



W E T T ETM n d nTM

EVERY ONE OF US HAS A STORYTM

Hate your job?

Here's what to do

Special Focus:

Women's Health

The heart attack symptoms
you might not recognize.

**Strokes: the drug that
could save your life.**

How does your garden
make you healthier

Karyn Staples, Pilates Powerhouse

OCTOBER 2011 | FREE
Issue 117

When you walk into ProHealth Physical Therapy and Pilates Studio in Peachtree City, you'd better be prepared to work—and learn. In preparing to write this story, I had heard that the owner of the studio, Karyn Staples, PT, PhD, OCS, was a powerhouse—a master teacher, engaged student, and savvy businesswoman. I arrive for a one-on-one Pilates session with her shortly after noon on a Saturday, mentally and physically ready to see for myself what all the talk is about.

I am dressed in black workout pants and a v-neck, spaghetti strap top. Karyn had told me to wear fitted clothes so she could see the alignment of my body. My hair is in a bonnet so that it's off my neck and out of my face.

She gives me a quick tour of her studio, and after asking some preliminary questions about whether or not I have pain in any particular areas of my body, begins our Pilates session. Karyn leads me to The Reformer, a spring-loaded, sliding exercise machine which, thank goodness, turns out to be not nearly as intimidating as its name. I sit down on the flat seat and place my feet firmly on the footrests in front of me. Karyn sits directly behind me. I can feel her eyes scan my back, and I sit still, my own eyes flitting around, looking at the equipment in the room, nervously anticipating step one.

"Did anyone tell you your—" she begins.

"My spine curves?" I interject. "Yes, I was told I have scoliosis in elementary school. How bad is it?"

"Not bad," she says, adding, "Your spine curves just a little to the right, like a 'C.'"

Amazing, I think to myself. How can she tell that through my shirt?

"Can Pilates help with scoliosis?" I ask.

"Yes," Karyn says. "It can help to make the curve less pronounced."

She tells me that before we can begin, I have to assume the proper Pilates stance, which involves tucking and holding in my pelvic muscles. We do this, she explains, because the proper support for the spine is actually in the pelvis. I inhale and squeeze my lower abdominals inward toward my spine. I inhale and squeeze my lower abdominals inward toward my spine. Then, I tuck my muscles and feel a strange, heavy pull.

Passion to the CORE



Karyn teaching a pilates mat class.



Karyn performing Active Release Techniques™ on physical therapy patient, Piper Hill; Karyn is working on her plantar foot to help decrease muscle tension and improve circulation.



Karyn instructing seated footwork on the Pilates chair with Pilate clients Tonie Ogden and Stacy Preacher.

BY NICHOLE BAZEMORE
PHOTOS BY MARIE THOMAS

A portrait of Karyn Staples, a woman with short dark hair and bangs, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a black long-sleeved top and black tights. Her right hand is resting on her head, and her left hand is resting on her knee. She is wearing a ring on her left ring finger and a bracelet on her left wrist. The background is dark.

Karyn
Staples

I maintain this pose as I begin my workout, first using my arms to pull me forward, and later, allowing my legs to do the work. Patiently, Karyn walks and talks me through exercises on five machines.

Silly me; I thought I would get the express tour—you know, do just a few reps on each machine and be finished—but oh, no. Like any good teacher who wants to make sure her student gets the lesson, Karyn combines theory and practice, and makes me do multiple repetitions of each exercise. *How long would I have to do this to have a body like Madonna?* I wonder, remembering reading somewhere that the singer practices Pilates faithfully.

As she's coaching me, Karyn talks me through each pose and explains which muscles are being worked out. She describes

as well as a pink Netbook computer that belongs to her daughter, Shae.

We approach a machine that looks a lot like something I remember from my elementary school PE days. Karyn tells me to stand, flat-footed, on a step. I extend my arms and place the fingertips of both hands on two posts in front of me. I place my foot on a bar about the size of a vehicle brake, and slowly press up and down.

Once I get my balance, Karyn tells

other—but Karyn is actually holding my torso so that it is perfectly aligned with my spine. My physical discomfort, she explains, is a clear indicator that my body has gotten used to poor posture. Simply put, I've gotten used to moving and carrying my body out of proper alignment.

