

# Multiple Sclerosis Patients Experience Significant Improvements in Strength and Balance with Pilates

Multiple Sclerosis is a condition of the Central Nervous System, where the coating around the nerve fibres is damaged.

More than 100,00 people in the UK suffer from MS. MS affects three times as many women as men with symptoms presenting in 20s and 30s and its cause is unknown.

As the Central Nervous System links everything in the body there are many symptoms.

Physical symptoms commonly include problems with vision and balance, dizziness, fatigue, muscle stiffness and spasms. MS also affects memory, thinking and has an impact on emotions.

People with MS are encouraged to stay as active as possible but the condition can complicate class participation as too intense activity can trigger symptoms.

Two studies in the last twelve months have looked at the effects of Pilates on patients with MS. The first study focused on a group of 28 non wheel chair users who were randomly divided into two groups. The first group undertook an eight week Pilates programme, whilst the control group performed abdominal breathing and active extremity exercises. Balance and mobility was measured as well as muscle strength of the upper and lower extremities. Researchers found that the Pilates group experienced improved balance, mobility and strength which the control group did not.

The second study was carried out with wheel chair users who undertook a twelve week Pilates programme. Again researchers found significant improvements in sitting stability, posture, shoulder and back pain and a reduction in the impact of MS had in the daily lives. The majority of the participants reported physical, functional, psychological and social benefits from Pilates giving them increased confidence in their daily activities.

*References: [www.mstrust.org.uk/research/updates/articles/update130822.jsp](http://www.mstrust.org.uk/research/updates/articles/update130822.jsp)*

