

Pilates for children in the electronic age...

By: Petra Bekkerin

Are you worried about your children's fixation with their electronic devices?

Are you concerned about their hunched posture and the possibility of them developing lower back or neck pain?

These questions are pressing on many concerned parents' minds these days. It's simple: neither us nor our children can do entirely without the devices anymore so we have to find a solution to deal with it!

Let's have a closer look first at what really happens to the body when our children are hunched over their tablet or phone. First of all, the head comes forward and the neck starts feeling tensed, possibly causing headaches. Then, going down the spine, we see the shoulders rolling in and an arch in the upper back will

occur, leading to a "closed" chest, making it harder to breathe optimally.

On top of that, in a seated position, the lower back will be flexed more than in a standing position and the core muscles don't have to work really. Lower back pain could kick in.

All in all, muscle imbalances can be the result and might on the long run even lead to aches and pains. That's not the way it should be at such a young age!

Luckily Pilates for children and younger adults can help fight the muscle imbalances by focusing on opening the chest, strengthening the upper back and bringing back the natural spinal curves. Most importantly it focuses on strengthening the core muscles, playing a vital role in supporting the whole body.

Pilates for children is like regular adult Pilates, but more

FUN! Children are fascinated by all the fantastic props: weighted small Pilates balls looking like apples, wobbly stability discs, elastic bands and specifically the big Swiss Balls! They appeal to their imagination which I use a lot; going on a trip, doing specific animal exercises like the Seal, the Swan, the Cat Stretch etc. I finish every class with a relaxation by reading them a story so they can open the doors to their imagination.

As long as we start teaching our children at a young age, they will be able to incorporate Pilates into later life. "First educate the child" as Joseph Pilates used to say...

I started a pilot project at a big international school in London last year for 7 to 11 year olds. It was interesting to see that specifically the parents who are Pilates enthusiasts,



physiotherapists or chiropractors themselves convinced their children to try it. Most of them have become big Pilates fans and have enrolled again!

When I asked my group last Christmas to write their favourite exercise on a note for the Christmas stocking, they all instantly wrote down "The Relaxation" and the "Swiss Balls" They don't need an electronic device for that!

Petra Bekkerin is a Level 3 Pilates and STOTT PILATES® instructor and is qualified to teach Kids and Teens Pilates.

More info: www.pthealthfitness.com

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Are you worried about your children's/students' fixation with their electronic devices?
Are you concerned about their hunched posture and the possibility of them developing lower back or neck pain?

If so, why not consider Pilates for Kids & Teens?
It is now on offer in West London for 4-12 year olds!

Just consider some of the benefits for children:
good body posture | core strengthening | correct breathing for relaxation | better concentration

Using props like Pilates balls, elastic bands, Swiss balls & stability discs makes it extra fun!

Interested as a school or parent ?

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