

### Testimonial for Linda McDowall Pilates

I was advised to take up Pilates 7 and half years ago aged 40, after having slipped a disc in my lower back. I started a beginner course with Linda and progressed to Intermediate. I find that Pilates definitely helps my back. In fact last year I slipped 2 discs in my neck and with Linda's expertise, I was still able to continue Pilates, at a much lower level, in order to keep my back strong and mobile until my neck was better. One of Linda's strong points, is that she is aware and remembers her clients injuries and will always give an alternative exercise without being prompted. Linda McDowall Pilates is going to be missed in Bishop's Stortford.

Nicola Taylor  
19th July 2015

### Testimonial for Linda McDowall:

I joined Linda's classes in 2001 following the caesarean birth of my child. Linda was the only postnatal qualified teacher I could find in the area. Not only did she help me towards a successful recovery I found that there were other benefits to my posture and the feel of my body. I have naturally deep arch in my back which leads to an imbalance of my stomach/ back muscles and consequently back issues. I have found that Pilates helps counteract this tendency.

I have continued with my weekly class ever since and combined it with Linda's body conditioning class for many years until she gave these up to concentrate fully on Pilates and personal training. I found it difficult to find another low impact aerobic class that I enjoyed as much as.

Linda is an experienced and conscientious teacher, always improving her knowledge and technique, incorporating cutting edge developments and other disciplines within her classes. The content is never the same twice ensuring that a full workout for body and mind is achieved! Her classes are defined into beginners, intermediates and advanced to ensure that she is teaching to the correct level. She is strict in her application of this. I was impressed that she ensured I attend a starter session to make sure I knew some of the terminology and how to achieve the move in my body before attending my first ever class. This has been the same for everyone I have recommended join her classes.

Linda always gives several levels of difficulty for each move to incorporate any weaknesses of her clients as well as challenging you to stretch yourself fully. She is always willing to adjust her advice and recommend possible useful exercises when injuries or frailties arise. I have been impressed by her willingness to teach everyone. I have enjoyed classes along side others - from the extremely fit to the not so fit of all shapes, sizes and ages. She supports mums and dads (I found her companion crèches invaluable in the early years), grand parents, those recovering from operations, and those with long term conditions within her class without affecting her standards or mine.

I would be, and have been, happy to recommend her abilities to others with confidence.

Penny Stephens  
Bishops Stortford  
July 2015

A Friend recommended Linda's Pilates classes to me 10 years ago, as she was already attending sessions to help her bad back, which had already help her improve her ability to move. I decided that even with all my medical problems, Chronic Pain Syndrome, Fibromyalgia and tendonitis in my shoulder, I would give it a go.

When I met Linda she was so supportive, she would always say "only do what you can mange" and always gave me alternative exercises, where necessary. Over the years I have found my movement, mobility and posture has improved. Linda has been particularly supportive on my bad days. I have never given up and keep going, Linda is such a kind and friendly person who always has time for you, I have always enjoyed her classes and would strongly recommend her.

Jane Taney  
July 2015

I have been attending Linda's classes January 2000 until now July 2015. I think that the fact that I have going to Linda's exercise and Pilates classes for 15 years says it all!

Linda is an excellent Pilates Instructor, she has really helped me, particularly through the time I have had back injuries.

I would recommend you give her classes or personal training a try!

Jane Tatchell  
13<sup>th</sup> July 2015

**Re: Linda McDowall, Pilates Instructor**

I have attended Linda's classes for almost four years, and I have been impressed by her method of teaching. She demonstrates and explains each movement and what each exercise is called and what it is designed to do. I have been particularly impressed by her care and attention to those of us with health and physical problems and where necessary she has adapted the moves to suit the individual abilities and needs.

I have enjoyed all Linda's classes and I am sorry she is leaving us. I would certainly recommend her to anyone looking to join a Pilates class, or to appoint a Pilates Instructor.

Valerie.F.Jones  
July 2015

Pilates was recommended to me by my doctor after developing breast cancer nearly 7 years ago. I had experienced back, shoulder and hip problems, partly as a side effect of the cancer drugs I had been taking. Now I don't experience any problems.

