

PILATES IN A PARK

Feast your eyes on lush greenery as you work out

PERSONAL TRAINER



PRADEEP PAUL

Pilates has been a workout option for Singaporeans for some years now. But instead of doing it in the usual Zen-like studios, how about trying it in a park? It is very relaxing to be surrounded by greenery, especially when you are also cocooned in an air-conditioned studio with huge glass windows.

This new spot, which is part of the Aramsa – The Garden Spa in Bishan Park, is called PowerMoves Pilates and Dance Studio.

Clients can feast their eyes on lush green flora as they work on workout machines – four Reformers and a Cadillac – in the studio. It was set up by Claudel Kuek, 43, last January. Lean and strong, she is a walking endorsement of what Pilates can do for the body.

The ballet dancer took up Pilates after childbirth. Now the mother of two children aged 11 and nine, she does Pilates at least three times a week and throws in a dance class on alternate days. She qualified as a trainer after attending courses at Pilates International in Australia and Physical Mind Institute in the United States.

To add to the cardio element, she will also offer hip-hop and jazz ballet classes. Group sessions (for up to six people) cost \$45 per person. Individual sessions cost \$130 each.

pradeep@sph.com.sg

PowerMoves Pilates and Dance Studio is at Bishan Park II, off Ang Mo Kio Ave 1, tel: 6455-2221. The first 50 readers who visit it with this page will get a free Pilates trial session.



Stretch and bend: Claudel Kuek shows how it's done on the Reformer.

MOVES TO TRY



SINGLE LEG STRETCH

How to do it: Lie on your back and inhale as you lift your head and shoulders off the mat and hug your right knee to your chest while the left leg is extended and lifted to a 45-degree angle. Exhale as you switch legs. Begin switching legs, inhaling for two hugs and exhaling for two hugs. Do five to 10 sets (each set comprising one inhalation and one exhalation).

Tip: Keep your shoulders relaxed and your back firmly anchored on the mat.



THE HUNDRED

How to do it: Lie on your back, with your legs raised at a 45-degree angle and arms by your sides. Inhale deeply and exhale as you lift your head and shoulders off the mat, moving your chin towards your chest as you stretch your arms past your hips. Pump your arms up and down by your side for 100 counts as you breathe. Do five pumps as you inhale and another five pumps as you exhale.

Tip: Keep your shoulders down and relaxed, lift your upper back higher on every exhalation while keeping your abs flexed and belly sucked in. To finish, lower your head and draw your knees towards your chest.



SIDE SINGLE LEG LIFT

How to do it: Lie on your right side with your shoulders, hips and feet in a straight line. Place your left hand on the mat to stabilise your body as you lift your top leg up to hip height. Without moving the upper leg, exhale as you lift the bottom leg to meet the top one, then lower it till it almost touches the mat.

Counting a lifting-and-lowering movement as one, start with 10 repetitions on either side, working up to more as you get stronger.

Tip: Keep your navel pulled in towards your spine and squeeze your inner thighs together each time you lift. Keep your neck and shoulders relaxed.