

OPENING YOUR OWN PILATES STUDIO - GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

These are general starting points only, not legal, financial, or business advice. Certificants are encouraged to connect with a qualified business coach within the Pilates profession for guidance specific to their situation.

Vision & Business Plan

- Define your studio concept (mat-only, reformer-based, hybrid, specialized population, etc.)
- Identify your target client and what makes your studio different
- Draft a basic business plan covering mission, services, market, and financial projections

Human Resources

- Plan your staffing structure early — even a one-person studio benefits from thinking ahead about how/when you'll bring on help
- Consider roles beyond teaching: front desk/reception, marketing, bookkeeping
- Think through onboarding, scheduling, and how you'll communicate expectations to your team

Hiring Policies: Contractors vs. Employed Staff

- Independent contractor vs. employee classification has real legal and tax implications and varies by state/country — this is an area where guidance from an accountant or employment attorney matters
- Each model affects scheduling control, benefits, taxes, and liability differently
- Decide this structure before you start hiring, not after

Wages

- Research local market rates for Pilates teachers in your area before setting pay
- Consider whether you'll pay per class, hourly, salary, or a hybrid/commission model
- Factor in payroll taxes, insurance, and any benefits if staff are classified as employees

Equipment

- Equipment needs differ widely between mat-only and reformer/tower-equipped studios
- Budget for purchase, delivery, assembly, and ongoing maintenance
- Get quotes from multiple vendors and ask about warranties and service support

Studio Systems

- Scheduling/booking and payment software
- Insurance (liability, property)
- Business structure and licensing (LLC, permits, etc.)

Marketing & Client Experience

- Define your unique selling point
- Plan for both client acquisition (social media, referrals, partnerships) and retention (community, consistency)

Self-Care

- Studio ownership often means long hours and wearing many hats — build in boundaries early so teaching capacity and personal energy don't get fully consumed by admin and business demands
- Consider how you'll protect time for your own practice, rest, and life outside the studio, especially in the first year
- Many studio owners find it helpful to build a support network (mentors, peer studio owners, a coach) rather than figuring everything out solo

For guidance tailored to your specific goals, market, and budget, NPCP encourages you to connect with a qualified business coach within the Pilates profession.