



The *Best* Bride Body

PILATES PROVIDES A FANTASTIC OPTION FOR
LOOKING YOUR BEST ON THE BIG DAY

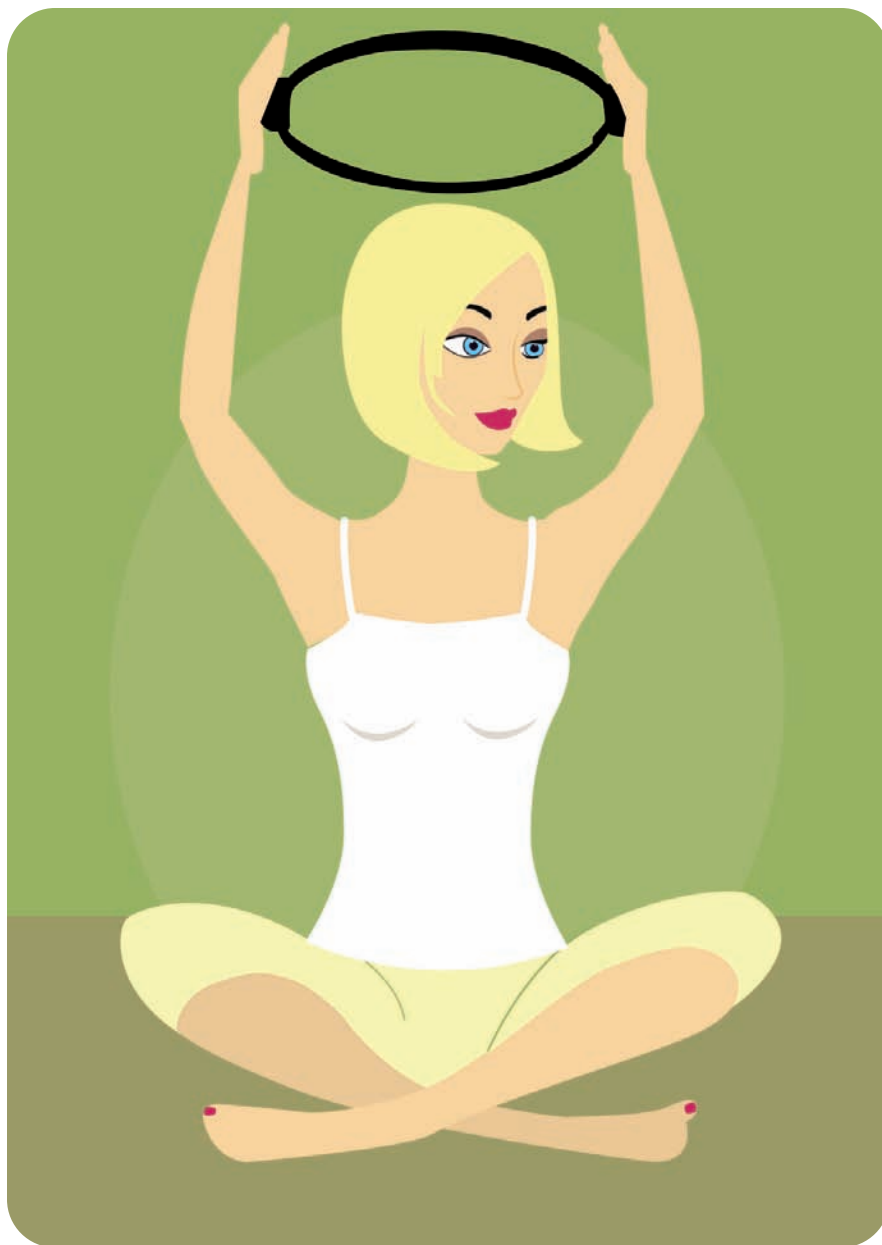
— By Liz Daniel —

Let's face it, every bride wants to be her trimmest in her dress on her wedding day. Getting there is another story. You don't have to deprive yourself of food and turn yourself into a bridezilla to look amazing, nor do you have to do two hours of intense workouts every day. No matter what your fitness level, most brides battle the same three issues: waistline, bride arms and posture. I met with a former Radio City Rockette and trainer-to-the-stars to find out

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how to implement a plan to show off your best body and get yourself honeymoon ready.

Erin Weston-Myers, the aforementioned former Rockette and owner of Simply Pilates, educated me about how Pilates can transform the body. Whether you're naturally tiny but soft, in shape but needing to lose five pounds or in need of an overall makeover, with no fitness regimen in place, Pilates is literally for everyone, in every shape.



BenEzra tells all clients Pilates will strengthen and tighten the core to enhance posture, but cardio is vital to keep lean.

are both extremely effective. Mat classes simply work your body against gravity where reformer work is done a big piece of machinery with springs, pullies and a moving carriage. Erin's Soho-styled studio Simply Pilates offers both. It feels like a space in New York but it's located in the Nashville's newest destination area, Edgehill Village.

HOW PILATES CAN HELP ...

