

Checklist to find your Pilates studio:

1. Google your area to see what pops up.
2. Find out where local sports medicine/physical therapist/chiropractors send their patients for Pilates.
3. What kind of training do the instructors at the studio have? Is it from a reputable program and recognized by the Pilates Method Alliance (the professional association for Pilates i.e. as close as you get to a regulatory board)?
4. What's the style of teaching at the studio and do the instructors have specialties? Some studios are more hands on, energetic, or gentle. Specialties include those focused on special needs, injuries, rehab, sports, or prenatal clients. There are instructors who strictly teach classical/traditional Pilates exercises to those that have more of a rehab focus to anything in between. You'll want to search for someone that matches your current needs.
5. What's the vibe of the studio? Is it warm, inviting, friendly, clean? How do you feel when you look at the pictures online or when you walk in the door? Can you focus and relax in that environment?
6. What's the studio's class schedule and offerings? Is it fully equipped? Does it offer private and group sessions? Do the times fit your needs and availability?
7. Is the location convenient for you? If it's not within 15-20 minutes of your home or work, you probably won't go consistently enough. Each Pilates workout builds on the next one so skipping for several weeks will set you back.
8. Pilates Style Magazine has a good network of studios if you need more help finding the right one for you.

Checklist to find the perfect Pilates Instructor:

1. What type of certification do they have? Is it recognized by the Pilates Method Alliance? A reputable training program will require 500+ hours of training, practice and student teaching over a period of months.
2. Ask how long they've been teaching? Also find out if they have trained in all of the equipment as that would be ideal.
3. Do they have movement related experience? A background in Physical Therapy, Yoga, Dance, Martial Arts, or Sports is going to make a difference in their teaching tools and abilities.
4. Your instructor may modify the exercises but should know the names of the classical Pilates exercises and be able to explain why they are modifying it.
5. They should design a class that moves you all directions throughout the workout.
6. They should teach at a pace that allows you time to feel the exercise in your body but not at an intensity that makes you feel behind or makes you sweat the whole time.
7. Each class should have some variety where you repeat the basic exercises but are learning new ones as you progress.
8. If you are taking private lessons, the program should be designed for your body type and fitness level. In group classes, the instructor should keep their eyes on everyone and give cues that apply to all throughout the class.

Remember you should leave a Pilates workout not only feeling taller but your body should also be "turned on" because you're more grounded, centered, present, calm yet empowered and energized!