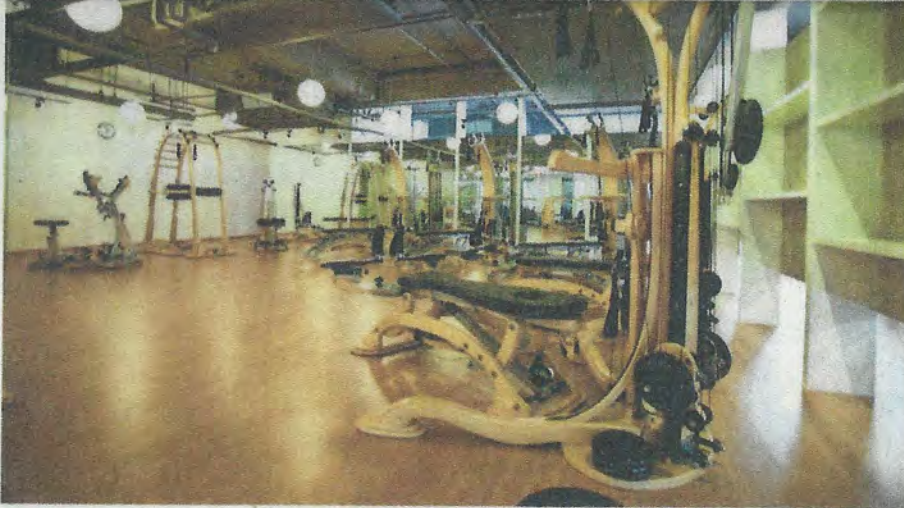


# THERAPY REFORMED

As new studios open up in Singapore, Pilates has become increasingly relevant for a whole range of needs, from physiotherapy to fitness and weight loss.



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## CORE BUSINESS

Left: Nina Kao, owner of Jace Physio-Pilates, puts a client through her paces at the Wisma Atria studio. Above: The Moving Body's studio with its Pilates and trademarked Gyrotonic equipment

EVER since The Moving Body opened two years ago, it's offered Pilates and the trademarked Gyrotonic exercises – especially beneficial for those who had completed their physiotherapy and had been referred by their doctors or therapists. "It's good for those who have passed the acute stage of their injury where their pain has subsided. Both movement methods combined together actually provides an indi-

vidual with the right balance of strength and flexibility to perform their daily activities and sports with a lower risk of injury," explains Audrey D'cotta, the director.

Pilates and Gyrotonic aren't alternatives to physiotherapy, osteopathy or chiropractic, even though its trainers have an extensive knowledge of posture and exercises – and in some cases, even more so than some physiotherapists. "But they aren't specifically trained to diagnose injuries or treat using manual therapy techniques," Ms D'cotta adds. The best person to do so is of course a physiotherapist who's trained in Pilates/Gyrotonic as well.

In the consultation room, my physiotherapy-qualified trainer gives me both a physiotherapist's assessment of my right arm with a pinched nerve and also a Pilates consultation which looks at general body alignment. Stretching out my right arm, he explains that he would apply the Active Isolated Stretching method on it.

"This is when you gently stretch a muscle and take it off the stretch before the reflex kicks in. Typically two to three seconds repeated 12-20 times. Neurodynamics and neural flossing are also techniques where you specifically stretch the nerves rather than the muscles in order to relax the nerve and desensitise its transmission of pain," he explains.

This is because the nervous system is the channel through which pain is trans-

mitted from our body to the brain. It is also responsible for giving feedback to the brain about all our movements, posture, strength and muscle tone. With traditional static stretching, people tend not to hold a stretch position long enough when it does work. "When held for too short a period, like just ten seconds instead of two to three minutes, it doesn't work. Different muscles also need different lengths of time as there's just a sense of relief but the muscle isn't lengthened," he says.



He then shows me some exercises on the Pilates Reformer machine, for a general overview, and also runs through exercises specific to my running needs.

The Moving Body studio does one-on-one classes, es-

pecially on the Gyrotonic and Reformer machines, as well as group classes of up to six per class.

At 4,000 sq ft, the studio is one of the largest in Singapore, if not Asia; and has a total of 26 pieces of Pilates and Gyrotonic equipment. It also has a health cafe called Sprout, and a sister company Pilates Inc that provides personal training, TRX and Spinning classes.

By Cheah Ui-Hoon