

# Teaching Mat Pilates - Alternatives To A Dedicated Cert IV

Version 4 – Updated 1/2/2014

## Intended Audience

---

- **Potential Pilates Mat Teachers** (be it in Gyms and/or Pilates Studios):  
Overview of alternatives 'tracks' to allow you to teach Pilates WITH Insurance cover
- **Gym / Fitness Centre Managers:**  
To understand salient differences between the qualifications of Pilates Teachers applying for work
- **Dedicated / Specialised Pilates Training providers:**  
To be aware of other offerings in the marketplace

## Introduction

---

Another title for this article might have been:

**“Your Pilates Teacher(s)...  
Exactly WHAT Did Their Particular Qualification Entail?” .....**

I was recently asked by a qualified fitness trainer (Cert III and IV) for help in becoming a Pilates Teacher. She was considering the 'online providers' - in particular Fitness Network Australia (hereafter referred to as just 'Network').

When making my initial inquiry with NETWORK, I employed a little subterfuge, posing as someone who wasn't qualified in Pilates.

I was assisted by Tyson Atkins [Tyson@fitnessNetwork.com.au](mailto:Tyson@fitnessNetwork.com.au) 02 8412 7403. He was incredibly helpful, genuinely enthusiastic, and extremely knowledgeable and taught me several things! At no stage did he employ any high pressure sales tactics and was extremely professional in a long 'phone call and several, detailed, prompt emails later, answering a veritable barrage of my questions!

When I 'fessed up' to being already qualified and asking more detailed questions, others at NETWORK were equally patient, professional and thorough – despite my annoying nit picking nature 😊

I am publishing this article to my website and Linked In forums with the intent of being balanced and constructive. I've shown several drafts to NETWORK prior to publishing and am very grateful for their 'grace under pressure' and corrections of my initial misinterpretations.

Obviously, this post is clouded by my opinion and it may also be out of date when you read it. Please use it as a guide to assist with the sorts of questions you might like to consider asking a training provider. I'd always recommend getting answers to your questions IN WRITING.

Although written in an Australian context, some of the principles and conclusions may still be applicable in other countries.

I'd welcome comments and corrections from any interested parties.

## Summary

---

- <http://www.fitnessNetwork.com.au/education/pilates-courses.htm>
- 6 Modules – total \$2000 / 44 CECs
- Modules can be done separately / reducing cost
  - but take care, if only the base module is done, Insurance may not extend to pregnant clients of those with spinal pathologies.
- Can get Insurance via Fitness Australia
  - although this may change if Pilates Association lobbying is successful in having a dedicated Cert IV in Pilates deemed the minimum qualification to get Insurance.
- Aimed as a CEC addition to an existing Cert III/IV Fitness Qualification
  - not a qualification in its own right / wonder how potential employers might view this
- DVDs and a manual
  - no contact hours with teachers / wonder how potential employers might view this
- Online Exam
  - no proof who took the exam / wonder how potential employers might view this
- Seems expensive for what it is
  - when compared with \$3000 a dedicated Cert IV Pilates course with Polestar with 200 hours of tuition

## Detailed Considerations

---

### No Actual Contact Hours With Teachers – Just DVDs and a PDF Manual

The courses are primarily aimed at someone who has already qualified with Cert III/IV in Fitness and equip trainers to conduct Pilates Classes in a Fitness Centre context.

Contrast this with a dedicated Cert IV in Pilates which typically involves substantial amount of contact hours and takes longer to complete (due to requirements for practise, observation and shadow teaching hours).

It is probably fair to say the *NETWORK* Pilates CEC offerings are not as comprehensive as the Cert IV courses run by the Polestars and Stotts of the world. In fairness, I haven't seen the DVDs/Manual but even so, contrast watching a bunch of DVDs and reading a manual with the syllabus I undertook as part of my Cert IV in Pilates:

<http://www.adelaide-pilates.com/becoming-a-teacher.html>

Then again, maybe the comparison is unfair - they are serving a different market.

The Polestar, Stotts are highly specialised qualifications aimed at, in my view, people who primarily will work with Physios and in Pilates Studios.

Maybe the quality of graduates produced by the two different 'tracks' differs markedly. Maybe/maybe not. Probably – after all, if you've just watched DVDs how do you actually KNOW if you are doing the repertoire correctly and likewise teaching it correctly?....

But who am I to say? Perhaps the market is the best arbitrator.....

It seems to me that the *NETWORK* will get 'Pilates into the gyms' by targeting Gym Trainers to explore Pilates as a CEC add on to their repertoire.