The waistline. Since everything in Pilates revolves around working the core, throughout every minute of your Pilates workout, you'll be toning the muscles around your mid-line. Even though the number on the scale won't necessarily change, you'll quickly see your waistline drop in size.

Bride arms. Most current wedding dresses are strapless or have spaghetti straps, and even if yours isn't you want to make sure there's nice tone in the arms. Pilates includes arm exercises that will nicely tone the arms without making your arms bulk up and look masculine. You can think of Pilates as a form of strength training, just not in the traditional sense. The use of springs builds resistance, which in turn elongates and lengthens muscles.

Posture. There's nothing worse than seeing a beautiful woman, on one of the most special days of her life, walk down the aisle with a beautiful, expensive dress on, ready to be wedded to the man of her dreams—all slouched over. Not only does Pilates work the abs, but it also works the back, which in conjunction with the abs, creates great posture.

Erin is the first to say Pilates must be done in conjunction with cardio and also requires eating properly. She directs clients to Lara BenEzra, M.Ed CPT, who transformed Jo Dee Messina's body into a lean machine for her *Bring on the Rain* tour in early 2000. Lara has a large clientele, ranging from busy professionals to high-profile music industry folks. She calls Keith Urban one of her favorite

Pilates is an exercise technique that focuses on strengthening the inner-most muscles of your body, known as your "core." Erin refers to the regimen as "intelligent exercise," since you have to be focused on what your body is doing at all times in Pilates. Joseph Pilates, an Englishman who invented the system just after World War I, described the timeline of seeing results best. "After 10 sessions you'll feel a difference," he said. "After 20 sessions you'll see a difference. After 30 sessions they'll see a difference."

Pilates work can be done on the mat or on a reformer. Group mat classes and group reformer (a type of Pilates machine) classes

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clients after touring with him 2005 and 2006, but says her most rewarding projects are the average exercisers who come to her and transform themselves with her mixture of education, tough workouts and support.

THE NUTRITION ASPECT

A certified personal trainer, Lara BenEzra will be the first to tell you she doesn't have a degree in nutrition. "I cannot stress enough that I don't try to take the place of an RD," she says. "I just feel that this system I have ensures success once we start to exercise, because it all works as a unit—the food and the fitness." BenEzra creates a program people can live with, not go on and off, like a diet. Her program is easy to relate to, rather than clinical, like you might expect from a nutritionist.

BenEzra believes getting a handle on nutrition and getting connected with food is the first step for her clients when they come for a consult. She aims to change their state of being—a state, she says, is for most an uncomfortable one, let alone unhealthy. She reviews food logs and speaks her gut feelings about where clients go wrong. I felt educated about eating well, until BenEzra reviewed my plan. "Healthy, but unbalanced," she told me, and tweaked my diet. I lost two pounds in a week. She follows with an educational session teaching her clients the foundation of sound nutrition, showing examples of portion sizes. The best part is she brings healthy food items to taste and view and then prepares a sample seven-day plan individualized to meet each person's needs and goals and tastes and lifestyle.

BenEzra tells all clients Pilates will strengthen and tighten the core to enhance posture, but cardio is vital to keep lean. She is also a big fan of circuit weight training to burn fat and sculpt the body, saying "strong brides feel sexy." She suggests exercise and healthy diet as a lifestyle, but says brides need 12 weeks to crank it in high gear. Six weeks can also do the trick, but it will require a bit more time per day (90 minutes versus 45-60 of exercise and being more restrictive with the diet). Cardio sessions should be done pretty much every day, alternating some shorter duration/high-intensity days with longer duration/steady, but lower-intensity days, four days a week for maintenance, six days a week if weight loss or getting your leanest is the goal. Strength and core work such as Pilates should be done two or three times per week in addition to the cardio.

Never intimidating and always motivating, both these women showed me how to get the best arms, posture and waistline for the big day, whenever that comes along. You'll find shoulders down and back and abs in is a natural state and you'll be outshining your Vera Wang wedding dress before you know it.

SIMPLY PILATES

Erin Weston-Myers
1207 Villa Place Suite A
Nashville, TN 37212
ph: 615-509-66004
www.SPilates.com email: info@SPilates.com

LARA BENEZRA

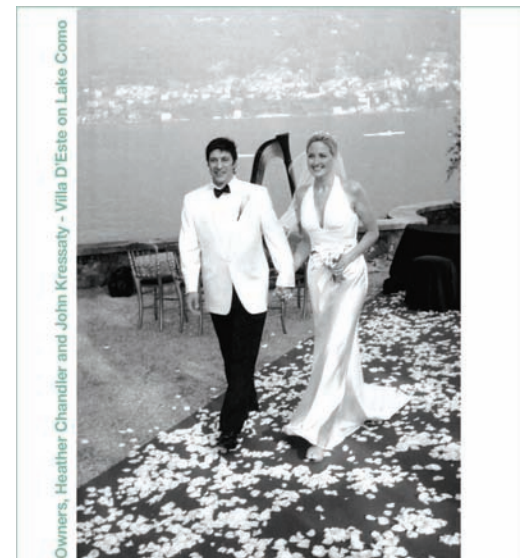
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