**23. Strengthen Your Core with Pilates and Dance Instructor Heather Craig**

**Heather Craig:** [00:00:00] Just keep moving. It doesn't need to be complicated. Walking, dancing, HIIT, stretch. Know, stick on a bit of music, have a boogie. Yeah, lovely. So easy.

**Intro** [00:00:12]

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:00:16] Hello and welcome to ALSO in PINK. The podcast all about lifestyle design. How we live, the clothes we choose and how we organise our space. I'm your host, Alexandria Lawrence, a certified KonMari consultant and personal stylist. I'm here to guide you on your journey to live a happy, fulfilled life.

Every Tuesday, you'll get new insight on what it means to live well, plus actionable tips.

Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life. Our guest today is pilates and dance instructor Heather Craig. Heather trained at the Royal Academy of Dance and the Rambert School. And she's co-founder of Moving Stories Dance Company.

Heather is an experienced pilates instructor and also teaches adult ballet. And you're in for a treat. This episode is a bit more interactive. You'll have a chance to do some lovely stretching as Heather guides you through a seated pilates session. It's the perfect way to gently get your body moving Heather, welcome. How absolutely lovely. I'm delighted to have you on the show.

**Heather Craig:** [00:01:30] Ahhh, thank you so much. It's lovely to speak with you.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:01:35] Yes, it's been ages and to give listeners a bit of background, I got to know you at my local rowing club, where you offered Monday night pilates classes. And these were wonderful, very popular amongst rowers and a great way to start the week. And it was super convenient for me too, since I'm just a stone's throw away from the rowing club. I guess a stone's throw if you have a very good arm, but about a five minute walk.

**Heather Craig:** [00:02:01] Oh, yeah, no, it's lovely.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:02:04] Yeah, so that wasn't long ago, but life has changed so much, hasn't it? What's it been like to be a pilates instructor during the pandemic?

**Heather Craig:** [00:02:12] So getting the sort of technical side of things together was quite interesting cause I'm really not very technical. I'm much better I'm using my body rather than using my hands and computer screens but, so far so good. It's translated quite well. And I've been really fortunate that I've had a fantastic client base that have followed me, great. So I feel a bit more comfortable now in front of the camera. Back at the beginning, it was quite nerve wracking, really.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:02:36] So virtually, do you feel like you can see what's happening enough and give students the support they need?

**Heather Craig:** [00:02:42] Yeah. Generally I'll keep the class quite basic, but because most of the clients I know, they know generally the way I work. And I've managed to create a bigger screen now, so that from my computer, I can switch it into the TV and then I get a , better , picture of everyone. So it's like the Muppets show.

They're all on their little screens. It's great. It's great. So I see legs flying everywhere, arms going everywhere. I can see when someone nips off to have a cup of tea. But yeah, no, it's fine. It's working really well to be honest and actually, on these dark January nights you're snug at home and you can do your exercise in the comfort of your own home. So that's quite nice, really.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:03:21] Exactly. It's a lovely thing to be able to do. And adore the idea of the Muppet gallery. Do you have two little old men commentating in the background as well, like on the Muppets?

**Heather Craig:** [00:03:32] That's right. I forget the names of the two old chaps, but definitely one of my clients has said yeah, we just like the two old guys in the Muppets. I was like, yes.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:03:41] That's excellent. So have you had a bit of that yo-yo effect going between online and in person when the lockdown has been lifted? Or how has that worked for you?

**Heather Craig:** [00:03:52] I have a group of clients that really, I think purely because they work all day on their computers, the last thing they want to do is login again , to a class scenario. So they're the ones that have been ready and waiting, ready to pounce back into classes.

And then again, that felt quite stilted initially to go back to classes because everyone was scared of touching everything. Even before lockdown happened. I was getting really rigorous with the cleansing routine thing: the hand sanitizing and all the equipment sanitizing.

And in the end, what I've got people to do is actually just purchase their own equipment. And so when they come back to live classes, now that they've got that already. It just really makes them feel a bit more secure. So we've got lots of plans. Plan A, Plan B and possibly Plan C.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:04:39] Absolutely. That's so challenging. And , I think there's often some confusion between yoga and pilates.A lot of people are probably a bit more familiar with yoga. So what is pilates? How would you describe what you do and how you help people?

**Heather Craig:** [00:04:54] Yeah, pilates is probably a little bit younger than yoga, but it did come about from a , a chap called Joseph Pilates who was an Austrian chap. And he devised a system really to , create more symmetry within the body, to create a strong core. Much more about retraining the body structure. So it's a very practical sort of exercise. And he devised it by using , I think he, he worked with springs, the old hospital beds that had the springs.

So he already knew how to work with resistance and that that would do a great thing for the muscles in the body and it evolved. And then eventually his studios opened up and, he worked with dancers and sports people, which is why it's so popular with all sorts of different groups of , fitness professionals, and then now it's become sort of a bread and butter exercise really for everyone. So I wouldn't say to anyone just do pilates. That's going to get you fit because it won't, but it works as a beautiful supplement and integral part of your exercise regime , because you're strengthening from the inside out effectively. And a lot of us are sedentary. This is half our problem. We don't move or stretch or think about, making our bodies even anymore. Yeah, it's a shame. Our posture has changed quite a lot over the last few years.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:06:11] So if pilates isn't enough on its own to keep you fit, how have you personally stayed fit during the pandemic? What do you supplement it with?