Sure, I lament that the course might not be as comprehensive as a Polestar,Stott et al qualification. Sure, I lament the course may dilute the quality of Pilates taught in gyms but what's the alternative?.... Yup, gym clients doing staccato based ab crunches by the million and being 'instructed' to 'go for the burn'. FFS.

### Cost:

6 modules – worth 44 CECs about \$2000. The modules can be taken individually, reducing cost. Just be aware that if you only do the base course, you may not be covered to teach people who are pregnant and almost certainly not people with various pathologies.

At just under AUD \$2000, the *NETWORK* course isn't significantly cheaper (IMHO) than the Polestar Cert IV course. I'm Polestar Pilates Mat Cert IV Graduate and it cost me about \$2500 in 2010. I think it's about \$3000 now. When you consider the plethora of contact hours and guidance with my teachers, I think (for me anyway) it was the better option.

### Insurance:

In order to get insurance cover, you need to be suitably 'qualified' (Appendix 2).

If you are a qualified Cert III/IV trainer, chances are you are already insured with Fitness Australia. NETWORK told me that Insurance Cover applies through Fitness Australia so long as you stay within the scope of the CEC module(s) that you do.

In other words, if you only do the base course, you may not be covered to teach people who are pregnant and almost certainly not covered to teach people with various pathologies.

Do your homework.... Ask the questions... Get the answers... IN WRITING. I'll put this colloquially, in the hope of added emphasis... Don't wait until you stuff up and are having the arse sued off you to dot the I's and cross the T's ..... capiche?...

The Fitness Australia insurance, like the CEC courses – are intended for a fitness setting with relatively injury free clients.

If you are insured with someone other than Fitness Australia – there is also a requirement for you to be 'appropriately qualified'. However, getting an underwriter to actually specify exactly what WAS the minimum level of qualification – ie Cert IV Pilates, Diploma Pilates etc proved somewhat problematic! It did seem to me though, that a weekend workshop/seminar would most likely not be adequate – especially at a CLAIM stage when the Loss Adjusters would be seeking any and all means in order to void the claim. (Me, cynical?...).

How an Insurer other than Fitness Australia might view the NETWORK CEC modules is uncertain. Again – ask, in WRITING blah blah blah – nag nag nag.

Also – it looked like the policy on offer via Fitness Australia offered, by default, \$10m Public Liability and \$5m Professional Indemnity. As of 2011, it was my understanding the Pilates Method Alliance Aust recommended a minimum Prof Indem of \$10m. I actually recommend \$20m for BOTH types as I have heard there have been case settlements in Sydney of \$14m.

Be aware that all Insurance Policies are not equal. You might also want to check the following aspects of your cover, be it Fitness Australia, AON, IHGroup etc:

- Are you covered for both Professional Indemnity as well as Public Liability?
- What is the sum insured?  
- My policy covers AUD\$20 for both (premium about \$350pa – details on request if interested)
- What is covered? What is excluded?
- Do the policies have Run Off and Retro Active Cover?

These are explained elsewhere on my website - refer to Appendix 3.

About three years ago, I heard that the Pilates Method Alliance in Australia had been lobbying the appropriate Government bodies seeking legislation that Pilates Teachers needed a MINIMUM qualification of Cert IV in Pilates in order to effect an insurance policy.

If this happens, it could call into question the relative merit of courses such as the NETWORK one – ie if its graduates are required to subsequently have to do Cert IV Pilates in order to continue teaching with Insurance.

However, this was three years ago and it still hasn't happened.

## **NOT A Qualification:**

I felt the repeated use of words 'Certify' and 'Certified' give the impression that the course(s) in some way bestowed an actual qualification – refer Appendix 1, see what YOU think!....

NETWORK completely disputed this, stating they were transparent and made no claim about these modules purporting to be anything other than CEC extensions to an existing Cert III/IV qualification in Fitness.

When I also considered the price tag of all six modules is not significantly cheaper than the Polestar type courses, this also gave me the perception that NETWORK was similar and therefore also offering a qualification.

After numerous emails on this aspect, NETWORK and I agreed to disagree!

### **No Contact Tuition:**

At the risk of repeating myself – NETWORK offer no actual contact tuition - just DVD and PDF manuals. The price tag of all six modules is not significantly cheaper than a Polestar Course except the later gives you a couple of HUNDRED hours under the auspices, guidance and correction of teachers.

