

## Pilates Exercise has Positive Long Term Effects on the Aged-Related Decline in Balance and Strength in Older, Community Dwelling Men and Women.

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### Abstract

This study investigated the effect of Pilates exercise on physical fall risk factors 12 months after an initial 5 week Pilates intervention. We hypothesised that ongoing Pilates participation would have a positive effect on physical fall risk factors in those that continued with the Pilates exercise compared with those that ceased. Thirty older ambulatory adults ( $69\pm 7$  yrs) participated in Pilates classes for 5 weeks with testing pre (T1) and post-intervention (T2), and 12 months later (T3). Balance and leg strength were compared using a two-way ANOVA with repeated measures. Postural sway, dynamic balance and function improvements evident after the initial Pilates training (T1-T2), were maintained at T3 ( $P < 0.01$ ). Significant differences existed at T3 for dynamic balance and strength between participants who continued performing Pilates ( $N=14$ ) and those who had ceased. Balance improvements after a short Pilates intervention were maintained one year later in all participants, with increased benefits from ongoing participation.

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