



August, 2005

Re: The Evolution of The Pilates Method: The Fletcher Work™

To Whom It May Concern,

The Fletcher Work is the authentic evolution of the Pilates' method. To be accurate and legitimate, any journalistic inquiry into contemporary Pilates must necessarily include this dynamic contribution. On behalf of The Ron Fletcher Company, I encourage you to take time to review the enclosed materials.

Pilates is more than a contemporary fitness phenomenon. It is an extraordinarily effective conditioning method — nearly a century in development — whose time has finally come. Joseph Pilates' original principles were absolutely sound, yet his wife, Clara, referred to her husband's original work as "just the tip of the iceberg."

The development and evolution of the Pilates method over the last 35 years has been, in large part, the result of the work and vision of Ron Fletcher, their protégé and student for nearly three decades. Since Joseph Pilates' death in 1968, no other individual has played a more pivotal role in the evolution and popularity of the Pilates method. Now in his eighties, Mr. Fletcher is one of only three such masters still teaching the Work.

Should you have any questions regarding the enclosed information, or should you wish to pursue a related project, please do not hesitate to contact me. In addition to being one of the great luminaries of the Pilates world, Ron Fletcher is also very much alive, well and active... *and he's a great interview.*

Sincerely,

Kyria Sabin

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It's hard for me to imagine how I could begin my life as a boy in Dogtown, Missouri, and end up in New York City with Martha Graham and Joe and Clara Pilates as teachers. I think there is a higher power that leads us to our path, and that perhaps, little is left to random chance. I continue to feel that many of my students are drawn to my work by the same higher power that led me to my special teachers.

—Ron Fletcher

21st Century Pilates

The House that Fletcher Built

There is little doubt among the fitness cognoscenti that Joseph Pilates broke new ground with the conditioning method that now bears his name. Half a century ago, Pilates knew he was far ahead of his time. During his lifetime, the Work was hardly known beyond New York City. What Pilates may never have been able to imagine was how it would ultimately evolve.

After his death in 1967, Pilates' wife and partner, Clara, described their progress as "just the tip of the iceberg." She knew the principles were sound but the work itself was still in development. In a now-famous letter penned to their 20-year student and disciple, Ron Fletcher, Clara Pilates wrote, "There is far to go with this work and you are the man to carry it forward."

For the past 35 years Master Teacher Ron Fletcher has done just that. In 1971, he took the Work west, opening *The Ron Fletcher Studio for Body Contrology* in Beverly Hills. Fletcher's introduction of this work to a highly visible new audience of movie stars and celebrities paved the way for the status it now enjoys.

Crucial as this move was, it only prefaced Ron Fletcher's dynamic contributions that have greatly assisted in making Pilates what it is today. His innovative adaptations of the original core Pilates principles have transformed the once rigid set of exercises into an elegant movement modality with a rhythm all its own.

The Ron Fletcher Program of Study™

As the popularity of the Fletcher Work™ continues to grow and as more and more Pilates-based studios embrace it, the need has arisen for a comprehensive, uniform, professional curriculum to satisfy the demand for professional Fletcher Teachers.

To answer that need and to ensure the consistency and continuity of this Pilates lineage, long-time Fletcher Teachers Pat Guyton and Kyria Sabin have joined forces in an unprecedented collaboration to produce The Ron Fletcher Program of Study™. The Program of Study is most comprehensive and definitive professional school of its kind, and the only to be fully endorsed by Ron Fletcher.

Today, in his eighties, Ron Fletcher is one of only three surviving master teachers to have studied directly under Joseph and Clara Pilates. By far the most influential, innovative and active, he continues to develop the work and to lead regular master workshops throughout the world. These workshops are filled to capacity at every stop with the next generation of Fletcher Pilates teachers.

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Ron's Story

The Beginning

Ron Fletcher arrived in New York City in 1944, and was accepted a short time later as a scholarship student by the legendary Martha Graham. The demands of the Graham work and a rigorous performing schedule caused what became a chronic knee injury, which led him to Joseph Pilates for therapy. Ron immediately recognized the value of Pilates' philosophy and concept, *Body Contrology*.

As "one of the lucky ones," Ron's career flourished in a short time. He became a well-known and successful dancer and choreographer while working with Graham and dancing in London. During this time, he choreographed *Top Banana* on Broadway, *The All Star Revue* for NBC, *The Lido* in Paris, and 13 editions of *International Ice Capades*, traveling to Moscow as part of the cultural exchange during the cold war.

In 1967, Ron experienced a spiritual awakening, realizing that he had worked through these highly successful but "crazy years" as a functioning alcoholic. He decided to leave the stage and pursue rehabilitation. In addition to daily AA meetings, Ron met with Clara Pilates three times a week for private sessions. (Joseph Pilates had died as a result of a tragic fire in 1967). Clara's "brilliant dissemination of Joseph Pilates' work" provided Ron with a new appreciation of *Body Contrology*.

With Clara's blessing, he opened *The Ron Fletcher Studio for Body Contrology* in Beverly Hills, California, bringing the Pilates method to the west coast. It was warmly received by a new population, including many celebrities who quickly recognized the value of the work to the degree that at one point he had a waiting list of 200 students.

The Evolution

While penning his now-classic book *Every Body is Beautiful*, Ron began to examine the mechanics of breath and its importance — as emphasized by both Pilates and Graham — in the human body. He began to add structured breathing patterns to movements, developing what he calls "percussive breathing" (a breath with a sound and a rhythm), which brought new vitality, exuberance, spirit and enthusiasm to the Work.

