



# FROM *the* HEART

*How Fulham gym Heartcore is leading the way with the ultimate feel-good dynamic Pilates*

Words MADELEINE HOWELL

It is no exaggeration to describe celebrity favourite Heartcore as a pioneer of boutique fitness. It's where Londoners in the know go to sculpt their bodies to perfection, and to get a guaranteed endorphin fix to boot. High-profile fans of their signature dynamic Pilates workout – which will challenge muscles you never knew you had on special reformer beds, designed exclusively by founder Jess Schuring – include *Made in Chelsea's* Lucy Watson. Schuring herself has trained a roll call of A-list names including Lara Stone and Ben Stiller, and despite the fact that she now runs eight studios across London, she still carves out ten hours a week to teach the classes herself.

A quick chat with German-born Schuring, who cut her teeth in LA,



A simple love of movement inspired Jess Schuring to found Heartcore

makes it clear that Heartcore is more than just a fitness studio to her. ‘My passion is people, not just fitness. I want you to be happy in your own skin, even more than I want you to be fit,’ she says. ‘Starting from that place of caring has been the blueprint for everything we do at Heartcore – from our amazing instructors to the warm, inviting studios and the little touches and treats that make you feel special as a person.’

It’s a philosophy that I experience for myself first-hand at the energising Fulham studio, where Pukka teas are unlimited, a bowl of fresh fruit beckons, and luxuriant showers are fully kitted out with gorgeous Cowshed products and fluffy towels. The Pilates class that I trial consists of effective, targeted movements, including a whole host of unusual exercises involving resistance and pulleys that both strengthen and lengthen the body. It’s this, a simple love of movement, which was the catalyst for Schuring’s success. ‘The fitness scene as it is today didn’t really exist when I was young,’ she says. ‘I was an avid horseback rider and as I got older I developed a passion for long distance running. I really liked how movement made me feel. Not only does it have a physical effect, but it clears your mind.’

The class is accessible to all, but extremely challenging depending on how far you can and want to push yourself.

It’s also good fun. For Schuring, it’s a means of damage control. ‘It not only makes you feel great, but it undoes some of the damage we do through lack of awareness – whether from rounding our backs, or sitting too long at a desk, or not being aware of how to use the core and strengthen the spine.’

As well as dynamic Pilates, Heartcore offers TRX, Barre, Ride2Tone and Flow Yoga. For Schuring, these five core programmes offer the perfect mix of athletics, cardio and mindfulness. Her particular brand of TRX training is low impact, as opposed to high intensity. ‘We were first to bring TRX into a group environment. What I love about it is that it’s very functional. It’s about understanding your body, using gravity to create resistance and learning how to move properly.’

‘I don’t believe that a tough, calorie burning workout necessarily needs to be high impact. High intensity classes can exclude those who are injured, not fit enough, or don’t know how to move well, and can do more damage than good.’ The Barre class is the lowest impact and is ideal for pre-natal fitsters. So, whatever your capabilities, if you’re looking to find joy in movement and take care of your body, Heartcore might be the one for you.

**Heartcore Fitness, 723 Fulham Road SW6 5UL; 020 7435 5078; heartcore.co.uk**

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### 3 of the best FOR PILATES IN SW LONDON

#### KATIE'S PILATES

Katie’s Pilates in Tooting offers more traditional mat classes in the style of Joseph Pilates, fused with body conditioning to chisel and define. Beginners need no previous experience. According to the founder, it’s the perfect way to build strength and stamina without adding bulk.

**ktspilates.com**

#### FITNESS FUSIONS

Fitness Fusions has two studios in Clapham, offering classic yoga and Pilates sessions, as well as hot classes, barre and reformer classes. One studio is set in a former sculptor’s studio in a tranquil courtyard setting, while the other is on the Clapham High Street and is set over three floors.

**fitnessfusions.co.uk**

#### PEPILATES

Pepilates offers classical Pilates in both Clapham and Wimbledon and believe that there is no need to mess with the original method conceived by Joseph Pilates. The luxurious studios are the perfect place in which to unwind and take care of your body with some classic moves.

**pepilates.co.uk**