

# Pilates for Scoliosis at Inner Strength Pilates

## Curvy spines can do Pilates, too!

BY AMY DIXON, OWNER  
OF INNER STRENGTH PILATES

Scoliosis, a lateral curvature of the spine, affects roughly 3% of the population. Many curves diagnosed during adolescence are called idiopathic scoliosis, as the reason for the curvature remains unknown. Scoliosis can be caused by disease, pain, or injury, and often worsens during pregnancy and menopause. For the most part, scoliosis is treated with bracing or surgery. In the past few years, though, corrective exercise has proven a very effective treatment.

Though there is no cure for structural scoliosis, Pilates can certainly improve posture, which often reduces pain and increases overall quality of life. Scoliosis is both lateral flexion and rotation of the spine at varying segments and with varying degrees, causing a corkscrew effect in the spine. This results in muscular imbalances with areas of tightness and weakness.

In Pilates, we learn internal control of the spine, and being able to hold your spine from the inside provides much-needed relief!

Scoliotic curves can be reduced with corrective exercise, thereby reducing pain and bringing more muscular balance to the body. Scoliosis patients in a corrective exercise program have 24-48% fewer spinal fusions. With corrective exercise, clients have an easier transition from brace-wearing to nonbrace-wearing, helping to fortify the new position, so the spine doesn't revert to the same degree of curvature from pre-bracing.

Pilates is quite beneficial for those with scoliosis. At Inner Strength Pilates, we are utilizing the Scolio-Pilates Method, which was developed by Karena Thek Lineback and is built upon the foundation of the Schroth Method. We focus on the three-dimensional changes that occur as a result of scoliosis. Think of carrying a 50 lb bag on your hip consistently (maybe a toddler?). This changes your center of gravity, so the spine will balance out in the opposite direction in order to maintain balance.

Give it a try...sit on the edge of your seat and slide your ribcage off to one side. Now notice how the low back muscles on the opposite side contract harder in order to stay on the chair. Stay there long enough, and rotational forces will take the ribcage back away from the shift, then the neck will tilt in the opposite direction to stay upright. The head will now tilt opposite again to keep the eye line level. Remember that rib shift that we began with – gravity will now work to draw it closer to the floor as the opposite low back muscles work even harder to hold you up! Feel that corkscrew effect?

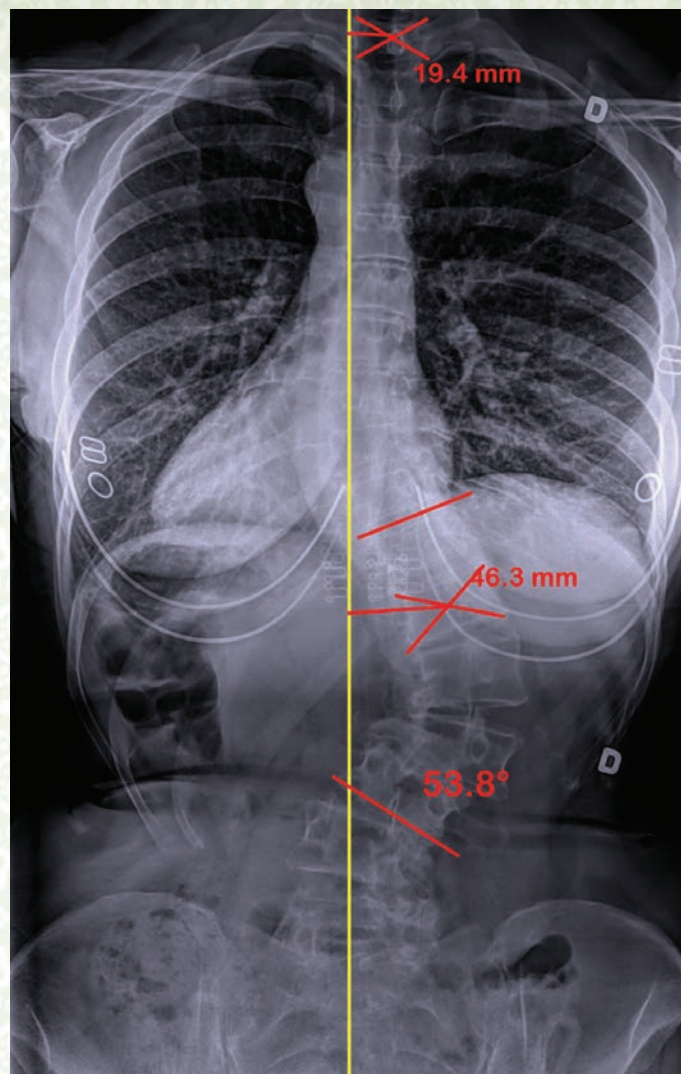
We focus on elongation of the entire frame, bringing the spine to its best position possible, and then strengthening that new position. Breathing techniques and stabilization work are also major components of Pilates for scoliosis.

Organ function, vital capacity, lung capacity, and digestion can all be improved with Pilates in the scoliosis client. Can you see how this person might have lower back pain due to their scoliosis? This is one of our clients that has received much pain relief from Pilates!

At Inner Strength Pilates, we receive referrals from local pediatric orthopedic scoliosis doctors, and are working in conjunction with physical therapy specialists to improve teenaged, as well as more seasoned, scoliotic spines!

With our Pilates for Scoliosis program, each client is seen individually for assessments, and then home exercise programs are specifically designed for each client. The client learns their particular modifications so they can then join Pilates classes or participate in their chosen activities.

Visit Inner Strength Pilates at 4983 Martin View Lane, Harper Hill Commons, in Winston-Salem, NC. Call 336-813-5320, visit them online at [innerstrengthpilatesnc.com](http://innerstrengthpilatesnc.com), follow them on Facebook and Instagram, or sign up for classes via their website or app: *iPilates*. "Changing the posture of Winston-Salem, one spine at a time!"



The muscular imbalances of the pictures below show the effects of scoliosis.

