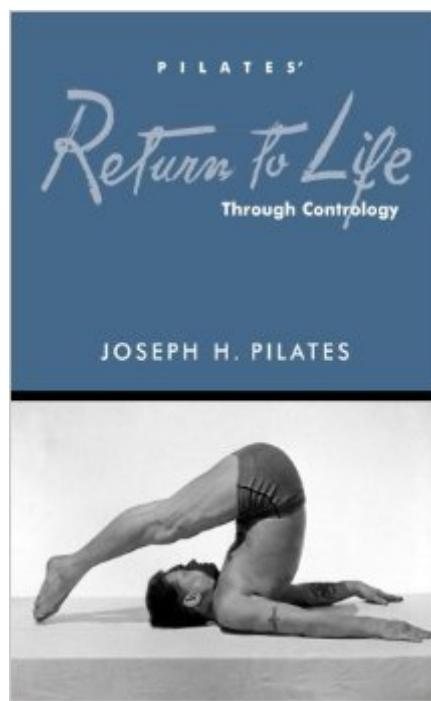


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Return To Life



Synopsis

RETURN TO LIFE is the original Pilates exercise book written by the creator and visionary of the Pilates method of exercise, Joseph H. Pilates. This book reviews the conceptual basis and philosophy of the Pilates method or "Contrology"™ and the original matwork exercises Mr. Pilates taught in the studio on 8th Avenue and 55th Street in New York City. The model featured in this book is Mr. Pilates himself at the age of 60.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars (See all reviews) (94 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is the original Pilates (or Contrology) "manual". In succinct (if not always fluid) text, Joseph Pilates outlines the intentions of the legendary exercise system he designed as well as how each exercise should be performed. This is a simple, short manual. It's surprising that a system that has ended up being shrouded in so many mysteries and rules, particularly by those who are in his direct "lineage", started out relatively humbly. Many, many Pilates instructors will tell you that if you can't take a class in Pilates (and usually in an expensive studio), you're probably doing it wrong (and then maybe it's not worth doing). Also, many instructors have argued that most people aren't ready to do the matwork and that they should almost always begin with sessions on the equipment (again, under the watchful and expensive eye of an instructor). Pilates, however, writes that his system should help you "Return to Life" at a minimum of cost and time. The tone of his writing is inclusive-his system should be readily available to everyone. While he does insist that the instructions he sets out should be followed and that one shouldn't move on until all previous exercises are mastered, I'm not sure that the man who wrote this book in 1945 would approve of the elitist tone that some of his modern-day disciples have adopted. It's interesting to note some of the exercises that are not

included in the book. For example, the five-part Stomach Series is one of the most famous sequences in the modern Pilates matwork. Here, however, Pilates only includes the first two exercises (the One Leg Stretch and the Double Leg Stretch). Also, the matwork system is also well-known for the Side Kick Series.

Having studied Pilates(R) for some time and gone through many of the phases of body change and self discovery that the system provides. The book is a reproduction of a relic originally published in 45 under the title "Return to Life Through Contrology." Contrology was the original name that Joseph Pilates gave to his system of exercise. The (R) marks and the PILATES name spattered everywhere is a result of the recent surge and push to mass market the system for profit. This book takes the reader, who simply must be a Pilates student to benefit, back to a more pure time, where Joseph Pilates' ideals grew, not out of a need for copyright symbols, but by a simple desire to understand the human body and to perfect it (beginners should seek out one of the more recently published books to get a better idea of its modern application). This book takes many reads to fully absorb. After reading this book, I discussed it with my instructor, Atasha Avery in Seattle. I understand how she works better because of the book. I now understand her subtle corrections and statements more (whereas before I knew they worked seemingly by magic as she and Pilates(R) transformed my body from flabby and inflexible to somebody who for the first time in my life is free of back pain and comfortable enough with my body to show it off more) and am more able to help her help me. I would definitely not replace Atasha with this book, or with any other instructor for that matter (in my opinion she is a model of the ideals that Joseph Pilates expounds on in his book and is by far the most qualified instructor I have ever worked with. For inspiration, however it is great. The pictures in this book are originals of Joseph Pilates.

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