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## Introducing The GYROTONIC® Method To Pilates Instructors

by [Lisa Marie Goodwin-Rice \(http://www.idealife.com/fitness-expert/lisa-marie-goodwin\)](http://www.idealife.com/fitness-expert/lisa-marie-goodwin)

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**Feature:** Expand your knowledge of how to move the body with ease.



As movement teachers, we're eager to learn more about how to live comfortably in our bodies. How can we transfer this ability to our clients and students? We awaken ourselves first and pass on our knowledge to clients, thus increasing their awareness.

Many Pilates instructors have questions about the GYROTONIC® Method, which Juliu Horvath created out of his own experience. This article will deepen your understanding of the GYROTONIC® Method and provide answers to some of the most common questions Pilates instructors ask; it will also cover the essential principles behind the GYROTONIC Expansion System®.

### What is the seed center?

The "seed center" is located in the center of the body, approximately between the umbilicus and the pubic bone. The seed center, or yolk center, is the place of germination, where life force begins. It's the source of vitality and strength. We connect internally to this center and then extend, as rays extend from the center of the sun. Working from the seed center allows us to connect with our bodies and move from a deeper place.

### What is "narrowing of the pelvis," and how is it different from or the same as the "inner unit"?

Narrowing of the pelvis begins at the seed center. Gravitational forces try to compress the body, creating stagnation. Narrowing the pelvis creates space, primarily in the low back, through contrast. An energetic polarity simultaneously reaches in opposite directions, creating both internal balance and support.

For example, from a seated position, reach your feet down into the earth and reach the crown of your head toward the sky. When you do this, you create space through your sacrum and low back. This also "frees up" the internal organs. Different analogies can illustrate this. When you squeeze a tube of toothpaste at the center, for example, the forces distribute above and below the place where you squeeze. There is a narrowing in the center.

First connect to the center on an energetic and physical level. The muscular body (psoas, transversus abdominis, pelvic floor muscles, obliques, etc.) is engaged, as when the "inner unit" fires in Pilates; however, the initiation starts at an energetic level. Muscular engagement is a *result*.

Here's another image to elucidate the concept of narrowing: Imagine an egg that begins to boil. The yolk shrinks away from the white, which also condenses and pulls away from the shell, creating more space. The yolk is the energetic body, the white is the muscular body, and the shell is the skin. The tautness of ligaments and tendons permits musculature to expand and stretch without adding stress.

There is almost a shrinking or gathering that occurs in the seed center when the pelvis narrows. Space is created, and the energy is disbursed throughout the body as needed for different movements.

### What does the "fifth line" refer to?

The "fifth line" can be compared to central currents of electricity moving through the spine, arms and legs.

The fifth line through each leg represents the direction of energetic forces down and out from the narrowing of the pelvis. Imagine four lines on the leg (anterior, posterior, medial and lateral). The fifth line is the center. Think of it as energy of the bone marrow extending out from the low back through the heel.

The fifth line is not just a straight line of energy; it's a continual flow, whether it's in the form of an arch, a side bend or a forward bend. GYROTONIC exercise works through the fifth line of the spine and limbs at all times. Reaching through the fifth line creates stability in the joints and gives strength without effort.

### Why does the GYROTONIC® Method seem to begin mostly with movements of the torso?

When we start with the spine and move through all the possible configurations, we "open" the nervous, metabolic and circulatory systems. This also allows life force and microcosmic energies to open.

### It seems that GYROTONIC® movement is all about arching the spine? Why is this?

We are bringing the spine not only into arches or extension but also into a natural upright and supported position. Gravitational forces pull us down and inward, toward spinal flexion and internal organ compression. The GYROTONIC® Method opposes these natural gravitational forces by working in opposition between flexion and extension to create a more ideal posture and a more balanced body.

### What is the view on closing the rib cage in GYROTONIC® exercise?

The rib cage connects the lower ribs to the pelvis, rather than "closing." It creates an elongated connection that brings the entire torso and pelvis together in such a way that breathing passageways remain open.

### What role does breath play in GYROTONIC® exercise?

Breath creates movement, and movement creates breath; by working synergistically, we experience a

sense of revitalization.

Matching breath to each movement allows us to generate and rejuvenate our body's energies. We pull in energy as we inhale, and release energy as we exhale. It's a constant give and take that nourishes and lubricates our joints and muscles rather than overtaxing, exhausting and drying them.

**What position is the spine in during abdominal-specific exercises in GYROTONIC® movement?**

We often refer to the positioning of the spine as a "bowed spine." The spine is in an optimal, elongated position with space between the joints. For example, in a full roll-up action, an "inner and outer coil" effect is created. The abdomen is taut and lengthened without flaccidity. At the beginning, the ischial tuberosities reach forward; they are not in a tucked position. The feet push away from the body to assist in elongating the spine as the sternum softens in a curl when the head begins to come up. This positioning is ideal for engaging the deepest abdominal strength.

**What role do the specific rhythms in GYROTONIC® play, and how do they affect the body?**

Rhythm keeps stagnation from settling into the body. As we move, rhythm helps us get out of our analytical minds and our distracting thoughts, which stop or stagnate movement. Rhythm allows us to listen to our intelligent bodies.

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April 25, 2013

very informative article. I Love this!!! Wonderful job

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