**Heather Craig:** [00:06:20] Going for a nice walk. If you got that hour of exercise that you can do that hour of time , walking, but I also do ballet. So I'll try and do maybe two or three ballet classes , in a week, if I can. And I'm not a massive advocate of HIIT workouts, but I found myself just doing a little six minute or 10 minute HIIT. Yeah. I look really funny doing it because I'm placed as a dancer but I have to be parallel and, look quite awww, and I'm quite petite.

So yeah, I just think, oh, when I'm trying to do all these lovely squat lunges and whatever it is. So it was quite interesting. So they're the things that I do, and actually to be honest, when I'm actually teaching my classes, I'm actually doing the exercises with everyone. So I feel probably a little bit fitter in lockdown than I do normally.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:07:11] Yeah, probably a lot of people can relate to that. Maybe you're one extreme or the other. Either the very sedentary during lockdown or the really raring to go and get fit. Being slightly limited it makes you work more with what you

**Heather Craig:** [00:07:24] I think so. For me, definitely.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:07:28] And do you have a favorite pilates move or exercise?

**Heather Craig:** [00:07:33] My favorite pilates exercise and probably everyone would know that coming to my classes. You might even remember , pelvic bridge, pelvic tilt. Yeah. So really the reason I like that exercise mostly is because it's not loaded flection, so therefore it's pretty safe for everyone's spines, but also what it does, it provides a little bit of traction. So if you've been standing for a long period of time, then what it does is just gives some lovely space between those vertebrae. So you feel a bit taller generally, hopefully after doing a few pelvic tilts, but that's my favorite one.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:08:09] It brings back all of the memories.

Oh, and then there's the foam roller. You roll your legs on it at the end of a pilates class, which is very painful.

**Heather Craig:** [00:08:20] Oh, now you're the rolling. We must roll. We must make that fascia. We must make it nice and fluid and not crispy.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:08:27] And for someone who has no idea what several of the words were in that last sentence, what would you,

**Heather Craig:** [00:08:34] Oh, we're getting technical now. So fascia is the substance that encapsulates muscles. And I always say to people, if you imagine really quite disgusting, really, but if you think about , mucus from your nose and that's quite sort of serumy, isn't it. Yeah. Quite serumy. Now, if that gets dry, it gets crispy and that's fascia.

So you massage the fascia. When you massage that serumy, crispy, yeah, snot mucus. Again, it moves better. It becomes more fluid again. And that's exactly what you want to happen to your muscles. You don't want them to be stiff and crispy. You want them to have some fluid within them and move with ease.

You'll know it, if you've been sat for a long period of time and then you get to stand up, you think, Oh, the front of your hips feel the bit. Oh yes. I just need to take a moment. That's exactly what I'm talking about.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:09:25] Okay. Oh, that's wonderfully vivid. I'm so glad I asked.

So why is it so painful then at the end, that rolling you do? Especially on your legs. So the front of your legs and the sides.

**Heather Craig:** [00:09:39] So they're big muscle groups. So the front of the thighs, you've got your quads and on the sides, you've got your IT band and still part of the quads there and they're global muscle groups. So they really take the brunt of every movement we do. So if we're not always engaging the stomach muscles and working perhaps more the glutes, the back of the legs, then obviously these muscles at the front and sides take a lot of the weight and, generally that's why it's so painful because those muscles are tight. They do need that stretch and roll and release. And then you'll find that your movement patterns are hopefully a little bit smoother...

**Pilates Mini Seated Session** [00:10:14]

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:10:21] And now for something more interactive. Grab yourself a chair and perhaps a small cushion. And here's Heather to guide you through some lovely stretches.

**Heather Craig:** [00:10:36] Hello. So this is the mini seated pilates session. Grab yourself a firm high back chair. Come and have a sit on that chair. And I want you just to move your bottom forwards so that you can place your heels underneath your knees with your feet flat. And I want you to think of your body comprising of three balls.

So your head. And your shoulder girdle and your pelvis, all stacked one on top of the other with a little bit of space in between. So you've got a nice neutral position through that spine. Then take your hands either side of your ribcage on the bottom of the rib cage. And I want you just to take a breath in and really expand those ribs into your sides and into your back. As you exhale, let your mouth open. Let the air come out and let those ribs soften.

Let's do that two more times. Keep the shoulders relaxed, breathing in and breathing out. Let's see on the last exhale if you can just take little contraction through those low stomach muscles, so breathe in. And as you exhale this time, imagine a sponge in your pelvic girdle. You're going to give it a gentle squeeze.

Lift your pelvic floor. Come on, let's try one more time for luck. Breathe in and breathing out. All right. Lovely. Let's put the fingertips on your shoulders. And I just want you to take a little bit of circling with those shoulders. So breathe in, let your shoulders lift forwards up to your ears back and down.