I only practice Pilates once a week but it has made a huge difference to my posture and physical health. Linda's experience and commitment to Pilates' instruction is second to none. She is patient, enthusiastic and knowledgeable and the qualities that she brings to every session make Pilates a joy to do. With this experience in mind I would, with no hesitation, recommend Linda's classes to anyone looking to benefit from them in the same way as I have.'

**Nicola Sykes, 49, Designer, Bishops Stortford**

I have attended Linda's Pilates classes for a number of years. She is a cheerful, highly qualified instructor who is able to adapt her teaching to accommodate a wide range of client ability.

Her conscientious style extends to helping clients overcome difficulties like knee replacements, back problems and so on. She helped me a great deal following my knee replacement.

Teaching points are clearly stated and reinforced where necessary, thereby mirroring her own high standard. Therefore, I strongly recommend her classes to anyone fortunate enough to take part in her future endeavours.

Yvonne Robinson.

June 2015.

Dear Linda,

Just a quick note to say how much I have enjoyed your Pilates classes. Three years have flown!

I appreciate the effort you take to make sure the classes are varied and increasingly challenging, and the care you take to ensure every group member maintains correct posture and exercises safely. This is no mean feat bearing in mind the many different physical limitations we can present e.g., trapped nerves, frozen shoulders and replacement joints to name but a few!

I found your exercise DVD particularly useful when I was recovering from a broken ankle.

The fact that I could attend free Pilates classes at my local gym and yet pay to attend your sessions shows how much I value your competence and professionalism.

I am amazed by the way our group has progressed and often wish I could show friends and family what a motley group of senior citizens can do with a ball, a ring or a band while balancing on a polystyrene tube!

I am sorry you are leaving Bishop's Stortford and wish you well in your new home,

Dawn Allen  
June 2015

Linda is a talented and dedicated Pilates teacher. She takes time to build a strong foundation for each student and carefully builds upon that ensuring that the practice is carried out correctly at each step. She makes every effort to vary the classes and always offers different variations to cater to the whole group. I have no hesitation in recommending Linda as a teacher.

Leanne Palfrey  
June 2015

I began Pilates in order to improve my posture and increase my flexibility. I hadn't realised quite how weak my stomach muscles would be after having two children, nor how that affected my balance and posture; I thought I would never be able to achieve some of the moves I was given during that first year. However, the repeated assurances of Linda to 'just do what you can today' gave me the confidence to keep trying and not berate myself for my apparent inabilities.

This is the innate strength of Pilates as a discipline - it's not about 'being able to do it', it's about doing what you can and improving a little every week.

Several years on, I was amazed to find myself one of the strongest in an ad hoc Pilates class I took while at a health spa, and I realised how far I had come. Little and often pays off!

My good posture now often gets commented on by friends and colleagues and I feel 2" taller than I used to. My balance has improved beyond measure, even though I hadn't realised it wasn't as good as it could be! And I can now hold a 'plank', where I previously struggled even to hold my stomach muscles away from the floor whilst lying flat!

Linda's instruction and classes have been well-structured and clear. I have rarely felt stiff or sore after a class due to the balance of strength and stretching exercises. She is well-organised and consistent in her approach and to my recollection has never cancelled a class except once or twice due

to severe weather. I have very much appreciated her classes and have and would highly recommend her classes to anyone, of any age or ability.

Kate Whitby  
June 2015

Linda is an excellent Pilates teacher who offers well planned routines which vary with every lesson. All exercises are demonstrated at two or three levels so that you can perform at the level that suits the way you are feeling that day. The lessons flow well and leave you feeling that your life worn muscles have been realigned and stretched back in place.

I tried several Pilates teachers before I was lucky enough to find Linda - definitely the best!

I wish Linda well in her new life in Southsea, but she will be a hard act to follow.

