

### Walking & Pilates for a Stronger Heart

Over 70 million North Americans are walkers, which makes walking our top sport. A recent survey showed about half are Pilates enthusiasts. Why are so many walkers turning on to Pilates?

Walking tightens the hamstrings, calves, hips, and the lower back just to name a few areas that need relaxing and lengthening. Muscles that get tight and overused can cause imbalances in the skeletal system creating inefficient gait and pain.

Something you will hear in the Pilates industry time and again is “Doing Pilates regularly will help you do everything else you want to do, whether it's league hockey, skiing, jogging or walking.” In Pilates we focus not just on strengthening the muscles; but equal time is spent on strengthening and lubricating the joints.

Pilates aims at releasing those areas through movements and core education. By witnessing our own gait we might notice imbalances in the muscular and skeletal system, which not only affects our feet, but knees, and hips as well as the whole body. Look at the bottom of your shoes — what is the wear pattern? Is one side more worn than the other? Is the heel the most worn-down part? All these are indicators of foot placement while walking. In Pilates we focus on stretching and core strengthening, AND also on correcting posture tendencies. It is these posture tendencies that affect gait.