### **Online Exam:**

With an online exam, there's obviously no mechanism to prove who took it and I can't but help wonder how this might be viewed by potential employers.....

### **'Elite Pilates Coach'**

With *NETWORK*, if you complete all six modules (\$2000), you get to call yourself an 'Elite Pilates Coach...'

Personally, I find that somewhat 'cringe-worthy' and reminds me of a quote from Shakespeare's Merchant Of Venice "so may the outward shows be least themselves"..... Sorry *NETWORK*, but 'Elite' from a DVD course when comparing yourself with the depth and breadth offered by Polestar, Stott et al... puh-leeese....

## Conclusion

---

Obviously, there are significant differences and pros/cons between the two 'tracks' to becoming a Pilates teacher. I suspect the dedicated Cert IV courses probably produce better trained graduates but would also argue/concede that *'some Pilates in a gym is better than none'*. I view programs like this filling a gap in the market. The *NETWORK* method offers an alternative way to encourage Fitness Trainers to embrace Pilates without the higher cost/significant contact hours of a dedicated Cert IV Pilates course. Without it, many might not bother with Pilates.

Although the word Certify/Certification appears frequently, this is NOT a Qualification - there are no Statements of Attainment. This is a grouping of CEC modules – for \$2000, you get 44 CECs. For those unfortunate enough to be on the CEC TreadMill/Money-Go-Round, I can see the appeal of these modules.

Compared with the cost of a dedicated Pilates Cert IV for only another \$1000 (for which you get HUNDREDS of CONTACT HOURS tuition) , I personally think the *NETWORK* modules (if you do all six) are extremely expensive - \$2000 for a series of DVD's and a PDF manual.....

Perhaps that's a little harsh – reiterating, I haven't seen the DVD's or manual – but no matter how good they are, I feel contact hours in person with teachers who assess your ability to both DO and then TEACH each move in the repertoire is a major omission in the DVD/Online genre of training programs.

I also wonder about how potential employers might view a teacher who is 'qualified' by virtue of taking an online exam.

# Appendix 1

– <http://www.fitnessNetwork.com.au/education/pilates-courses.htm> as at 24/1/14

## PILATES INSTRUCTOR COURSES, CERTIFICATION & TRAINING

BECOME A PILATES INSTRUCTOR FROM THE CONVENIENCE OF HOME WITH NETWORK PILATES



Networks Fitness Australia approved Pilates **certification** will provide you with the knowledge and skills to become a sought after Pilates instructor in the fitness industry. Our goal is to deliver the best functional Pilates instructor courses for the fitness industry and to provide you with the knowledge to adapt Pilates based movements to all ages and abilities.

**Our course is delivered 100% by correspondence - so you can study from home!**

Our exceptional team of Pilates instructors and course presenters are all extensively trained and hold academic degrees such as exercise science, dance, physiotherapy and education. Network has chosen leading international instructor trainers to head up the Pilates teacher training, which means you'll be taught by presenters who understand how it all fits in with personal training, general fitness and group exercise.

- ✓ Enhance your Personal Training or Group Ex career as a professional Pilates instructor
- ✓ Learn from the best to ensure your Pilates teaching skills are world class
- ✓ FREE Membership to Network to obtain member benefits
- ✓ Combine online learning with expert DVD tuition

Australian Fitness Network's international reputation for producing the finest quality Pilates instructors ensures that our graduates are highly regarded within the industry and can employ their skills worldwide. Once you graduate you leave with the confidence of knowing you can teach clients in a safe and effective manner, and with the comfort of knowing we will always be an ongoing resource for you.

### THE NETWORK PILATES INSTRUCTOR COURSE DETAILS

Course name	Content	CECs	Price
	Matwork basics and Pilates fundamentals, essential for	...	\$590mbrs

<b>Pilates on the Ball</b>	Learn how to take Pilates exercises and teach them using a fitball to add intensity and variety.	5	\$260mbrs \$379nonmbrs
<b>Pilates for Personal Trainers</b>	Learn how to incorporate Pilates principles and exercises in your PT sessions.	4	\$170mbrs \$289nonmbrs
<b>Remedial Pilates</b>	Learn how to prescribe Pilates exercises to clients with common musculoskeletal complaints.	9	\$350mbrs \$469nonmbrs

**Want to talk to someone?**

Click here to enquire

**Need more information?**

Click here for more info and enrol online

Australian Fitness Network's Pilates **certification** course is modular based - this means that at the end of your training you will not only have the skills to become a Pilates instructor, but also the knowledge to help sustain a healthy career in the fitness industry.

