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## Pilates for the Love of the Sport

Posted By [Sara Talbert](#) On August 21, 2008 @ 11:47 am In [Feature Articles](#) | [No Comments](#)



I have been an avid cyclist since 2001. When my husband, Joe (a Personal Trainer), and I were married, we each purchased steel-framed LeMond bikes. Every summer weekend, we would go out and ride for miles and miles. Now with two little girls, we work hard to balance our family lives, our full-time jobs as fitness professionals, and our love of cycling.

To accommodate our busy schedules, we tend to favor workouts that allow us to condition for cycling and our other favorite sports without injuring ourselves. It is with this experience in mind that I developed a program, **Pilates for Athletes**, to help cyclists become pedal powerhouses in no time flat.

Pilates' integration of the trunk, pelvis, and shoulder girdle, as well as its emphasis on proper breathing, correct spinal and pelvic alignment, and smooth flowing movement, allows cyclists and athletes of all kinds to access each part of their body individually and become familiar with their functional mechanics.

A recent study of 15 competitive cyclists found that when abdominal, back, and oblique muscles fatigue, pedaling mechanics falter. Your core is the platform from which your legs push; when it cracks, so do you. The **Pilates for Athletes** program addresses this issue and helps keep your center rock-steady by following three Pilates concepts:

- Heel-to-Buttock Connection (ex. Footwork on the Reformer with heels on footbar)
- Rib-to-Scapula Connection (ex. Long Box on the Reformer Pulling Straps)
- Three Anchors: low abdominals, inner thighs, and gluteus/hamstrings(ex. Using the Power Circle between the knees to engage and connect the three anchors)

Let's not forget the mental part of sport. Once you have established the physical fitness you need to finish strong. Your mental fitness is what sets you apart as an athlete. By incorporating the elements of mind-body-spirit into the Pilates for Athletes program, clients are able to practice "keeping their cool" under workout stress by incorporating two **Pilates principles**: concentration and [1] [breathing](#).

Through concentration you can focus on the task at hand: pedaling your bike as fast as possible even when your legs are screaming.

Proper breathing avoids gasping by expanding your lungs using your diaphragm. Good breath technique will help you find your rhythm, rid yourself of undue stress, and increase energy and power output.

When you top your next climb, I hope you still have the energy to smile. Ride within yourself to be the best athlete you can be.

"Pain is temporary. It may last a minute, or an hour, or a day, or a year, but eventually it will subside and something else will take its place. If I quit, however, it lasts forever."  
–Lance Armstrong

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[1] breathing: <http://www.pilatesdigest.com/the-link-between-the-mind-and-the-body/>

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