



## **Balanced Body, Inc. Corporate Backgrounder**

Balanced Body, with headquarters in Sacramento, Calif., is the world's largest manufacturer of Pilates. Since 1976, the company has designed, manufactured and marketed equipment for Pilates studios, health clubs, rehabilitation facilities and individual consumers. As the first company to manufacture Pilates equipment on a broad scale, Balanced Body made this specialized fitness equipment more available to a growing and diverse audience.

The company and its founder and CEO, Ken Endelman, remain committed to the integrity of Joseph Pilates' original equipment designs, while using sophisticated engineering, materials and technology to constantly improve the quality, safety and functionality of each piece. Throughout the last 30 years, many of Endelman's innovative equipment improvements have become industry standards.

### **Raising the Bar for the Pilates Industry**

Focusing on breathing techniques, proper body alignment and acute body control, Joseph Pilates began developing his innovative mind-body exercise method during World War I, while interned in England with other German nationals. His exercise system, which he originally called "Contrology," contrasted from traditional exercise methods in its concentration on quality of movement over number of repetitions. The Pilates method focused primarily on the core "powerhouse" of the body – the area consisting of the abdominal muscles, lower back, hips and buttocks that work together to form the core strength of the body.

In 1926, Pilates brought his "Contrology" system to New York City where he opened his own studio. In New York, the Pilates method quickly attracted the attention of dancers and athletes for its ability to heal injuries. Pilates also taught his method to a small group of devoted students, now known as the "elders," including Ron Fletcher, Mary Bowen, Romana Kryzanowska, Kathy Grant and Lolita San Miguel. The elders eventually took their Pilates training to other parts of the country, sharing and teaching the Pilates concept. From the elders, a second generation of Pilates enthusiasts arose, then a third, spurring a proliferation of Pilates teachers and students.

The popularity of Pilates continued to grow throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and Pilates enthusiasts opened studios across the country. Today, the Pilates community is larger than ever. The number of studios in the United States has grown from just five worldwide in 1976 to more than 5,000 today. Although the Pilates workout attracts celebrities such as Madonna, Sharon Stone and professional athletes from teams like the Oakland Raiders and Detroit Lions football teams and New

*-more-*

Jersey Nets basketball team, its popularity has become widespread in recent years. The SGMA Sports Participation Topline Report indicates that in 2004, more than ten million people participated in some form of Pilates.

As the Pilates workout caught on, the demand for equipment soared. In the 1970s, Balanced Body CEO Ken Endelman owned a custom-furniture store in Hollywood's trendy Melrose Avenue district. His career as a Pilates equipment manufacturer began when one of his clients, a Pilates instructor, made a special request for a better-built Reformer, the primary piece of equipment used for Pilates.

After studying existing equipment and Joseph Pilates' original designs, Endelman consulted with several other Pilates instructors to determine what additional features might make the Reformer an even more effective piece of equipment. The end result was a safer, smoother, quieter and more user-friendly Reformer that would help propel the Pilates workout well into the next century.

### **The Next Generation of Exercise Equipment**

As Pilates became more popular throughout the 1980s, Endelman continued to refine and improve the equipment. Consulting with Joseph Pilates' longtime associates, including "elders" Ron Fletcher and Kathy Grant, Endelman developed Pilates equipment to maximize the effectiveness of each movement, while ensuring safety and ease of use. Endelman's dedication to developing the finest Pilates equipment available has made Balanced Body the preferred manufacturer for Pilates instructors, studios and health clubs around the world.

Using Joseph Pilates' original equipment designs as models, Balanced Body has set the standard for the entire Pilates industry. Each piece of equipment is built to last, using high-quality materials such as Rock Maple wood and nickel-plated carbon steel springs. Balanced Body provides the smoothest, quietest, most durable Pilates equipment on the market – equipment designed and built to last a lifetime.

### **Pilates For All: Leading the Trademark Lawsuit**

In 2000, Ken Endelman won an important victory for Pilates instructors and enthusiasts when the U.S. District Court ruled that Pilates trademarks are invalid, establishing the term "Pilates" as generic. The four-year, \$1 million-plus lawsuit required that Endelman defend his use of the term Pilates against a New York City studio owner, Sean Gallagher, who had falsely trademarked the word Pilates, and demanded payment from anyone who used the term to promote their Pilates studios. Gallagher had also claimed that his instructors were the only qualified teachers of the Pilates method.

Endelman defended the Pilates community on the premise that trademarks do not cover exercise methods, such as yoga and karate. Preserving the public use of the Pilates term has ensured

*-more-*

the health of the Pilates industry, and opened the door for people worldwide to practice Pilates as their exercise method of choice.

### **Leading the Future of Pilates**

Today, Balanced Body maintains its commitment to building the finest Pilates equipment available, and actively promotes the Pilates method and its benefits to the fitness industry, the medical profession, the media and consumers. The company developed the 1-800-PILATES service helping individuals and health and fitness facilities locate instructors in specific areas free of charge. Every month, this service refers more than 1,000 interested clients to Pilates instructors and health and fitness facilities across the globe.

Balanced Body designs and manufactures custom-built Pilates equipment at its 85,000 square foot manufacturing facility in Sacramento, California. Through the company's Web site ([www.pilates.com](http://www.pilates.com)) and catalogs, customers around the world trust Balanced Body for the world's largest selection of Pilates equipment, accessories and videos.

###

### **CONTACT:**

Ariel Knobbe  
Lawscomm  
10630 E. Bethany Dr., Suite A  
Aurora, CO 80014  
Phone: 303-755-4400 x100  
Fax: 303-755-4455  
E-mail: [ariel@lawscomm.com](mailto:ariel@lawscomm.com)