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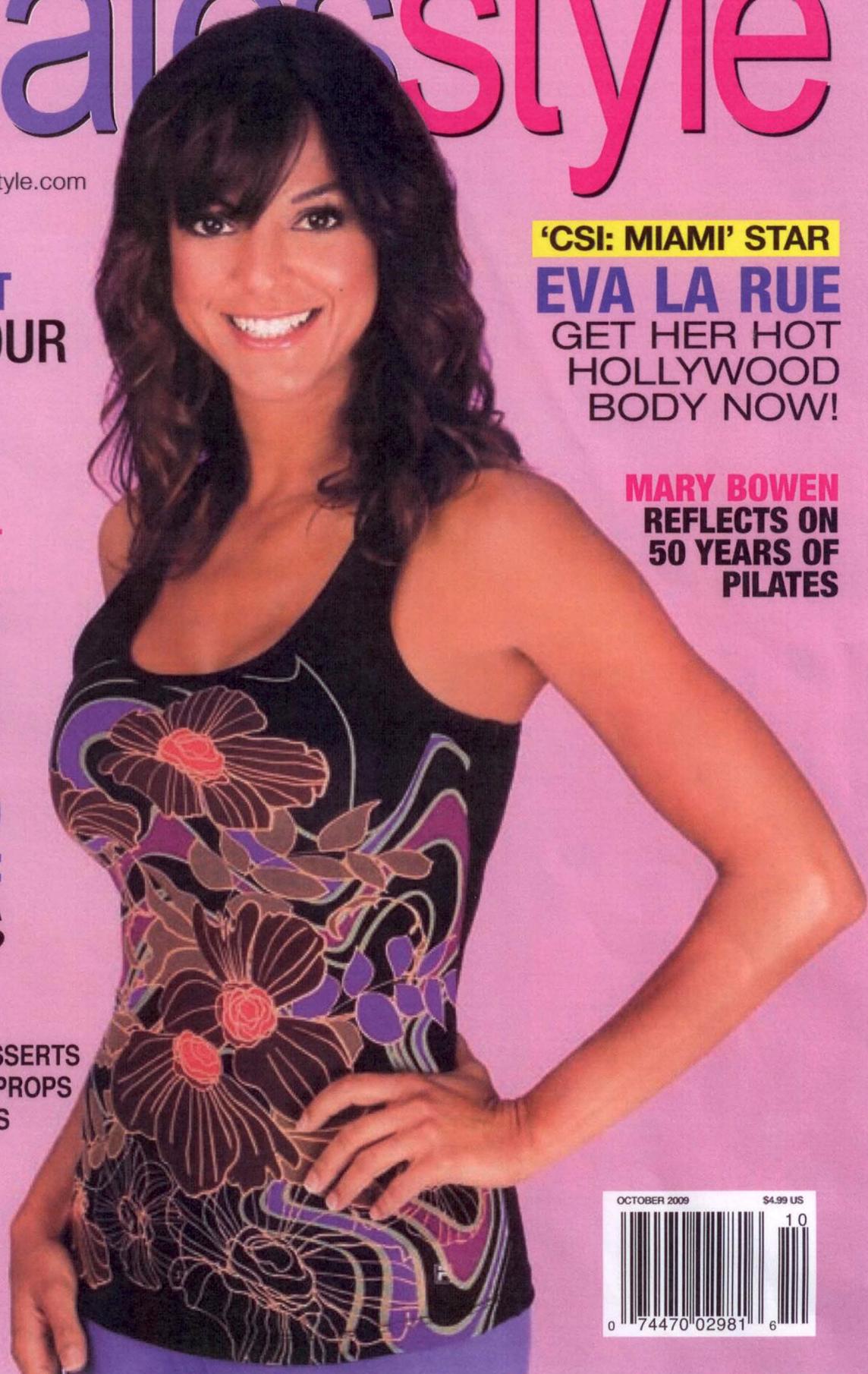
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# ask the experts

clean mats • effective workouts  
protein-carb balance • wellness coaching

BY MOIRA MERRITHEW AND JACKIE KELLER

**Q:** *I've noticed that instructors always wipe off apparatus. Should I wipe my mat off after practice, too? How concerned should I be about germs in the studio?*

**A:** Wiping off apparatus is a standard practice for all thriving studios. A common cleaning solution is water diluted with tea tree oil to disinfect surfaces that clients come into con-

floor or closet in which they're stored. Not only is it the safe thing to do, but it's also the courteous thing to do.

The same goes for your home mat. It's essential to keep it clean and maintain its longevity by washing it down once a month with soap and water as well as wiping it down after each of your home sessions.

While we're on the subject, it's worth noting that cleaning off appara-

your hands before and after your sessions or before you incorporate small props and equipment into your Pilates routine is another effective way to reduce germ exposure. You might consider bringing a hand sanitizer to class.

There's no one healthy habit to keep a studio germ-free; it takes a combination of practices to proactively guard against the buildup of germs. The studios I work with are very careful about keeping surfaces clean and dust-free and enforcing rules that allow clients to walk around barefoot and with exposed skin. —M.M.

