

Pilates Instructor interview questions

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What to expect

Interviews for Pilates Instructor roles usually combine a conversation about your teaching approach with a practical demonstration. Employers want to see how you assess movement, adapt to different bodies, and keep clients safe.

- **Process:** Questions about how you plan and structure classes, from warm-up to cool-down.
- **Behavioural:** Questions asking for examples of how you have handled client needs or challenges in the past.
- **Scenario:** Questions that put you in a realistic studio situation and ask what you would do.
- **Technical:** Questions about anatomy, cueing, breathing and exercise modification.
- **Client-facing:** Questions about customer service, motivation and communication.
- **Safety:** Questions about equipment checks, injury prevention and emergency procedures.

A typical process starts with a phone or video screen, then a practical teaching demonstration with a small group or individual. This is followed by a face-to-face interview covering client scenarios, safety and your programming approach. Some studios may ask you to complete a short written assessment on anatomy or class planning.

1. Walk me through how you plan a group reformer class for a mixed-ability group.

Why they ask

This shows whether you can structure a safe, effective class that caters to different levels.

How to structure your answer

Walk-through: start with your pre-class planning, then describe the warm-up, main sequence, modifications, cool-down and equipment checks.

Example answer

"First, I check the class list for any injuries or pregnancy, and I set up reformers so everyone has enough space. I usually start with breath work and footwork to warm up the feet and ankles, then move into a sequence that has options for different levels. For example, I might teach a supine arm series where beginners keep their feet on the foot bar, while more experienced clients add a challenge with a small ball. I watch for signs of strain and offer modifications quietly. I finish with a gentle stretch and a moment of relaxation, then I wipe down equipment and reset for the next class."

2. Tell me about a time you had to adapt an exercise for a client with an injury or limitation.

Why they ask

This assesses your problem-solving, empathy and safety awareness.

How to structure your answer

STAR: Situation, Task, Action, Result.

Example answer

"At my previous studio, a client with a shoulder injury joined my reformer class. She was worried she would not be able to keep up. I asked her about her range of motion and what her physio had advised. During the class, I offered her a lighter spring setting and a modified arm position, and I checked in with her after each set. By the end of the session, she was able to complete the full class without pain, and she booked into my regular time slot."

3. A client in your mat class complains of sudden lower back pain during a roll-up. What do you do?

Why they ask

This tests your ability to respond safely and calmly in a real situation.

How to structure your answer

Judgement under pressure: immediate action, assessment, modification, documentation and follow-up.

Example answer

"I would stop the exercise immediately and ask the client to lie down in a comfortable position, like knees bent or legs extended if that feels better. I would quietly ask where the pain is and whether it is sharp or dull. I would not try to stretch it out or push through. I would offer them a modification for the rest of the class, like avoiding flexion, and suggest they see a physio if the pain continues. After class, I would document the incident and follow up with them the next day to see how they are."

4. How do you cue breathing and core engagement for a client who is struggling with a teaser?

Why they ask

This checks your technical knowledge and your ability to teach complex movements clearly.

How to structure your answer

Step-by-step explanation, with a focus on external cues and progressions.

Example answer

"For the teaser, I would first check if the client can do a basic roll-up with good control. If not, I would break it down. I would cue them to exhale as they roll up, imagining they are blowing out through a straw. For core engagement, I might place my hand under their lower back and ask them to gently press into my hand, or use a small ball between their knees to activate the pelvic floor. I would also offer a modification with the legs in tabletop or use a strap. The goal is to help them feel the movement rather than force it."

5. How do you handle a client who is frustrated with slow progress?

Why they ask

This shows your customer service and motivational skills.

How to structure your answer

Empathy, listen, reframe, adjust plan.

Example answer

"I would start by listening to their concerns without interrupting. I would acknowledge that progress can feel slow and that it is normal to have plateaus. Then I would remind them of specific improvements I have seen, like holding a plank longer or moving through a sequence with less tension. I would ask if there is a particular goal they want to focus on and adjust their program to include more achievable milestones. I would also encourage them to celebrate small wins, like better posture or reduced pain."

6. What are your regular studio safety and equipment maintenance checks?

Why they ask

This checks your attention to detail and commitment to a safe studio.

How to structure your answer

Checklist walk-through, covering daily, weekly and monthly tasks.

Example answer

"Every day before classes, I check the reformers for frayed ropes, loose springs or anything that does not feel right. I wipe down equipment between sessions and make sure the floor is clear. Weekly, I check the springs for wear, inspect the foot bars and make sure the carriage moves smoothly. I also check that the first aid kit is stocked and that emergency exits are clear. If I notice anything that needs repair, I report it immediately and take the equipment out of use until it is fixed."