

CUEING, COACHING AND IMAGERY

A good cue can change the way a participant understands and executes a movement. It can be that “lightbulb” moment.

Skilled Pilates cueing doesn’t happen overnight; it comes with experience, experimentation, understanding and intuition. But every instructor should have this skill – even if it is only at a basic level.

You are likely to have a variety of learning styles in a group class. If you are working 1:1 you could ask your client to do a VARK questionnaire to determine the way in which they learn best. Then you can tailor your programme delivery accordingly.

<https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>

Visual Cues for Visual Learners

Visual learners like to see demonstrations.

Your aim is to be something of a role model – but not every teacher has to be perfect at every exercise. Learn your “cheats” if you know you find a particular exercise tricky. Or you can use another student who you know has perfect form. Or you could use videos.

Spoken Cues for Auditory Learners

Auditory learners like instructions and explanations.

You will develop your own ways to explain the exercises. BUT make sure you give scientifically sound information. Think about the muscles being used and the purpose of the exercise.

Imagery is another form of auditory cueing and can be very powerful. Most people respond well to this approach; mental picture can be a shortcut in the learning process, sometimes conveying in a sentence what would otherwise take a long time to explain.

BUT: inappropriate imagery can be counterproductive (even when given with the best of intentions). They can sometimes create confusion if they are not clear and so there should be a clear link between the visual and what you want to elicit. There should also be clarity with regard to the A&P or biomechanics content too. But don’t overload your client/s with too much technical detail.

Experiential cues for Kinaesthetic learners

Kinaesthetic learners usually like to do the Pilates exercise straight away.

Step back and let the process “happen.” Allow the participant or client to experience the Pilates movement without bombarding them with corrections right away. Once the participant has achieved a basic understanding of the exercise, corrections and teaching points can follow, within reason. It’s unlikely that a newbie will execute a move perfectly – there is so much to cover. So cherry pick your TPs – focus on the most important aspects and, as long as it’s safe, “mistakes” are fine!

Read/Write learners

You could consider offering handouts at the end of each session. These could list all exercises used or focus in detail on just one exercise. If you build a library of handouts over time you could also consider creating your own book which could be upsold or included in your classes as an added bonus!

Hands On Cueing

Tactile learners will find hands-on cueing helpful.

Because touch is so direct and time efficient, it can be a really helpful way of assisting clients. But this type of cueing comes with several warnings:

1. Do not touch a client without permission. Even then, consider how touch could be misinterpreted. DO NOT use tactile coaching in what are clearly private areas of the body.
2. Remember that we are all individuals – never use force to move a client into position. A person who cannot touch the floor in forward fold could have several reasons for this – pushing them towards the floor is unlikely to be helpful – and could be harmful.
3. Hands-on coaching will be more challenging in a group setting.