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A New Twist

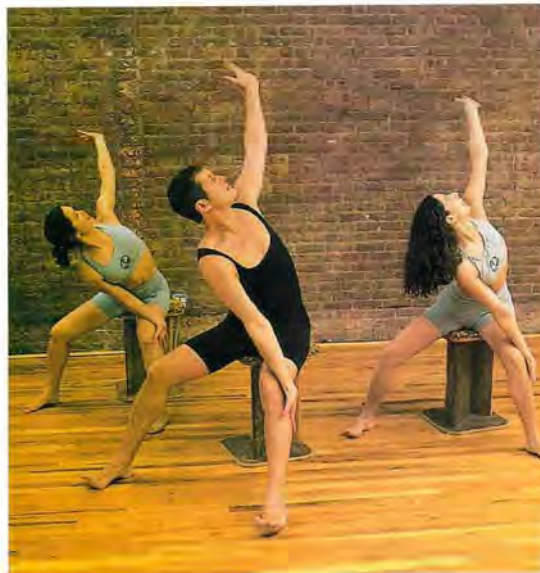
No more back-and-forth workouts. GYROKINESIS® takes its cues from the body's natural rotational movement.

MOVE OVER MAT CLASSES. Much as Pilates is reclaiming its floor-based roots, Gyrokinesis—the machine-free origin of Gyrotonic—is taking hold in savvy spas, gyms, and living rooms across the country. Designed to exercise the entire spine—the foundation for all movement (and many believe, of health), this total body workout restores strength and fluidity to muscles and joints. Its fully rotational exercises build core and lean muscle strength while nourishing the body with focused breathwork—which is one reason its original name, in 1977, was *Yoga for Dancers*.

Gyrokinesis is based on seven different movement principles—bending forward, extending backward, side bending right and left, rotating right and left, and circular. During a 90-minute class, these moves are harmoniously paired with breathing patterns and organized into a flowing workout that resembles a choreographed dance. In the end, Gyrokinesis trains the mind and body to move gracefully while producing a long, lean, powerful, and more flexible body.

Classes begin seated on low stools. Guided self-massage on acupressure points aids relaxation, and breath exercises awaken the body. Once relaxed, you are eased into action with a series of undulating movements that involve arching and curling the spine

before progressing into deeper twisting and spiraling gestures, such as overhead arm circles and shifting the upper body side to side like drifts of seaweed in the tide. This initial focus on the spine and pelvis massages tension from hips, knees, and related muscula-



Seated on low stools, Gyrokinesis students are led through twisting movements that gently stretch and strengthen the spine.

ture, opening the pathways to increased mobility, blood flow, and oxygenation.

The remainder of the class, done in floor and standing positions, is geared toward relieving tension; sculpting core, arm, and shoulder muscles; and elevating body temperature for cardiovascular benefit through a series of strength and flexibility exercises targeting the legs, abs, back, and neck. No postures are held for long in order to maintain the flu-

idity that is at the heart—and soul—of this system.

“In Gyrokinesis, your body moves in every direction, and that’s hard to do,” says Adrianna Thompson, who introduced Gyrokinesis to spa-goers at The Aspen Club & Spa before founding her own studio, Aspen Gyrotonic. While many of her clients are Pilates and yoga students looking to try something different, she also works with those who have suffered trauma—such as an automobile accident—and are seeing a chiropractor. “Chiropractors readjust you, but they don’t teach you how to keep the alignment,” says Thompson. “Gyrokinesis is self-adjusting because you are actively stretching and constantly working to strengthen your core.”

The exercise is particularly beneficial to the desk-bound crowd. “If you sit all day, hunched over a computer, your joints compress and your muscles begin to atrophy,” says Thompson. “Gyrokinesis teaches you how to sit erect. It opens you up and creates space between your joints.”

Spas like Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Arizona, and Rancho La Puerta, in Tecate, Mexico, offer classes in Gyrokinesis. And though personal instruction is best for learning the technique, it can be practiced, much like yoga, whenever it’s good for you and your spine. “Once you learn the movements,” notes Thompson, “you can take it anywhere—the office, the beach. Wherever you are, you’ll finish a session brimming with energy.”

KIM FREDERICKS