

# Pilayoga: A New Exercise Program Combining Yoga and Pilates



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## Abstract

Newly exercise programs are created by merging and integrating, and recently a new fusion yoga named Pilayoga have recently been introduced in Korea. This new fusion exercise program trains cardio endurance, strength, flexibility, and balance. It is possible to focus on training for burning calories and increasing strength. In addition, it is based on low impact and various level and is adaptable for all ages and fitness level.

**Keywords:** Pilayoga; Yoga; Pilates; Piyo

## Opinion

Various exercise programs exist in today's society, and new types of exercise programs are created by merging and integrating these exercise programs. The exercising population in Korea is continuously increasing and, in particular, the exercise rate of the middle-aged and the elderly are consistently on the rise every year. As such, there is a high interest in new exercises and exercise programs, and these are introduced through the media and newly created in the community every year.

One example where an existing exercise program has been modified is Taekwon aerobics, which is a combination of Taekwondo, Korea's traditional martial art, and rhythmic aerobic exercise. This new exercise program merges taekwondo, which requires muscle strength, and rhythmic aerobic exercise that can enhance the aerobic functions of the body and is targeted toward all ages from elementary school students to adults for losing weight and improving physical strength. CrossFit is a high-intensity exercise program that mixes resistance exercises and power training, and the main participants are adults in their 20s to 30s whose purpose is to improve physical strength. In addition, line dance consists of simple and easy dance movements that incorporate the principle of aerobic exercise; one round of exercise is for at least 20 minutes while maintaining middle to high intensity. Therefore, line dance is usually targeted at managing physical strength and losing weight among the elderly. Pilayoga is a combined program of Pilates and yoga that has recently started in Korea and incorporates the characteristics of each exercise program. This article will

identify the characteristics and effects of yoga and Pilates and, ultimately, briefly introduce Pilayoga.

Yoga originated in ancient India and has gained popularity in many countries including Korea. This is owing to the fact that yoga is safe and feasible for various age levels. Moreover, the physiological effects of Yoga have been widely reported. It was reported that long-term Yoga can positively affect cardiovascular diseases (CVD) such as diabetes and high blood pressure, as well as the risk factors of CVD such as blood lipids, metabolic syndrome, and obesity. Cramer et al. [1]. examined 44 randomized control trials in their meta-analysis and the results showed beneficial effects on blood pressure (BP), abdominal obesity, insulin resistance, and blood lipids levels. Similar results were reported on cardiometabolic health such as BP, body composition, and glucose [2]. In addition, participating in Yoga exercises has been shown to have positive effects for not only traditional risk factors, but also cardiac autonomic function, such as heart rate variability [3,4]. Lastly, Yoga was also shown to have positive effects for elderly patients with hip fractures, which led to decreased activity and increased risk of pulmonary complications [5]. In conclusion, it can be seen that regular yoga can bring about positive improvements physiologically and has value as a representative lifestyle modification strategy for prevention and management of diseases.

Pilates was first introduced by Joseph Pilates in the 1920s as "Contrology" by combining gymnastics movements and breathing. Currently, it is a popular exercise program to improve

pain from body alignment problems, incorrect posture, or orthopedic problems through training the core muscles and breathing. Thoracic breathing used in Pilates widely expands the nose when breathing in and pulls in the ribs to the belly button when breathing out. During this process, the stomach is tightened, strengthening the core muscles. This method of breathing strengthens the waist muscles, improves the alignment of the waist, and relieves pain, resulting in a similar effect to physiotherapy. Also, because it is based on strength and dynamic flexibility rather than exclusively with static movements [6], it is possible to relieve the stability and mobility of the lumbar spine [7,8] and neck pain [9].

Pilates applies the basic movements of resistance exercises and consists of movements performed on the mat and on equipment, such as reformers. Both methods can train the muscles in the upper and the lower part of the body. In particular, practicing Pilates movements using equipment improves the muscle strength of the lower body and develops the muscles, thus improving balance ability and decreasing the fall risk for the middle-aged and the elderly [10]. Furthermore, Alpozgen et al. [11] reported positive effects on the upper extremities with Pilates, and this was due to the exercise programs comprising shoulder flexibility, stretching and strengthening movements, and breathing. Similar results from other studies also showed that Pilates has been suggested as an adjuvant treatment for breast cancer care in a meta-analysis [12]. As breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer in women, Pilates would be able to provide a positive impact on cancer rehabilitation. As such, Pilates is highly effective in showing significant improvements in orthopedic problems, thus is a health promotion program that can improve the quality of life.

Pilayoga is an exercise program that combines yoga and Pilates. It is also known as Pila-core-yoga in Korea and Piyo in North America. Pilayoga is based on Pilates and Yoga principles and trains cardio endurance, strength, flexibility, and balance. Because the exercise program consists of warm-up exercises, followed by various repetitive movements with music according to exercise purposes, it is possible to focus on training for burning calories and increasing strength. Furthermore, as traditional yoga movements are modified into different types, Pilayoga brings about the effects of exercise despite its low impact and difficulty levels; it is suitable for both males and

females and is adaptable for all ages and fitness levels. Currently, intervention studies on the effects on Pilayoga are very limited. Pilayoga will definitely be effective in terms of various exercises for the human body, physiotherapy, and rehabilitation in terms of physiology and orthopedics. Basic scientific results will develop the programming and teaching methods of Pilayoga. In addition, such efforts will contribute greatly to the rapid acceleration and generalization of Pilayoga as a new trend.

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