Pilates is designed to undo this improper conditioning, both physically and mentally. While most other exercise programs—take aerobics or weight training, for instance—work one part of your body at a time, Pilates works the entire core (the muscles that run from the shoulder to the pelvis, both front and back) by focusing on proper alignment and smooth movements. Over time, the body is strengthened, flexibility is increased, and muscles are stretched so that they appear longer (think of a dancer's lean body). Pilates is not just a body workout, but a mind workout, as well; you actually have to concentrate on your body's alignment as you're performing the movements.

I learned this firsthand while attempting an exercise Karyn told me I could use at home to strengthen my spine. To do it, I have to lie flat on my back and imagine my spine as a string of pearls. I tuck my pelvis, and lift each pearl, one by one, until my backside is off the floor. Then, I slowly lower my spine back down to the floor, pearl by pearl. This is exhausting, trying to think of and lift my spine in segments. Yet, when I finish my session with Karyn, my whole body feels airy, oxygenated, like muscles I never even knew I had were finally being fed.

A Passion for Pilates

To say that Karyn Staples is passionate about Pilates is like saying a new mother is passionate about her infant. Words simply cannot describe how intensely, how unconditionally, she loves it. Tall and willowy, with closely-cropped black hair and bright eyes, Karyn talks about Pilates



Above: Karyn's daughter Shae took a photo of her mom in the car on the way back from Rosemary Beach, FL, where they celebrated Corin's 2nd birthday. Right: Family photo in Canada at Niagara Falls July 4, 2010. Top Right: Karyn at the January 2011 Pass the Torch. Karyn, always in continual student mode, spent one year going to Polestar Pilates International in Miami, FL for continued training with Brent Anderson, PT, PhD, OCS. L to r; Brent Anderson, Shelly Power, AnneMarie McKenzie (Perth, Australia), Sarah McLaughlin (Dublin, Ireland), Anke Sinz (Shanghai, China), Alix Sorrel (Lafayette, LA).

what I should feel and what I shouldn't. As I work, I catch glimpses of myself, looking strained and awkward, in the floor-to-ceiling mirrors that line an entire wall. I notice the large exercise balls along the wall, and sprawled across a long table in the center of the room are paper and writing utensils,

me to let go of the posts, so that I am balancing myself on one foot and pumping the brake with the other, while she holds and gently nudges my waist to the right. It's awkward and uncomfortable, and my waist feels strangely twisted, as though it wants to go one way and my body an-

excitedly and with few breaks. You get the sense that she feels the need to get it all out before she forgets something—and then you realize she won't forget, because her knowledge about Pilates technique and science is as deep as her love for the same.



Karyn with best friend, Brandi Cannon, in NYC for her *Pilates Style* magazine photo shoot.



Shae and Corin performing a Pilates plank.

Karyn, a lifelong athlete, learned about Pilates in the mid-1990's while she was a student at the University of Evansville in Indiana. Although she had participated in gymnastics as a child, played volleyball in high school, and even taught step aerobics for awhile, she eventually felt something was missing. "I was bored," she explains. "I thought, 'I've done step aerobics. I don't like lifting weights; it's not fun. What can I do that's fun?'" As fate would have it, she stumbled upon the book, *The Pilates Body*, by Pilates expert and celebrity trainer Brooke Siler, and was intrigued. When a fellow student told Karyn about a Pilates studio in town, Karyn enrolled and was hooked. Not only did she become a student, but she eventually earned her certification in Polestar Pilates.

In 1998, Karyn and her college sweetheart, Patrick, married and began looking for somewhere to start and raise a family. They knew they didn't want to stay in Indiana, where Patrick's family lived. Nor did they want to move to Maryland, where Karyn's family lived. When one of Patrick's business associates told them about Peachtree City, it seemed like an easy decision. "It was close to the mountains. It was close to the beach. It was close to the airport. The school system was good. And there was no Pilates studio here. We just felt comfortable," Karyn recalls.