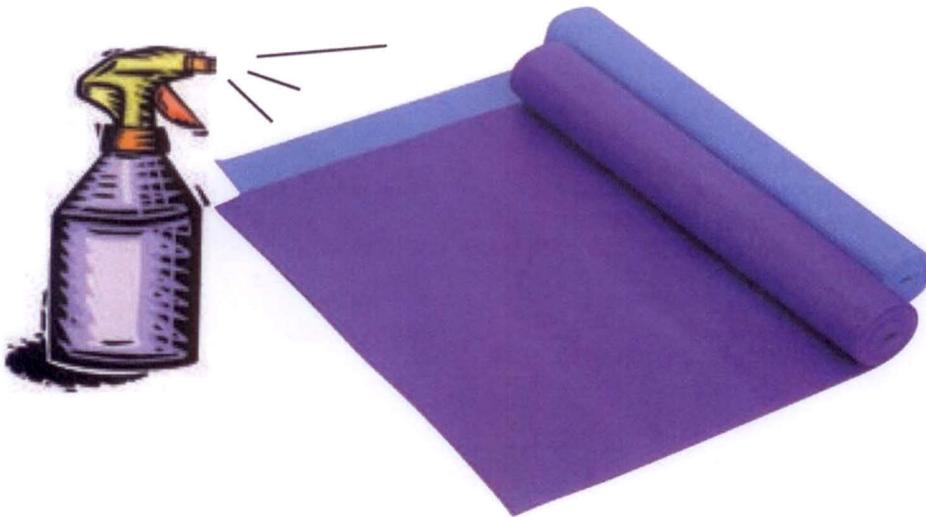
**Q:** *I can't afford privates. Can I get the same benefits from regular mat classes and a home practice?*

**A:** For customized attention and carefully monitored progress, there's nothing like private instruction. But like most highly qualified professionals' rates, Pilates instructors' hourly rates can be quite high. And while this is appropriate for their business, it's not always affordable for people just as keen to experience high-quality workouts and good progress in their fitness.

That said, class instruction shouldn't be considered as a compromise to good fitness training! The instructors are no less qualified in delivering effective,

tact with—particularly with bare skin. Any time people exert themselves on a porous surface, like a mat or apparatus, there's the possibility of germs collecting and compromising the sanitation level of the surface and even the shelves,

tus and mats doesn't eradicate the need for attention to overall studio sanitation practices. For instance, it's important not to wear outdoor shoes in the studio—they can transport outdoor grime that might linger. Washing



challenging and diverse workouts. It's motivating to have people beside you, laughing with you or supporting your efforts. Groups can keep your energy level up and your competitive spirit in place. Most important, they aren't as expensive as private classes—and are often easier to schedule.

Practicing with a DVD from a reputable, professional company can be effective as well. The benefits of working at home are that you can do so on a schedule that is convenient, and you have control over the length of time, level of challenge and focus of the workout. Again, you don't have to compromise your fitness vision just because working out at home is best for you. As long as you use high-quality equipment and props and remember to switch up your program often so you don't get bored, you should be pleased with your results.

If you do choose to work out at home or use group classes as your primary source of fitness activity, I recommend that you touch base with a private instructor maybe every six to eight

ensure the effectiveness of your workout and the types of results you achieve.

Remember that fitness is a personal endeavor. The most important thing is to be realistic about your level of commitment and to be focused on results. This way, you can establish a course of action that is right for you and that motivates you to take care of your body. Nothing else matters. —M.M.

**Q: As an active exerciser, I'm worried about striking the right balance between protein and carbs to keep up my active schedule but not gain weight. How do I figure out how much of what I need to eat?**

**A:** That's a multidimensional question, one that you could write a book about! In fact, I have, and in it I recommend a macronutrient balance of 50–55 percent of your calories from complex carbohydrates, 20–25 percent from lean proteins and the remaining 20–25 percent from healthy fats.

As a point of reference, a 150-pound woman doing Pilates for an hour burns

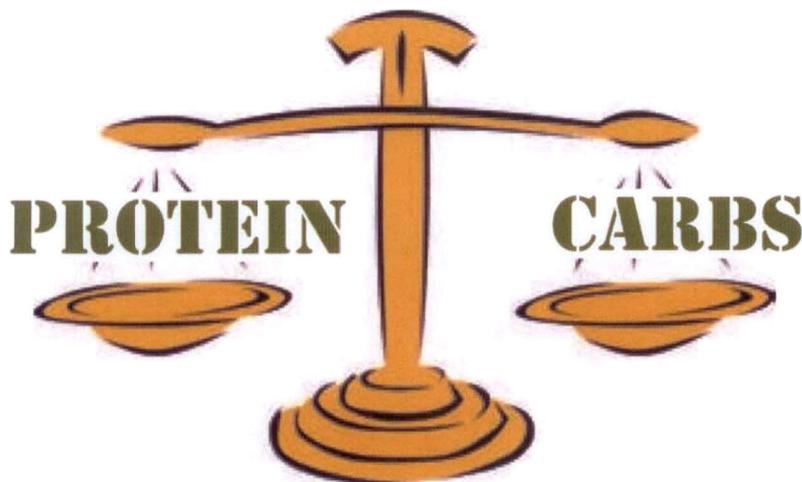
after your workout, leave them there. In fact, if you make another small “deposit,” say, adding another class into your weekly exercise regimen, at the end of the month, you will have burned off nearly two pounds without making any adjustment to your eating. Of course, if you're trying to lose weight, you need to both burn more calories and restrict your daily consumption by 250 to 500 calories to achieve a weight loss of one to two pounds a week.

