



FIT FOR LIFE

Drop the dead bug

Strange yoga postures should not be confused with healing Pilates exercises, says Carol Westmorland

In my experience, when it comes to exercise, keeping things simple is by far the correct approach. I am against gimmicks. Instead, I employ a failsafe system: if it works don't change it.

'Flipping the Dog' was a term I was gladly unfamiliar with. 'Dead Bug' being another. Both these terms have been presented to me in as many weeks. I am being asked if I am familiar with them. I am alarmed. They describe nothing and, as a lover of all things great and small, I am aghast.

I was prepared to allow the Dead Bug one to die quietly in a corner but when the Flipping the Dog arrived, I felt the need to take a closer look.

As I suspected, they belong to yoga. That's right, yoga. It is worth at this point explaining a little bit of background. Joseph Pilates began his method using springs from beds before moving onto a machine with a pulley system. Flipping the Dog would have you in a tangle should you be attached to a pulley system. You have the picture.

Flipping the Dog would be dangerous on so many levels. Dead Bug is actually single leg stretch. Call me old fashioned, but isn't single leg stretch so much easier to visualise? Single. Leg. Stretch. Whereas Dead. Bug. Exactly.

So my gripe is this: stop confusing the two disciplines. Pilates began as a way to reform following injury. Do you really believe Joseph Pilates would expect you to perform a Flipping the Dog following injury? No, he would not.

So, my call out is this. We do not mess up what works.



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I know from my own injuries that there is nothing more miserable than being asked to perform some ungainly contortion when a simple one would do. If I sound infuriated it is because I am. I see enough bodies in my work to know that the majority need care.

The reason Pilates endures is simple. It works and it is logical.

The creatures of this household agree.



'Flip the dog' and 'dead bug'

Carol Westmorland lives in the Eden Valley. She is a Cycling Time Trials national champion, clocking up 445 miles in 24 hours. She also teaches pilates. www.pilates-cumbria.uk