Pure Lipo™

Create the Body of Your Dreams

Other Services Available

- Latisse® • Synergie® Cellulite Treatments
- Laser Hair Reduction • Bioidentical Hormone Replacement
- Prescription Weight Loss Program • Thermography
- Laser Peels • Botox® • Silk Peel® • Microdermabrasion
- Facials • Radiesse® • IPL Photo Facials
- SkinCeuticals® Skin Care Products • Juvederm®
- Nova Lash Extensions • Chemical Peels
- Permanent Make Up • Tattoo Removal

Call for a complimentary consultation

Financing options available
through SurgeryLoans.com

Latisse
BOTOX
Cosmetic



Ageless
AESTHETICS

105 Governor's Square • Suite E
Fayetteville, GA 30215

Dr. Jamie Walraven
Board Certified in Anti-Aging

678-364-8414
www.drwalraven.com

The Magic of Kameleon

- *Fun
- *Flexible
- *Fashionable
- *Affordable

Interchangeable Sterling Silver Jewelry System

It's as Easy as...

1. Choose your design.
2. Insert your gem.
3. Enjoy your new look.

WARNING - THIS PRODUCT IS ADDICTIVE!

KAMELEON®
Change is Natural.

Paula Hyatt Studio Owner
Kedron Village Shopping Center
(Across from Target)
1237 N. Peachtree Parkway

770-631-0007
hyattp@bellsouth.net
Hours:
Mon. - Sat. 10 AM - 6 PM

www.merlenorman.com

© 2011 Merle Norman Cosmetics, Inc. Merle Norman Cosmetic Studios have been independently owned and operated since 1931.

MERLE NORMAN®



The Staples family found a snail when they went on a family trip with Mom to San Diego, CA for a Pilates conference.



Karyn, Patrick, Corin and Shae in the Costa Rica rain forest in November 2010.



The Staples family on a MSC cruise formal night. This was the first cruise for the kids, and the sixth for Karyn and Patrick.

The couple moved to Peachtree City and in 2005, Karyn, an Orthopedic Clinical Specialist, opened ProHealth Physical Therapy and Pilates Studio, where she combined physical therapy (PT) and Pilates techniques to treat individuals who had suffered physical injuries. Initially, she marketed just the physical therapy side of her business. But word of her innovative approach and hands-on technique spread and her Pilates classes grew. Today, many of her physical therapy patients transition to Pilates students.

Eighteen year-old Shannon Escarra is one such patient-turned-student. Shannon, who just started her freshman year at Seattle Pacific University in Washington, started seeing Karyn in May 2011 after suffering a sports injury. A lifelong gymnast, Shannon fell off a bar during a gymnastics meet and had to have surgery to repair a torn ligament in her elbow. As a result of being unable to work out regularly after the surgery, she noticed her body becoming increasingly weak. Karyn started Shannon on a regimen of PT and Pilates to rebuild her strength. Just three months later, Shannon reports an absence of pain and increased vitality throughout her body. "I can't tell you how much pain was in my ankles and my back. Before, when I would twist really quick or do a hard landing, it was like, 'Ouch!' Now I can pop right back up, and I'm not in pain. I cannot tell you how glad I am I did it. It's helped my entire body," she says.

Joan Houghton, 79, also became Karyn's PT patient after multiple surgeries that had rendered her practically immobile. "I was walking with a knee scooter, and I thought I'd never walk again," Joan remembers. That was practically unbearable for the retired McIntosh High School English teacher, who had previously enjoyed an extremely active life. "I used to hike and mountain climb and swim. I was just so active and then all of a sudden, wham! I couldn't do anything," she says. Joan had worked with two other physical therapists after other surgeries but was sorely disappointed. She learned about Karyn from a friend after undergoing arm surgery two years ago. "The person said, 'I have a gift for you,'" Joan recalls.

And what a gift it turned out to be. Through twice-weekly visits and strength-building exercises, Karyn worked with Joan to regain her strength—and her mobility. "Karyn worked with me to build up my strength and said, 'You know, I think you could walk again,'" Joan says. "If it weren't for Karyn and her team, I know I wouldn't be walking." And the good news for Joan didn't stop there. She had also lost the use of her right shoulder, but Karyn massaged it to the point that she can now move it again. "Karyn is just perhaps one of the most understanding, brilliant people I have ever met," she says. "She has the ability to diagnose and know what's going on with your body. She's resurrecting this chapter of my life."

"I want to create an environment people want to come to whether they're hurt or healthy; a place they want to come to, not have to come to."

- Karyn Staples, PT, PhD, OCS

And these are not isolated incidents. In fact, Karyn says she regularly uses Pilates to undo physical damage that her patients had thought was irreversible. "We've had patients who were potentially on the verge of knee replacement, and we delayed it," she says, adding "We've also worked with arthritic patients to create awareness of their movements so areas with degeneration weren't getting all the pressure."

