

## Ask the Experts: Does Pilates exercises help Scoliosis?

### What is Scoliosis?

Scoliosis is a common condition faced by many. Instead of a straight line down the back, there's a sideways curve of the spine, sometimes looking like a letter "C" or "S".

### Can we treat or prevent it?

The onset of scoliosis cannot be prevented, unfortunately. Most cases of scoliosis (around 80%) are idiopathic, which means that the cause is not known. Idiopathic scoliosis usually develops during puberty, so if your teenage or pre-teen child has recently been diagnosed with scoliosis, there's a good chance it's idiopathic. Since the cause of the curvature is unknown in these cases, it cannot be anticipated and no preventative action can be taken.

But Scoliosis can be treated with Pilates exercises.

- *Chami, Pilates Instructor*

### Does Pilates exercises help Scoliosis?

You can't reverse the curve in your spine with Pilates exercise but a targeted program can teach you how to release tight areas of your spine, improve your awareness of alignment and strengthen the internal muscles that support and control your spine.

The goal is to develop the inner muscles of the rib cage in order to change the shape of the upper trunk and to correct any spinal abnormalities. Pilates is well known for developing body awareness and deep core muscles to support trunk stabilization.

- *Chami, Pilates Instructor*



### How does Pilates make a difference?

While most people feel a difference between one side of the body versus the other in terms of strength or flexibility, the disparity is much more pronounced in people with scoliosis. The curve in the spine causes imbalances in the muscles, making one side of the body more tight or weaker compared to the other.

Pilates can help address these muscles imbalances and hopefully even out any differences in strength or flexibility. Exercise programs can be tailored so that balance and symmetry can be restored in the body to the extent possible.

Pilates is a wonderful exercise to address pain or discomfort that is common to those with Scoliosis, particularly all the side-bend and rotational movements that we do with the spine.

- *Mayni, Pilates Instructor*

### What do you need to be aware of when exercising?

This is just a general advice as scoliosis patterns differ for each person :

- Focus on keeping axial elongation, as it will help improve the imbalances of the spine
- As challenging as they are, give your best to those deep core exercises in class as they help with trunk stabilisation and provide long term support for the spine
- holding the spine more upright.

- *Fiona, Pilates Instructor*

While the incidence of back pain for scoliosis is roughly the same as people without back pain, back pain does appear to increase with the severity of scoliosis. This essentially means that a small degree of scoliosis is not necessarily a big contributor of back pain, however like the general population, exercises will help with back pain.

For more queries, feel free to reach out to us. If you would like to make a private booking with our Instructor or Physiotherapist, do give us a call at 6235 3938 / 6327 2072 or email us at [info@focusmovement.sg](mailto:info@focusmovement.sg).

