

Why you're
not losing belly
fat doing Pilates +
5 steps to make
it happen.

(And it doesn't involve more
aerobics or starving yourself.)

Brought to you by The Pilates Nutritionist!



I'm gonna take a wild guess...

You signed up for Pilates classes because you wanted to tone your abs, shrink your waistline, and ditch the “muffin top”.

If you've been at it for a few months, you know your abdominal muscles are stronger. **You can *feel* them.**

The exercises get easier with each class.

Only, your rock hard abs are hidden under a stubborn layer of fat.

(totally unfair, I know)

And while you love Pilates because you feel refreshed, focused, and strong, you're frustrated that you are seeing the results **everywhere** **but your core.**

You might *feel* lighter... **Only you're *not* lighter.**

The scale isn't budging. Your pants aren't any looser.

What gives?



Well, first off, you're not alone.

I've heard this story over and over again. And not just from Pilates clients, but from instructors as well.

(Hey, maybe you're one of 'em. A warm welcome to you, fellow teachers!)

When you're paying good money for Pilates sessions and taking time out of your busy day to swing by the studio, you want to get what you asked for.

And this is exactly why I wrote this mini manual.

As a Pilates Instructor and a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist, I've heard bad advice thrown around the studio far too often. Things like:

- You need to do more aerobics
- You need to start counting calories
- You need to do a juice cleanse (don't even get me started...)

Maybe you tried some of these and let me guess, it backfired.

Well, it's not your fault, 'cause you weren't given the full story to make an informed decision.

It's time to set the record straight and, more importantly, **help you get the Pilates body you deserve.**



5 reasons you're not losing belly fat...

1. **You're not *really* engaging your core** - You might hear your teacher say "Pull in your abdominal muscles" or "Navel to spine", but are you *really* doing it? And, are you maintaining that action throughout your workout? At least half of the muscle activation in Pilates is intentional, not a random side effect of being in a certain position or performing a certain exercise. You can cheat your way through (almost) any exercise in Pilates. If you're not feeling it, tell your instructor so he/she can help you "find" the right muscles.

The FIX? The best way to engage your core is to imagine pulling your bellybutton in towards your spine and then pulling it up towards your ribcage. Then, think of your lowest ribs moving closer to your spine. Do this *before* you start an exercise, not after.

2. **You forget about Pilates once you leave the studio** - Just like everything else, the more you practice it, the more it becomes second nature. The muscles you activate in Pilates are the same muscles that help you sit up straight, bend down without tweaking your back, and walk upright. They are also the muscles that support your internal organs and keep them from bulging out your abdomen. 1-2 hours per week of practicing good posture in Pilates will not make up for 7 days of slouching while sitting at your computer. You make a choice to turn those muscles on or off.

The FIX? Become aware of your posture - while standing, sitting, and walking. Align your knees over your ankles, hips over knees, ribs over hips, shoulders over ribs, and head over shoulders. Imagine you are suspended by a string coming out of the top of your head. Get taller. Now look in the mirror and see the difference.

5 reasons you're not losing belly fat... cont'd

- 3. You're stressed** - When your body senses stress, its immediate response is to release a stress hormone called cortisol, which raises your blood sugar. Why? Because our caveman brain views the stress of the office the same as running away from a Grizzly bear. It wants to give you enough sugar to fuel your escape. Only, that physical activity never happens. And what does that excess cortisol and blood sugar do? It tells your body to store that energy for later. Where? In your belly... as fat.

The FIX? Pilates can be a great stress reliever, but it might not be enough to outweigh your daily stressors. So ask yourself, how can you better handle stress? Is it meditating for 5 minutes in the morning? Listening to calm music during your drive to work instead of talk radio? Taking a 10-minute walk after lunch (or maybe *leaving your desk* to actually eat lunch!)?

- 4. You're combining it with too much aerobic exercise** - This one is controversial to the folks who still believe that 'calories in = calories' out is a perfect equation. (HINT: it's not) They say "do more aerobics to burn more calories and then you'll lose weight". Unfortunately, excessive aerobics is seen as a source of stress for your body (see #3), and while you burn calories, you're also triggering the release of cortisol. And because aerobic activity can drop your blood sugar very quickly, you leave your workout ravenously hungry and craving sweets and carbohydrates, which (you guessed it), get stored as belly fat.

The FIX? Keep it to 30 minutes of aerobics max per day or consider high intensity interval training instead. **Pro tip:** Strength training, including Pilates, help you burn calories while you sleep! Aerobics: not so much.



5 reasons you're not losing belly fat... cont'd

5. **You're eating the wrong foods, especially at breakfast** - Most people eat way too many carbs for breakfast and not enough protein or fat. We're talking cereal, oatmeal, fruit, juice, yogurt, milk, toast, bagels, etc. These foods spike your blood sugar, but don't keep you full for long. This leaves you starving at 10am and craving sweets. In studies on breakfast, they've found when people have eggs instead of bagels, they eat less for up to 24 hours after the meal.

The FIX? If you want a breakfast that leaves you satisfied until lunch (and doesn't unravel all of your hard work in Pilates), choose something like eggs, sausage, greek yogurt, or nuts, which have enough protein + fat to keep you craving-free all day long. I wrote a whole post on this, called "The Healthy Breakfast Mistake", so be sure to check it out.

Of course, these 5 reasons only scratch the surface of why you're not losing belly fat doing Pilates... and that's what inspired me to start writing about all this.

So, while you're in reading mode, you might like to check out these article on my site, www.PilatesNutritionist.com:

- 6 Reasons to Stop Counting Calories (seriously)
- What Detox Products Don't Tell You
- Recipe for Homemade KIND Bars
- 5 Reasons to Ditch Low-Fat Salad Dressing
- Why Eating Nuts Upsets Your Stomach



Who is The Pilates Nutritionist?

Why that's *me*, Lily Nichols.



Yes, the girl holding vegetables just bursting with excitement (farmers' markets are my Disneyland).

I help women frustrated with restrictive diets achieve the weight loss they've been searching for for years by giving up low fat, low calorie diets that never work (and taste terrible) and indulging in real, delicious food.

And if you have digestive issues that doctors can't figure out, I can help you discover what foods are triggering your symptoms and get you relief fast through a customized diet based on the results of food sensitivity testing.

I also specialize in prenatal nutrition, so I help expecting moms have healthy, happy babies by teaching them the best foods and exercises (including Pilates) for a successful, easy pregnancy. And if you've been diagnosed with gestational diabetes, I can help you learn to fearlessly manage your blood sugar through lifestyle changes, so you have a lower chance of needing medicine or insulin and so that your baby gets the best start possible.

As a registered dietitian and nutritionist, certified diabetes educator, and certified Pilates instructor, who has worked in hospitals, clinics, health food stores, state programs, Pilates studios and in private practice, I integrate my varied background to give you the best, simple to follow nutrition advice and help you **fall in love with food again, one real food meal at a time**. Let's get in touch at www.PilatesNutritionist.com