Barbara Levey  
June 2015

To whom it may concern

Linda McDowall started my practice of Pilates in 2013. I was a true novice. The reason for starting Pilates was that I was getting back and knee pain. After speaking to some friends they told me about Lindas' classes. I went to a weekly class in which we progressed from beginners to intermediate as a group. Each week her teaching strengthen our core and I was amazed that each week the moves were varied and challenging. There have never been two identical classes back to back. Linda is passionate about Pilates and is extremely knowledgeable about anatomy and physiology . Each of her clients are watched with an eagle eye as she corrects and positions you to get the most out of each exercise also adapting each move to suit a particular injury .I think her visualisation skills are exemplary. I have benefited immensely from her classes. As a dentist my posture has improved I don't leave work with a painful back or aching shoulders. Recently I achieved a personal best time of 28 minutes in a 5km run without any painful knees.  
Thank you so much Linda.  
Our loss of a fantastic teacher is definitely your gain

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Dr Odette Lazarus  
June 2015

Like many people I spend a lot of time in front of a computer and as I got older I noticed I was getting very stiff, suffering with a number of aches and pains. I was always crap at any sport at school and in subsequent life didn't get on with aerobics etc. I started many programmes but never found anything suitable that I kept up. I really needed to become more supple and decided to try Pilates. This was a big step for me as I hadn't joined a class for more years than I care to remember and can I can be quite shy.

Linda immediately put me at ease, her instructions are clear and easy to follow. She is very patient and brilliant at focusing on mastering the core skills before moving onto the next level. Linda's amazing knowledge, dedication and motivating approach encouraged me to continue with Pilates and to incorporate it into my daily regime without it seeming a chore.

I really enjoy my classes and moreover I can now bend down to put my socks on without a problem! I haven't suffered with the previous recurring shoulder problems since I started Pilates and am generally in far better condition than I have been for years.

I can highly recommend Linda as an expert Pilates teacher, she is caring and supportive to all her clients' needs and you can achieve life changing benefits.

Lynne McCabe – Bishops Stortford 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015

I have attended Linda's classes since 1993 - aerobics first and more recently Pilates. In 22 years Linda has been an utterly reliable and dedicated teacher. Her classes are always varied and she is very careful about ensuring everyone is provided with options according to their individual physical needs.

I have maintained fitness and remain free from the aches and pains suffered by so many of my (younger) office colleagues. I attribute this entirely to Linda's teaching and wholeheartedly recommend her.

Jenny Palling  
31st May 2015

I have been coming to Linda's classes regularly for almost 10 years now, which tells you something about how indispensable I have found them. Linda always encourages and gently corrects students during the class, which has been an invaluable part of my learning how to do Pilates the right way. It's amazing what a difference a tiny correction can make, and that's something you just can't get on a DVD alone. I credit the classes with keeping me fit and supple, they are a great antidote to a full-time desk-based job and I would thoroughly recommend them.

1<sup>st</sup> June 2015  
Becky Miles

I started Pilates because I had got to an age where I ached every morning when I got out of bed and I wanted to exercise in a safe and non-strenuous way. Pilates has been a great success and I feel the benefits are long-lasting without too much effort! I feel very safe with Linda as I trust her extensive knowledge of muscles and how bodies work to ensure I won't over-do the exercise or actually cause myself problems. The evening sessions are vital for me to fit around my working day and the town centre location means I can travel by foot with added health benefits of walking! I would highly recommend Pilates and Linda McDowall.

27<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Clare Tozer

My Physio suggested I go to Pilates, as this should help my back and neck, my friends say I look taller and slimmer, even though I don't diet, I believe this is due to my posture and how I hold myself now, due to Linda's lessons, my fitness is at its best, which has had a really positive impact on me. I want to continue to achieve more, whilst building my core further, and I feel great after every session, very relaxed.

Thanks Linda for all your help!

Sue Kingsbury

20<sup>th</sup> May 2015

I have been attending Linda's classes once a week for about 18 months. I was advised to join a Pilates class by my GP for an ongoing back problem and Linda was recommended by a friend. It not only helped me with my backache it helps my core strength, posture, flexibility and relaxes me mentally. Linda is a very experienced professional instructor with an excellent attitude towards the teaching of breathing techniques and the exercise routines of Pilates - highly recommended!

18<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Rebecca Dellow

I had wanted to improve my posture for a long time, and knew it caused my other issues with my shoulders. After just over a year of Pilates, I have been complimented on my posture, and have found a noticeable difference to how I hold myself which has had a really positive impact on me. There is still a lot I want to continue to achieve whilst building my core further, and feel better after every session.

Thanks Linda for being a great teacher.

17<sup>th</sup> May 2015

**Clara Downton**