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Pilates Association Australia

Scope of Practice
PILATES PRACTITIONER

"Scope of practice" describes procedures, actions and processes a practitioner/instructor is permitted to undertake. The scope is limited by the specific qualifications, education, experience and competency of the practitioner/instructor.
"Standards" include any criteria, protocols or specifications for conduct, performance or services and are considered to be mandatory and may be accompanied by an enforcement mechanism.
"Guidelines" are statements that include recommendations intended to optimise client care.

Introduction

Pilates is a mind-body exercise modality that enhances efficient movement habits, postural awareness, coordinated strength and flexibility and respiratory function. Its benefits include:

- restoring and improving optimal physical function for health and fitness
- preventing and managing injuries and sub-acute/chronic conditions to reduce pain, improve function and mitigate musculoskeletal degeneration
- improving strength, flexibility, alignment, balance, range of movement and breathing function for ongoing health and rehabilitation purposes
- pre- and post-surgery rehabilitation
- improving performance through specific training and countering sports/muscular bias
- managing the effects of underlying systemic health conditions especially those impacting on activities of daily living
- improving mental health through mindfulness and purposeful movement

To achieve the benefits above, Pilates classes require an environment that enables mindful motor learning. This includes:

- consistent repetition and structured progressive exercise programming
- exercise modifications and variations tailored to each client's conditions and goals
- high levels of supervision best achieved in small group settings
- postural and movement instructions specific to each client
- responsiveness to each client's learning style and biopsychosocial needs

Note: Individuals who hold a bachelor degree, postgraduate or doctoral degree in fields such as Physiotherapy, Pilates, Exercise and Sport Science or have completed additional studies related to musculoskeletal functioning are acknowledged as having a broader 'Scope of Practice' specific to their field of specialisation, but are still required to have completed comprehensive Pilates training.

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Competencies

All PAA Pilates Practitioners are competent in designing and delivering sessions for lower risk individuals. For more complex conditions and disorders, evidence of further study and relevant experience is required.

Client profile	Lower risk individuals	Higher risk individuals
Intention	• Improved fitness, physical well-being and mental health • Performance enhancement • Prevention and correction • Supervised guidance • Improve functional activities of daily life	• Rehabilitation & ongoing management of more complex treatable conditions • Management of systemic health conditions
Targeted populations	• Healthy & low risk individuals • Professional and amateur athletes, movement specialists and performers • Low risk prenatal and postnatal individuals • Individuals at risk of musculoskeletal injury due to occupation, repetitive activity and/or general deconditioning • Individuals with well-managed neuro- and degenerative conditions • Individuals with muscular or structural conditions or disorders • Aging population • Low risk pre- and post-surgery individuals	• Individuals with a range of conditions including fibromyalgia, Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's, arthritis • Special populations eg children • Individuals with complex muscular or structural conditions/disorders
Focus	• Improve suboptimal postural patterns and movement strategies by addressing range of movement, strength and flexibility, breathing and stabilisation strategies • Improve performance in professional, amateur and everyday activities and reduce injury risk, including adverse effects of repetitive movements/postures • Address balance, gait and falls risk • Prepare and assist with physical impacts of low-risk pregnancy and childbirth and post-natal recovery • Prepare for surgery and assist with recovery • Postural awareness and improvement strategies for hyperlordosis, hyperkyphosis, scoliosis, low back pain and other musculoskeletal conditions	• Address specific impacts of client condition • Address range of movement, strength and flexibility especially to assist with activities of daily living • Improve mental health • Mitigate pain • Modify according to progression of disorder or improvement in condition
Education level of instructor	PAA approved Diploma	Diploma plus: • additional condition-specific training, • Advanced Diploma or • Allied Health Bachelor degree
Group size (recommended)	Same apparatus: No more than 8 participants to one instructor. (This may be varied dependent on team size if teaching athletes.) Mat: No more than 12 participants to one instructor Mixed studio equipment: No more than 4 participants to one instructor	No more than 3 participants to one instructor

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PAA Standards of Practice

The PAA uses a competency-based model for training standards, ensuring instructors' skills, knowledge, and experience are adequate for the variety of client conditions that present in a Pilates studio. The PAA oversees professional standards by:

- setting education standards for course content, minimum study hours and work experience
- setting standards for training providers and the qualifications and experience of their faculty
- reviewing training courses to ensure ongoing quality assurance
- setting standards for entry level PAA membership and upgrades in membership levels
- setting standards for ongoing professional development
- addressing complaints raised against training providers through investigation and mediation
- addressing complaints against individual members through investigation and mediation
- reserving the right to audit members to ensure they are operating within the scope and standards of practice

Member Requirements

PAA Pilates Practitioners must have a comprehensive qualification that demonstrates knowledge, skills and industry experience in the Pilates Method. Membership as a PAA Pilates Practitioner requires:

- holding a PAA recognised government accredited Diploma (AQF level 5 or above) or industry equivalent with a minimum study period of 500 hours
- current certification in Provide First Aid
- current Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance
- full financial membership of the PAA and agreement to abide by the PAA Code of Conduct
- maintenance and elevation of industry knowledge, skills and practice through relevant, research-based professional development courses that meet PAA requirements. A minimum of 10 points is required annually. For more details, refer to https://www.pilates.org.au/education/pdp/
- continuity of teaching practice as specified by the PAA (a member must maintain a minimum of 200 hours of Pilates work over any two-year period, otherwise they are deemed 'non-current' and require refresher education)

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Service Provision

PAA Pilates Practitioners will be guided by the following provisions:

1. Work with clients whose functional movement capacity or condition is within the practitioner's level of competency. This may include healthy and lower risk clientele, clients presenting with moderate grade or post-acute injuries and conditions, or chronic conditions or pathologies.
2. Conduct physical activity readiness assessment/pre-exercise screening to determine each client's suitability to begin a Pilates exercise program.
3. Evaluate each client's static and dynamic posture and movement function.
4. Identify exercise and programming goals for each client.
5. Design exercise programs in line with evaluation findings, client goals and medical or allied health professional recommendations.
6. Provide and supervise Pilates sessions according to program design and client presentation at each session. Sessions range from 45 minutes to 90 minutes but may be varied depending on the capacity of each client.
7. Constantly evaluate client movement pattern and technique and provide exercise regressions/ progressions/modifications as appropriate.
8. Use a range of appropriate Pilates apparatus (Reformer, Cadillac, Chair, Barrel, small apparatus) ensuring the safety of clients and instructors through client education and diligent supervision.
9. Collaborate with medical or allied health professionals and refer where appropriate.
10. Promote client understanding of movement function and body awareness to enhance overall health.
11. Maintain notes on changes in client health status, progress and program updates.

Additional Service Provision for sessions to be considered therapeutic

In order for a client's management to be considered therapeutic, these additional requirements are compulsory:

1. Conduct a one-on-one initial assessment and record findings. This includes collection of relevant health history, client aims, current general health status and recording of any musculoskeletal problems or conditions, medications, and medical or allied healthcare practitioner recommendations.
2. Undertake and record a full functional movement assessment, including evaluation of static and dynamic posture, strength, balance, range of motion, functional performance skills, and respiratory patterns.
3. Document client progress and any change to client health status and/or objectives according to industry guidelines.
4. Conduct ongoing assessment and adapt exercises (regressions, modifications and progressions) as required, keeping thorough records.

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