the digits tend to move as a block. Ankle alignment is altered by the strength in the foot too. Study the sole of your foot and look for areas of hard / thicker skin. If it's outer heel and inside of big toe then you are pronating (rolling in) and the arches won't be as stimulated to lift your foot. Nor will your



big toe joint be free to move as it needs to. This can lead to bunions and swelling / ossifying of the big toe joint.

(Oh dear... that's me then!) So how do the toesox help? Well if our skin is separate between our toes and not touching.....our mind perceives the toes as independent of each other and the foot muscles start to be stimulated to move independently. The feet I saw in the workshop were of a different tone, shape and size. The muscles were stronger and the arches lifted. It was a marked difference.

So what will it mean in class? Well we will intermittently do some foot work. I'll be encouraging foot movement. I'll be wearing my Toesox as much as I can. After years of wearing orthotics to run and help my ankle, foot, knee and hip alignment, I'm now of the opinion that my feet CAN learn how to work well and that I can prevent or minimize the demise of my toe joints! Why not try wearing toesox with grips in class (the grips go all up the toes so they're very effective in downward dog and plank) and even to wear toesox without grips in your day to day shoes. No-one need ever know!!!

Can we get the best stretch alone? Well we can certainly do some pretty darned big stretches on our own. We will be using the CRAC (Contract, Release, Antagonist, Relax) method and this helps the body move beyond the boundaries and alter its perception of a stretchy position. But we can also get better body awareness from helping others and seeing how their body holds itself. When we feel the changes as someone softens into our assisted stretch we too can learn it in our own body.

What this means in class? Is that you might be offered the chance to do pairs work. I'd encourage you to drop any fear or inhibition... as you will not be shoved or forced anywhere. The person getting the stretch is the one in control. They ask for more, less, or let their body yield into the stretch themselves. It's an amazing feeling and a real gift to help someone else. As they relax, so do we. As they let go, so do we. As they breathe so do we. As they feel the joy of freer movement, so do we.

Your first chance to sample a whole stretch focused class is on 29th Dec... Our charity night will be in two parts. To book your place email nicky.healthylife@virginmedia.com

Great news as a qualified instructor Lindsey receives a discount with a number of Pilates equipment retailers. In the run up to Christmas we are able to offer an exclusive 10% off the RRP for Toesox. These are the original toe sock with a patented non-slip grip that is great for use as Pilates socks. They come in a variety of colours and come with either toes or no toes! To look on line go to: <http://bit.ly/toesox>



The lovely Jane Nichols in class has been busy developing healthy treats for us and here's a special offer for class members.



Please quote code
ONEOFF
Offer valid until 31.12.14

LAUNCH SPECIAL £ 1.00 off RRP

Sweet Revolution are delighted to announce the launch of our brand new Instant Hot Chocolate - the only product of its kind on the market to be certified vegan and free from dairy, refined cane sugar and soya.



We've combined three nutritious, wholefood ingredients to bring you a healthy hot chocolate drink that you can take, and make, anywhere.

Our raw, ethically sourced cacao powder grown without agrochemicals in the rainforests of Peru has been combined with vegan coconut milk powder with a reduced oil content of 30%, which is made from freshly pressed coconut milk. The coconut milk is spray dried and retains the same nutrient content as the raw coconut. A little raw crystallised coconut nectar is added for sweetness, which has a low GI of 35 and is perfect for those with sugar sensitivities. Granulated from the sweet nectar of coconut blossom, it is unrefined, unfiltered and unbleached with no additives or preservatives.

We devised a method of making this drink to preserve as many of the natural characteristics of the ingredients as possible. Simply add the hot chocolate powder to a mug, mix with cold water or non-dairy cold milk (our favourite is Koko coconut milk!) and then top up with hot water – what could be simpler?

Orders can be placed with Jane in class or by mobile: 0780 855 5189

It's truly a 'hug in a mug'! We hope you like it as much as we do.

Fancy a massage? Here's another special offer. Obviously Lindsey had to trial it first!!!

Local lady, Jill Lewis is a home based Massage & Beauty Therapist, in Boston Spa. Qualified for over 20 years and since 2009 she has specialised in *NO HANDS® Massage*.

NO HANDS® Massage is deep, releasing, rejuvenating and nourishing – working on every level Physical, Energetic, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual. Instead of using our hands we use the soft surfaces of our forearms. This means it is both deeper and more relaxing than conventional massage. Massage is a therapy that has a cumulative effect – if you receive regular treatments the more benefits you will notice.

Jill offers several different styles of massage:

Nurturing: flowing & soothing, take time out

Replenishing: slow & gentle, recharge

Connecting: deep & slow, connect mind & body

Releasing: powerful & deep, loosens spine, neck & hips

Detox: gentle colon & reflex treatment

Reflex: stimulates reflexes on your feet

Colon: gentle, holistic massage of your belly, can help regulate your colon

Clothed: is massage for you? Try this to get you started – you remain fully clothed.

Introductory Offer: ONLY £15 for a 1 hour treatment (£5 of which donated to Martin House Hospice) only one treatment at this price per person.

Usual Price: 40 Min £28 & 1 Hr £35

If you have any questions, please feel free to email her or call, I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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So: Here's to a supple and 'easy' 2015. I'm excited to be able to go on this journey with you and share our experiences as we change and learn.

Merry Christmas from Lindsey and Nicky x