

# Continuing Ed: The Franklin Method

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Nicole Rogers in Career Development, Education, Franklin Method



*“Continuing Ed” is our regular look at workshops, programs and other methods of bodywork that can enhance your skills as a Pilates teacher.*



Image courtesy of [Center of Balance](#), a U.S. Franklin Method certification center. **By Nicole Rogers**

The [Franklin Method](#) is experiencing increased popularity with Pilates Instructors due to its concentration on imagery, anatomy and movement. Pilates is, in many ways, a moving meditation, and the Franklin Method provides excellent tools for focusing the mind and body together.

Eric Franklin, a dancer, educator, university lecturer and author from Germany, developed his educational program as a professional dancer and movement educator, teaching his first Franklin Method workshops as early as 1984. His technique explores and enhances the benefits of the mind–body connection by emphasizing three core principles:

- Dynamic Imagery, a multi sensory and kinesthetic way of using the brain to affect movement and function.
- Experiential Anatomy, which gives you direct physical awareness of your body’s function and design.
- Reconditioning Movement, which integrates dynamic imagery with experiential anatomy to produce optimum function.

## **The Pilates Perspective on the Franklin Method**

We talked to Donna Luder, owner and director of [Pacific Movement Center](#) in Monterey, Calif., who is certified in Pilates, Gyrotonics and the Franklin Method, to get her point of view on how the Franklin Method can enhance your Pilates teaching skills.

### **Q. What initially piqued your interest in the Franklin Method?**

**A.** My own certifying teacher (Marie-Jose Blom-Lawrence of Long Beach Dance Conditioning) hosted a workshop by Eric... I attended his class and I was totally and completely mesmerized. This

dynamic, incredibly intelligent and hysterically funny guy blew me away. I caught his elbow in the expo hall and immediately signed up for his first West Coast teacher-training program.

I attended his program's years 1 and 2; and attended an introductory week to year 3. The year 3 material is phenomenal, absolutely transforming, and I am excited for it to be scheduled soon. I may need to learn German so I don't have to wait; I could go to Europe and do his program's year 3 there.

**Q. How has it informed or changed your teaching as a Pilates instructor?**

**A.** I use the Franklin Method in each and every session I teach. I use his coaching techniques to keep students invested and focused, I use his imagery techniques to make exercises relevant and vivid, and his attention to pacing has made my sessions far more enjoyable for both myself and my clients. The Franklin Method has given me a vast repertoire of teaching techniques to choose from. For instance, if I want to focus the student's attention onto the abdominals in a Roll Up, I can shift the imagery to focus on any of the following:

- The movement of the bones (pronation and supination of ilia, nodding of the sacrum, facet joint motion of the lumbar spine, spiraling of the ribs or compression/decompression of the sternum)
- The directional flows of the muscles (rectus abdominus, transverse abdominus, lats, psoas major—we even learned how to differentiate kinesthetically between the psoas and iliacus)
- The rhythms of the organs (diaphragm slides forward over liver-stomach layer; bladder rolls back within the pelvis; lungs turn out upon inhale and turn in upon inhale).

**Q. You have conducted a successful Pilates Instructor Training Program for eight years with co-director Stephanie Spencer, and you have incorporated aspects of Eric Franklin's teachings into this program. What do you hope new teachers will gain from this?**

**A.** Mostly we use Eric's method to teach the anatomy, physiology and kinesiology portions of our teacher-training program. It allows us to disseminate a vast amount of information in a playful and enjoyable way. The lecture portion of our teacher-training program is filled with laughter as we explore anatomy, biomechanical function, preconceived notions and how they impact our movement. Our students who come to us from a physical therapy background or other health science background ALL remark on how much they enjoy our biomechanics and anatomy lectures. Many times we have heard it said that they wished their own original training had been as educational and fun. I am currently working on my own MS in Kinesiology and I can attest to the fact that Anatomy and Physiology is often taught in a dry, tedious manner—it is so unnecessary!

**Q. Do you have a client success story from your time practicing the Franklin Method that you would like to share?**

**A:** I have a client who developed severe osteoporosis at the age of 32, when her second pregnancy unmasked it. She fractured every vertebra and lost 1.5 inches in height. She had a moderate to severe kyphosis and was, of course, saddened by her new posture. It was a very frightening experience for her and her little family, with a 3-month-old newborn, a 5-year-old and a bewildered husband.

The Franklin method helped us uncover how much of her posture was truly limited by her condition and how much of it was reversible. We found imagining a waterspout lifting up the front of the thoracic spine and cascading down her back like an enormous waterfall enabled her sternum to lift without strain. I remember she said over and over how effortless it felt, and we used the imagery

while we did all of our exercises. It was the difference between (a) her working hard to lift her sternum and lessen the kyphosis, and (b) simply allowing her sternum to be lifted by an imaginary waterspout. She is doing great now 10 years later. Her bone densities are still increasing, and she still does Pilates and Gyrotonic with me every week.

### **Getting Certified in the Franklin Method**

If you are interested in learning to teach the Franklin Method, The Franklin Method Institute recommends first participating in a workshop. In fact, Eric Franklin will be presenting a workshop entitled Relax Your Neck, Liberate Your Shoulders, at this year's Pilates Method Alliance Conference in Phoenix, Ariz.

Once you have attended a workshop, there is a Franklin Method Teacher Training Course. There are three levels: Introductory, Intermediate and Advanced. Each level consists of three modules, and each module is one week long. Here's what they cover:

*Introductory Level:* Covers the basics of imagery, the bone-rhythms of the body and fundamentals of biomechanics, posture and breathing.

*Intermediate Level:* Covers more in-depth material about the muscular system and how to use imagery and touch to facilitate muscles and changes in muscle tension, as well as info on strength, stretching and endurance training.

*Advanced Level:* Covers the inner anatomy and systems of the body: nervous system, cardiovascular, immune system and lymphatic system. You will learn how to use imagery to affect a positive change and combine the information covered in previous levels into a whole.

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### **THE DETAILS: The Franklin Method**

**LOCATIONS:** Worldwide

**STRUCTURE:** Three levels: Introductory, Intermediate and Advanced. Each level consists of three modules, and each module is one week long. In between modules you have homework and teaching assignments. Upon completing Level/Year 1, you are certified to teach the Franklin Method at the introductory level, and any education beyond that is entirely up to you.

**COST:** \$3,900-\$4,400 per three-week course

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit [franklinmethod.com](http://franklinmethod.com) or email [info@franklin-methode.ch](mailto:info@franklin-methode.ch).

### **BOOKS BY ERIC FRANKLIN**

**Nicole Rogers** is a Pilates instructor and writer. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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