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Research article

## Integrating Pilates Exercise into an Exercise Program for 65+ Year-Old Women to Reduce Falls

Gonul Babayigit Irez<sup>1</sup>,  Recep Ali Ozdemir<sup>3</sup>, Ruya Evin<sup>3</sup>, Salih Gokhan Irez<sup>4</sup>, Feza Korkusuz<sup>2</sup>[Author Information](#)[Publish Date](#)[How to Cite](#)[Email link to this article](#)

### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine if Pilates exercise could improve dynamic balance, flexibility, reaction time and muscle strength in order to reduce the number of falls among older women. 60 female volunteers over the age of 65 from a residential home in Ankara participated in this study. Participants joined a 12-week series of 1-hour Pilates sessions three times per week. Dynamic balance, flexibility, reaction time and muscle strength were measured before and after the program. The number of falls before and during the 12-week period was also recorded. Dynamic balance, flexibility, reaction time and muscle strength improved ( $p < 0.05$ ) in the exercise group when compared to the non-exercise group. In conclusion, Pilates exercises are effective in improving dynamic balance, flexibility, reaction time, and muscle strength as well as decreasing the propensity to fall in older women.

**Key words:** Pilates, elderly women, balance, reaction time, muscle strength

### Key Points

- Pilates-based exercises improve dynamic balance, reaction time and muscle strength in the elderly.
- Pilates exercise may reduce the number of falls in elderly women by increasing these fitness parameters.

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