If you're trying to maintain a healthy weight and not lose or gain while exercising, you should snack consistently. It's important to keep your body fueled properly throughout the day so your metabolism stays elevated and your blood sugar levels constant. You'll want to eat something nutritious every three hours, like fruit, nuts, yogurt, cottage cheese or wholesome whole-grain crackers. Remember that a varied diet will give you a spectrum of vitamins and minerals in nature's most perfect package: healthy food! —J.K.

**Q: Why should someone opt to hire a wellness coach, and how is that different from seeing a psychotherapist?**

**A:** Wellness coaches are trained to develop client-oriented goals and objectives and help clients arrive at their own solutions. Therapists typically work from a problem orientation and are trained to give advice and direction. Both approaches have their advantages, and whichever route you go, be sure to check their credentials, experience, training and references.

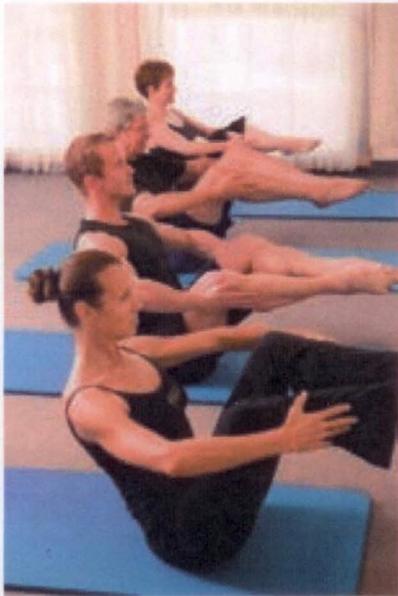
Here's an overview of how coaches work: During the first 60-minute coaching session, the coach will facilitate a discussion about the client's priorities and wellness vision, and together they will create a coaching program. The client then affirms that he or she is ready to make changes in at least one wellness area (e.g., improved fitness or nutrition,



weeks to make sure you aren't establishing any bad patterns or habits. A private instructor is trained to analyze posture and focus on the specific needs of their clients. This type of guidance can be very useful as an intermittent tool to

about 240 calories. This is the equivalent of eating an energy bar or drinking a large, full-fat latte, which you might be tempted to do as a reward for a good workout. But consider “banking” those calories: Instead of “withdrawing” them

weight loss, stress reduction) and orally commits to a coaching program. They generally set short-term goals for the following week plus realistic goals for a three-month period. The goals are behavioral, meaning they are specific actions the client will take consistently for three months.

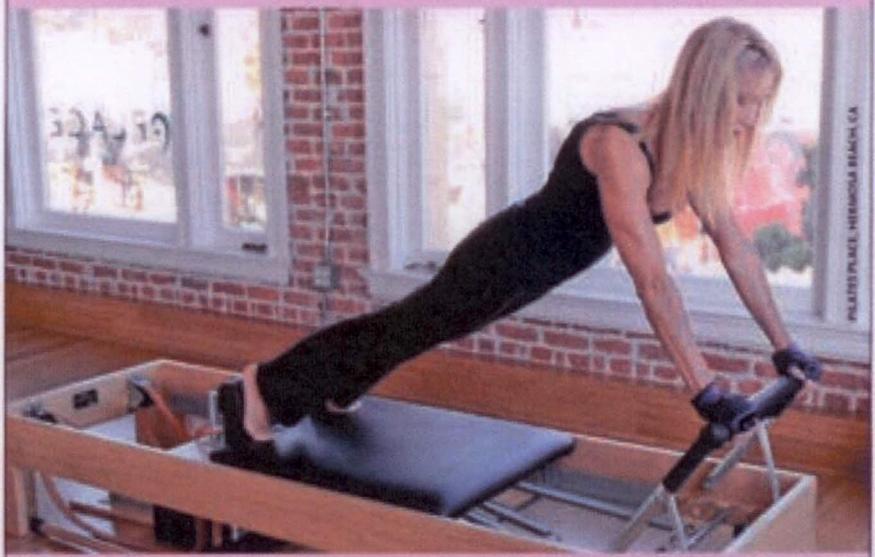


In each subsequent 30-minute coaching session, coaches and clients review the progress made and, when necessary, develop solutions to overcome obstacles. Every week, a set of goals for the following week is agreed upon. In my personal experience, by the end of three months most clients have reached 80 percent of their first-priority short-term goals and more than 70 percent of their three-month goals. They are usually energized and confident to commit to maintaining and/or changing new areas over the next three months. —J.K.

*Moira Merrithew is the cofounder and executive director of education for STOTT PILATES®. Celebrity nutritionist Jackie Keller is a wellness coach and the founder of NutriFit.*



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