But perhaps what is even more amazing than Karyn's ability to reverse her patients' ailments is the fact that she built and runs a growing practice (plans to expand the studio are underway) while being a wife and mother of two small children (her daughter Shae is six; her son Corin is two). She's also a self-described "perpetual student." In fact, Karyn takes Pilates classes in Newnan once a week with a friend.



she credits her husband Patrick for his support. "We have a great partnership. He is my biggest support, my biggest cheerleader. I absolutely could not do what I do without him," she says. Next is her desire to share her passion and excitement about Pilates with her community. "I want to create an environment people want to come to whether they're hurt or healthy and leave with a positive experience; a place

they want to come to, not have to come to," she adds.

Let's see: one-on-one attention, practical exercises I can try on my own, knowledge about the body, and unbridled passion for one's craft, the likes of which I've never seen, anywhere. Suffice it to say, in some famous Hollywood last words, I'll be back.

Last April, she completed the ultimate test: she earned her PhD in Physical Therapy, with a focus on Orthopedics and Sports Science, from Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions. For her doctoral dissertation, she conducted a long-form research study to examine how Standing Pilates affects balance in an aging female population. Karyn also authored an article, in which she demonstrated Standing Pilates techniques, in the July/August 2010 edition of *Pilates Style Magazine*.

How on earth does she do it? First,

Karyn and her husband Patrick



Nicole Bazemore is a freelance writer. Her company, *Simply Stated Solutions*, provides marketing materials for coaches, consultants, and small businesses. She and her son live in Riverdale.

What is Pilates?



The Pilates Method of body conditioning, developed by German-born Joseph Pilates more than 70 years ago, emphasizes balance, control, focus and stability.

Burdened by various health problems such as asthma, rickets, and rheumatic fever, Joseph was determined to be in top physical condition. He studied and used various conditioning techniques, including body building and gymnastics, resulting in his being fit enough to pose for anatomical charts at the age of 14.

Later, he moved to England where he was a boxer, circus performer, and self-defense trainer for English detectives. During World War I, he was designated an "enemy alien" and kept in camps with other Germans. There he nursed and taught his techniques to his fellow inmates. When thousands of others were killed by an influenza epidemic in 1918, Pilates' teachings were credited for his inmates' good health and avoidance of the epidemic.

When the war ended, Pilates and his wife moved to New York City and opened a studio in which he shared the method he originally called "Contrology." It became very popular with dancers and eventually athletes and other performing artists became followers as well.

Joseph remained in excellent physical shape until his death in 1967 at the age of 87.

Pilates involves a series of controlled movements designed to develop strength, increase flexibility and lengthen muscles while achieving total body awareness. Principles of concentration, muscle control, centering, precise, efficient movements, and breathing techniques are the core of the Pilates Method.

Karyn Staples will tell you: Pilates is the ultimate body workout.

"The benefits of Pilates extend from those who want a healthier body, to athletes, to those with orthopedic and more challenging conditions," Karyn has said.

Men and women enjoy the longer, leaner, stronger physique Pilates produces. Athletes, including runners, swimmers, golfers, triathletes, dancers, gymnasts, and tennis players, can supplement their traditional training in order to develop balance, stability, and stamina with Pilates.

Individuals continuing to recover from or manage back, knee, or shoulder conditions, as well as those with pelvic floor dysfunction, multiple sclerosis, and those with chronic pain or disease benefit from Pilates as well. In addition, seniors and pregnant women, or those who were recently pregnant, find many benefits from the Pilates method.

"You will feel better in 10 sessions, look better in 20 sessions, and have a completely new body in 30 sessions."
- Joseph H. Pilates

new arrivals
come see what just came in



Brighton

Stop by One Magnolia Lane at The Avenue, Peachtree City
to see all of Brighton's Fabulous Creations
– *always new, always chic, always fun!*
770-486-9494



Get Emma's Look



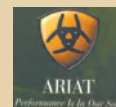
Blouses
from



Sweaters
from



Boots
from



plus Warm Leggings & Cozy Scarfs
All Available Now at

SMITH & DAVIS

1552 Hwy. 54 • Between Fayetteville & Peachtree City
770-487-4183

www.SmithDavisClothing.com