#### ENQUIRE TODAY ABOUT BECOMING A PILATES INSTRUCTOR

To find out more about becoming a **certified** Pilates instructor simply complete the form below, click "Submit" and one of our friendly career consultants will be in touch to talk you through the process. Or, if you would like to speak with us today about becoming a certified Pilates instructor, or to upgrade your current skills, phone Network TODAY on **02 8412 7400** or fill in the form below and one of our team members will be in touch with you very soon.

\* Required

Title



**Note: This is NOT a Certification!**

**Network said they make no claim about their modules purporting to be anything other than CEC extensions to an existing Cert III/IV fitness qualification.**

**What do YOU think...??? !!**

# Appendix 2

## – Insurance / Fitness Australia

No one logged in. [Join](#)



[Home](#) [About us](#) [Courses](#) [Information](#) [Membership](#)

### NETWORK INSURANCE FAQs

**What is Professional Indemnity?**  
The Professional Indemnity Insurance covers you for claims that arise when a third party, usually a client, alleges that your professional advice, design or service as a fitness instructor or personal trainer was negligent and caused them a loss. The loss could be any or all of the following bodily injury, property damage or financial loss. So the Professional Indemnity covers claims that arise from a breach of the duty that you owe as a professional. **The Network Insurance policy covers you for \$5,000,000 of Professional Indemnity.**

**What is Public Liability?**  
The Public Liability covers a claim against you for bodily injury and property damage to a third party, that arise from the operation of your business as a fitness instructor or personal trainer. Public Liability however does not cover claim resulting from your negligence, it covers the claims that arise from a breach of duty you owe to people in general. The Network Insurance policy covers you for \$10,000,000 or \$20,000,000 of Public Liability.

**What activities am I covered for?**  
You are covered for the activities which you are qualified to teach. If you are not qualified for the activities which you are teaching, you are not covered. For example, if you are teaching Pilates classes you must have a qualification to do so.

**What do I do if I have a claim?**  
When you receive a letter of demand, you need to send a copy of the letter and all communication to do with the incident including the incident report to [networkinsurance@ajg.com](mailto:networkinsurance@ajg.com) as soon as you receive the letter of demand. From there we will deal with the claim, which means you no longer have to.



# Appendix 3

– Further Material On [www.adelaide-pilates.com](http://www.adelaide-pilates.com)

Simon Trangmar - Adelaide Pilates Instructor

Home News Classes Bookings Pilates & You! The Instructor Contact Resources Extras Credits

Client Guides >  
Teaching > Teachers  
IT Section > Student Teachers

Find A Teacher/Cover  
Pilates Employment  
Becoming A Teacher  
LinkedIn Discussions

**Hot Topics!**  
- Hot Weather Protocol  
- Buy a friend a Pilates New Years Gift

**Class Moves:**  
A Sneak Preview

**Popular Links:**  
Newcomers Info  
FAQs  
Class Photos  
Video Guides  
Teachers  
Student Teachers  
Teaching Vacancies  
Testimonials  
Blog

**ADELAIDE CBD BASED PILATES...**  
Training clients to achieve true Core Stability/Toning

- By teaching an awareness of 'less is more' and the effectiveness of slow, controlled movement
- In a safe and fun way, using traditional Pilates methods
- Complemented by challenging balance/stability

Simon Trangmar - Adelaide Pilates Instructor

Home News Classes Bookings Pilates & You! The Instructor Contact Resources Extras Credits

## Teachers

**Video Guides**  
inc breathing, cues etc

**Other Links**  
Useful, Related Material

Adelaide Pilates  
LinkedIn Group

Got something to share to help others?  
I'd LOVE to hear from you!

## Introduction

This area is intended to assist fellow qualified Teachers.

When I was a Polestar Student, the people who trained me were **incredibly kind and helpful**. Unlike most of the others on the course, I had no teaching, fitness industry experience or physiotherapy background - I was a complete 'newbie' and my teachers' patience knew no bounds! This area of my website is my way of 'putting back into the system'.

## Articles

- **Liability Insurance & Re-Certification**  
Public Liability/Professional Indemnity Explained  
Getting off the 'Re-Certification 'Treadmill'!
- **Professional Indemnity Insurance - A 'Gotcha'?**  
Retro-Active & Run-Off Cover
- **My Insurance Policy**  
Policy Summary / Contact Details
- **Health Fund Rebates**  
What do you need to do in order for your clients to be able to claim & is it actually WORTH it?! ...