

Pilates of some benefit for low back pain**Clinical Question**

How effective is the Pilates method for patients with non-specific acute, subacute or chronic low back pain?

Bottom Line

Pilates was more effective than minimal intervention in the short term (less than three months) and intermediate term (three to six months) for pain and disability outcomes, and more effective than minimal intervention for improvement in function and global impression of recovery in the short term. Pilates was not more effective than other exercises for pain and disability in the short and intermediate term. For function, other exercises were more effective than Pilates at intermediate-term follow-up, but not at short-term follow-up. Thus, while there was some evidence for the effectiveness of Pilates for low back pain, there was no conclusive evidence that it was superior to other forms of exercise. Minor or no adverse events were reported for the interventions.

Caveat

The overall quality of the evidence ranged from low to moderate. The duration of the treatment programmes ranged from 10 days to 90 days. The duration of follow-up varied from four weeks to six months. None of the included studies measured follow-up beyond six months. The sample sizes ranged from 17 to 87 participants.

Context

Non-specific low back pain is a major health problem worldwide. Interventions based on exercises have been the most commonly used treatments for patients with this condition. Over the past few years, the Pilates method has been one of the most popular exercise programmes used in clinical practice.

Cochrane Systematic Review

[Yamato TP et al. Pilates for low back pain. Cochrane Reviews, 2015, Issue 7. Art. No.: CD010265.DOI: 10.1002/14651858. CD010265.pub2.](#) This review contains 10 studies involving 510 participants.