After the release of his book and the public exposure it engendered, and as the popularity of the Pilates method grew, Ron was asked to offer an increasingly greater number of workshops around the country. He began to distinguish himself from others in the field by pulling away from the term "Pilates," opting instead for a more accurate descriptor: the Fletcher Work™, which was based on his studies with Clara and Joseph Pilates as well as other visionaries such as Martha Graham, Yeichi Nimura, and Alma Hawkins.

By the turn of the millennium, this unique lineage of the Pilates method was flourishing. The worldwide demand for Fletcher workshops and training was growing by leaps and bounds, and it became increasingly clear that there was a need for a quality teacher education program specifically designed to preserve and sustain it. Through Ron's work and the tireless dedication of many others, The Ron Fletcher Program of Study™ — a comprehensive, uniform curriculum designed to formalize and preserve the Fletcher Work™ — was born.

It was evident to Clara Pilates that her husband's work had been only the tip of the iceberg. As she said to Ron, "It is in your blood; take it and go, but always remember the ABCs!"

That is precisely what Ron Fletcher has done.

Our Mission

We preserve and advance the inspired evolution of Body Contrology — the work of Joseph and Clara Pilates — as articulated by our Master Teacher, Ron Fletcher. As he mentored and taught us, so we will teach and mentor others in the transformation that leads from strength to balance to grace.

Who's Been Talking

American String Teacher Magazine

A.M. Magazine

Arizona Daily Star

Beverly Hills Magazine

The Body Forum

Brilliant Magazine

Cosmopolitan

Coronet

Dance Magazine

Fitness Plus Magazine

Good Housekeeping

Ladies Home Journal

Los Angeles Herald Examiner

Los Angeles Times

L.A. Magazine

New York Post

People Magazine

Pilates Style Magazine

Playgirl

San Antonio Express News

Self

The Morning Call

Town & Country

Tucson Citizen

Valley News

Vogue

Women's Wear Daily

"You know that an exercise program must be good when you can take an already good body and reshape it into a great body. And that's what Ron Fletcher is really in the business of doing. Be it men's or women's bodies, the Ron Fletcher Method is hard to beat."

—Dale Kern, *LA Herald Examiner*

"Not only has it helped me as a performer, it has enhanced the quality of my everyday life."

—Jennifer John,
American String Teacher Magazine

"In the last few years, a growing number of devotees of the increasingly popular Pilates Method have been more than happy to learn at Fletcher's feet. He says he was always seeking to construct fluid movements that deeply engaged all the body's muscles rather than a series of exercises that worked on only a few."

—Rosa Salter, *The Morning Call*

"Fletcher has committed his life to teaching what he considers the 'pure' form of Pilates, and rescuing it from those he contends have bastardized the art and abandoned the principles behind it. Talk to Fletcher's acolytes and you'll hear them speak of him with an almost spiritual sense of awe."

—Richard A. Mariani,
San Antonio Express News

"To Fletcher, teaching requires special talent in communicating the discipline involved, demonstrating the purpose and integrity of the movements and inspiring pupils to excel."

—Rebecca Rooney, *Brilliant Magazine*

"Fletcher refers to the body as a work of art. He uses such phrases as 'architectural structure' and 'the divinity of the whole mechanism.'"

—Eddie North Hager, *Tucson Citizen*

Hollywood's Devotés: The Stars

Bibi Anderson
Candice Bergen
Susan Blakely
Dyan Canon
Carol Channing
Stockard Channing
Cher
Candy Clark
Jill Clayburgh
Tony Curtis
Richard Dreyfus
Doris Duke
Sandy Duncan
Britt Eklund
Eva Gabor
Holly Harp
Goldie Hawn
Don Henley
Shirley Jones
Judith Krantz
Ann-Margaret
Marsha Mason
Ali MacGraw
Steve McQueen
Sarah Miles
Valerie Perrine
Nancy Reagan
Katharine Ross
Renee Russo
Jane Seymore
Steven Spielberg
Barbara Streisand
Cicely Tyson
Ben Vereen
Raquel Welch
Natalie Wood

"I was introduced to Ron Fletcher and his method of Pilates right after I gave birth to my now 34-year-old son, Josh. While working with Ron, I learned how to center myself. How to feel deeply calm and vibrantly energized, all at once. I guess the word might be *Alive*. Ron gave me that awareness, the thrilling sense that every one of life's movements are indeed a dance".

—Ali MacGraw

"Ron taught me that my little toe is not disconnected from my pinkie; that a health body works collectively. I feel three inches taller, five pounds lighter, and ten years younger."

—Dyan Cannon

"His realignments accomplished in one month what my chiropractor couldn't in three years: removing tension in my neck and shoulders."

—Susan Blakely

"I do this work just to put my body, mind and soul all in the same place. Ron's is a feeling-good trip."

—Cher

"Sir Laurence Olivier once told me I had beautiful posture. I owe it all to Ron's routines."

—Katharine Ross

"I was happy to be introduced to the Fletcher Work™ last year. It was a new approach and discipline I hadn't yet encountered with Pilates. I really feel it is a more complete method! The breathing techniques and attention to correct body position help me focus even after my practice is done for the day. Most recently, I was able to practice through the first two trimesters of my pregnancy with twins. I am convinced that the Fletcher Work™ helped me be more agile, focused and fit, than my first pregnancy".

—Emily Robinson (*Dixie Chick*)