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Pilates on the Ball: The World's Most Popular Workout Using the Exercise Ball (English Edition)

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the Exercise Ball

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA unique and exciting synthesis of two highly acclaimed fitness techniques: Pilates Method and the Swiss exercise ball. Non-impact Pilates exercises on the ball can be adapted for all levels of ability, from fitness trainers and weekend athletes to those healing from injury or chronic back pain. Shows how to practice Pilates techniques without expensive equipment. Profusely illustrated with black-and-white photographs for maximal learning.The Pilates Method of body conditioning is a highly effective workout technique that strengthens the body while engaging the mind. Developed in the early twentieth century by accomplished boxer and gymnast Joseph Pilates, the Pilates Method aligns the body; builds long, lean muscles; and develops core abdominal strength. Many lifestyle and fitness magazines have named Pilates the hottest workout of the decade. In a first-of-its-kind fusion, Pilates on the Ball merges the principles and exercises of the highly effective Pilates Method of body conditioning with the unique functions of the

exercise ball, used by Olympic coaches, dancers, and athletes to fine-tune body awareness and enhance physical performance. The ball magnifies the benefits of the carefully developed and refined Pilates Method.

Because maintaining balance on the ball recruits the deep, stabilizing muscles of the spine, the postural muscles are strengthened. The ball intensifies athletic performance by increasing resistance and heightening awareness of how the body moves in space. Chapters detail the Pilates principles step by step, with successive movements to challenge all levels of ability and "watch points" for careful evaluation of your

form. Intense enough to engage seasoned athletes yet accessible enough to use as an everyday exercise routine or to alleviate chronic pain, Pilates on the Ball builds strong bodies and engaged minds. Extrait Pilates on the Ball Introduction Heaven or Hell? Our Relationship to Physical Activity Ingrid's Story On a recent trip to Africa I had tea with Ingrid, a seventy-year-old widow of a European diplomat. My friends and I sat outside on a veranda overlooking a sprawling garden wild with climbers, fig trees, and unswept leaves, an oasis where even in the dead of an African winter insects, birds, and flowers thrived. The sun was very sharp but falling fast as the tea arrived, colonial style, carried on a well-dressed tray by the domestic helper. My

friends baited Ingrid to talk about her sojourns in the various African countries where she and her late husband had lived. Sudan, Egypt, Congo, Kenya, Uganda, she rattled off. She was my mother's age yet had lived a life I could not imagine. Not a life of shopping malls, PTA meetings, or painting classes, but one of terrorist bombings, grenade attacks, luxury houses on stilts overlooking foreign oceans; a decadent life with too much drinking and cigarette smoking. The sharp cold made us move inside. We sat on leather sofas in front of a massive stone fireplace surrounded by animal-skin carpets and bead-decorated stools. Every eye was on the sun-aged, blue-eyed diplomat's wife, who smoothed a stray piece of hair back from her face in a mood reminiscent of a 1950s Hollywood starlet. Once in Uganda she had been roused from a bath at midnight by the sound of guerillas with AK-47s stomping around in the very next room. After Idi Amin's fall, Ingrid slipped into the dictator's ransacked home to help herself to a stool and a telephone. These stories would have had a historian or a journalist jumping. Yet what made my ears perk up was her announcement of how she had transformed the mammoth stone-filled field around her new home into a lush garden. Her

husband, she explained, had died two years previously; soon after she had begun to shrivel up, and she needed to walk with a cane. One day she looked into a mirror, a crystal glass full of scotch nearby, to admit that she had again gone off the wagon and was old--a skeleton living in another radically transformed African country. Then a close friend had helped her to stop drinking. Sober and alone, she was forced to take control of her life. What did you do? I asked. The fire glowed in the grate behind her. Physical work--like a man, she said with a small smile. I designed the garden. I ordered truckloads of dirt. I put in the two fishponds. Of course I had help. I had to get rid of the sticks. These, what-you-call, canes, held me back from planting. Now what do you do? I asked. She had two gardeners who appeared to take care of much of the yard work. Swim aerobics, she said. I started eight months ago. I go every second day. The swim aerobics led to the mall walking. Mall walking? On the days I don't swim, I walk. It's very organized. True as God, they even time us with stopwatches. Like an American, I am, she laughed. Can you see me walking in circles inside a mall? But I love it. You do? exclaimed one of my friends. Like me he was no doubt trying to imagine Ingrid clad in sneakers and track clothing. Ingrid nodded. Behind the chair in which she sat Ingrid had arranged some fat purple-brown pods with other dried flowers. I knew these pods opened with a crack--a crack you could hear from a distance--before flinging out their seeds. One look at these wondrous pods and I was reminded of the transforming power of a new beginning. My life is saved, Ingrid added after a moment.

My face is old. I am ashamed of my face. But my body, it sings. Movement and You What is your relationship to physical activity? Have you despised exercise most of your life so that even the idea of a walk feels like a chore? Or do you crazily toss yourself from one activity to the next, from one new fitness phase to another? Perhaps you are one of the so-called weekend warriors, the people who do nothing physical all week, then at the first opportunity toss themselves into frenzied, extended exercise--pedaling all day on an ill-tuned bicycle or swimming nonstop across a lake. Or maybe you are relatively fit. You are disciplined enough to slip in three sessions a week at your local Y or health club, but you are terribly bored of the same old routine. In frustration you find yourself on the floor, your feet hooked under a heavy bar, forcing yourself to do dozens and dozens of sit-ups. Yet in spite of your efforts you do not achieve the results you want. Throughout my life I have had the opportunity to live on different continents and learn from different peoples and cultures. In many countries I have witnessed the same erratic relationship to exercise that we

North Americans have. In Russia I have seen people worn to the bone by the strains of daily life, as dog-tired as the stray mutts who sleep outside the metro stations; yet these same people will fire off a set of push-

ups in their cramped apartments. They may not exercise again for months, even years. In South Africa I have seen activists pull on torn sneakers to jog ten kilometers and then smoke their lungs out at meetings afterward. In North America we use our cars to drive two blocks to a corner store, then we sit atop stationary bikes, often in front of the television, unaware of our posture or technique. In spite of an extensive background in dance movement and ballet, even I cut myself off from my body for twenty years, believing that intellectual pursuits were noble and physical ones superficial. *Revue de presse* "Craig offers a unique and exciting synthesis of the Pilates Method of body conditioning and the Swiss exercise ball, providing a new, low-impact way to get fit." (Arizona Networking News, April/May 2002) "A unique and exciting synthesis of two highly-acclaimed fitness techniques. . . provides a new, low-impact way to get fit." (Total Health, September/October 2001)