



Dayna Winter

BEST PILATES IN TORONTO

By DAYNA WINTER

The best pilates studios in Toronto challenge Joseph Pilates' original vision by reinventing the practice with a contemporary twist and fusing it with yogic and martial arts-inspired movements. While still true to the traditional strength and flexibility-building exercises, our city's studios add their own spin, giving pilates a broader appeal.

Pilates virgins can start with less-intimidating mat classes and work their way up to S&M-esque contraptions. Two weeks of pilates have done me good. If, like me, your posture resembles a croissant, read on. Here are five of the best pilates studios in Toronto, as voted by the readers of blogTO.com

Body Harmonics

Body Harmonics – with its two Toronto studios and 14 years of experience – tops our list. Instructor Georgia Burns says that the studio is known internationally for its teacher-training programs. Body Harmonics has even developed its own certification and training manuals. For

the rest of us, there are over 50 group classes to choose from, some specific to teens or “starving artists” (read: cheap) and others fusing elements of pilates with cardio. Best for instructor wannabes.

Core Studio

This hip Queen West space boasts newly renovated studios for hot yoga, mat pilates and machine classes. There's something to be said for the atmosphere, and apart from a beach, I can't think of a better backdrop for a good stretch than its exposed brick and views of the Toronto skyline. Affable studio owner Monica Plewes warmly welcomes a mixed bag of clientele that only Queen West can provide. Best for early risers.

Chang'e Studio

Chang'e makes our list no doubt because of the people. Co-owner Sandra Brunner has the demeanor of a preschool teacher, putting newbies at ease with her calming voice and patient coaching. The small intro classes – a very beginner-friendly workout – are attended by nice-as-pie Leslieville residents and chatty retirees. The space also hosts

yoga and reformer pilates as well as massage therapy and acupuncture appointments. Best for the shy and out-of-practice.

Pilates for Life

Yorkville's Pilates For Life has been providing group mat classes and private in-studio or at-home sessions for the area's busy business types for seven years. In addition to yoga, prenatal and pilates classes, the studio has added ballet to its schedule for 2011. Best for post-work workouts and shut-ins.

The Loft Pilates Studio

The Loft feels a lot like my physiotherapist's office. That's not a bad thing for a studio that specializes in restorative pilates and workouts tailored to healing. The focus is anatomy-based and teachers have a broad knowledge of the human body. Clients recovering from injuries are often referred here by doctors or chiropractors for private rehabilitative sessions. But the bright Junction studio also hosts group mat and machine classes. Best for nursing aches and pains.

Check out the full list at blogTO.com

RESTAURANT REVIEW:

INIGO



Helen Lee

Located near Trinity Bellwoods Park, Inigo is a casual restaurant that offers simple and satisfying comfort food. With a mix-and-match menu of meats, salads and sides, this is definitely not your average roast-chicken joint. Don't miss the main attraction – roast chicken with crispy golden skin and moist fall-off-the-bone meat – available whole (\$12), or by the quarter to half piece (\$3.75 - \$6.75). A side of fluffy brown basmati rice (\$2.50), earthy French lentils & squash (\$3.25) and cold candied beet & apple salad (\$3.50) finish the plate perfectly.

Helen Lee

O | OSSINGTON

FROM HERE TO THERE:

Head south on Ossington or hop on the 63 Ossington bus to Queen St. Head east on Queen Street. Inigo is right across from the park at 927 Queen St. W.

TEA TIME:

HERBAL INFUSIONS TEA CO.



Dennis Marciniak

A new teasshop near the corner of Spadina and Adelaide is trying to alter Torontonians' love affair with java. The cafe already boasts an impressive wall of more than 100 varieties of black, green, oolong, white, pu-erh and herbal teas. Prices range from about \$5-\$7 for 50g. They also offer tea lattes (\$3.30 or \$3.95) and tea frappuccinos (\$4.25 or \$4.60) made with either regular milk or soy milk. I walked out with an orange cookie black tea latte and a newly wavering devotion to my once-faithful cup of Joe.

Robyn Urbach

O | ST. ANDREW

FROM HERE TO THERE:

Head west on King or hop on the streetcar to Spadina. Head north on Spadina to Adelaide. Herbal Infusions is just west of King at 404 Adelaide St. W.

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