So let's inhale as we take the first part of the movement and then exhaling as you take the second part. Two more times, breathing in, lift the shoulders exhaling and taking them back and down. One last one, breathing in and breathing out. Now in that same position with your arms we'll just do a little bit of rotation.

So when you're ready, just take a little twist through the upper spine, looking over your right shoulder and then inhale to come back to the center. Make sure your sitting bone stay nice and heavy and even as you rotate and come back. Good. And again, let's breathe in and breathe out as you twist. Exhale, coming back to the center. And to the left just that gentle twist and coming back to the center. One more time each side. Breathe and feel those Laceter muscles drawing into towards you. That sponge in the pelvic girdle, maybe a little lift of your pelvic floor.

And you should be coming back to the center about now. Take the arms forwards no higher than your shoulders. And I want you to reach forward, so you stretch your shoulder blades at the back and then just squeeze your shoulder blades together. So keep your arms long, so forwards and backwards movement breathing in and breathing out.

Good. So feel your shoulder blade spread. Try not to move that spine. Keep nice and lengthened. Just the shoulders working, squeeze back, inhale, reach forwards and exhale to squeeze. Good. Now keep your arms forwards in this position. I want you to think about drawing your low stomach muscles in so much so that you allow your pelvis and tailbone to tuck.

So you take a little curve in the lumbar spine and then inhale to restack the spine. And again, breathing out scoop those low stomach muscles in and inhale to sit tall. And again, breathing out. And breathing in, restack the spine. And one last one, just so you've moved that lovely base of the spine. Give it a little stretch and then sit tall. If you bring your right hand behind your head and just press the back of the skull into the hand, left arm down by your side and just reach down towards the left side. And then coming back up. So let's breathe in. As you reach down, just feeling that gentle stretch through the waist, and again, keeping your sitting bones really nice and heavy there.

Breathe then and breathe out. When you're ready, change to the other side. So just a little pressure into the hand with the back of the skull and reach down to your right side. Over you go. Okay, so no twist in that pelvis or spine. Just straight down. Side, bending little space between the ribs and the hips.

Good. And then for the next exercise, if you've got a cushion handy, use a cushion between your knees, but don't worry if you don't. Just bring the legs together a little bit. You've got the cushion there place them between the knees. And I want you to squeeze the cushion or your knees together. Feel your inner thighs contracting.

Little pull in through the low stomach muscles and then release. You can even feel your sitting bones as you exhale and squeeze. So you're tightening up your bottom muscles and then releasing. Let's again, breathe out and squeeze and almost feel your spine elongates as you do this. So remember those three balls stacked one on top of the other.

Just keep them nice and lengthened. Last squeeze. Okay, when you're ready, see your bottom back to the back edge of your chair. So your thighs are resting and then I want you just to take some leg stretches. So exhale, press the back of the right thigh into the chair. Extend your right leg forwards. Bring it down.

Let's change legs. Breathe out. Press. So we're contracting those big muscles at the front of the thighs. The quads. Try not to let your spine curve here, try and keep that neutral position. Keep your low stomach muscles nice and strong and down. Again, right leg. And down. Lovely. And and left leg. And down. Now hold the right leg up.

And I just want you to flex and point your toes. So reaching the toes forwards and bringing the toes back up. Toes forwards and back up. One more time forwards, try and stay sitting tall. Now circle your ankle three times two and three, and then go the other way. One, two, three. Carefully bend that leg, take it down.

Let's change legs, lengthen your left leg away three times pointing and flexing. Really spread your toes and last time, and then your circles around you go one, two, three, and the other way, one, two, three. Good. Let's bring the bottom forwards again so your heels are underneath your knees.And I'm just going to get you to put the weight into your heels on both feet and lift your toes and then bring them down. And again, lifting the toes and bringing them down and lifting the toes and bringing them down.

Now, change. Balls of the feet pressing and lift your heels. So you just start activating your calf muscles there. Good lovely. One last one. And let's see if you can alternate now. So bring the toes up of your right foot and the heel up of your left foot and now change. So heel down on the left foot and toes up and heel up on the right foot and toes down. And change. And just keep changing.

It'll rock through. Good. Really spread those toes. And then just to finish, we're going to take a little breath in bringing the arms up sideways. Reach to the ceiling and then bring the arms down and you can slightly lift your breastbone up. So you get that nice stretch. And again, breathing in, reaching up and breathing out.

Push the air away underneath those armpits, press down with resistance. Breathe in, reaching up. Clasp your fingers, push your palms up towards the ceiling. Really stretch. You can let those shoulders lift and have a little wiggle. Bring the arms down and give me one more lovely, big inhale as you lift your shoulders and exhale to circle those shoulders down and back.

And you're cooked. Well done.

**Interview Resumes** [00:19:55]

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:20:12] So I wonder, I hadn't thought of this before, but if you are a professional dancer, someone who's used to engaging your core more regularly, even if you don't do that rolling. Are you less likely to have quite as much pain because you're using your core more often?

**Heather Craig:** [00:20:27] Yeah, I think the more that you can , , get that core nice and strong. For myself, I came to pilates quite late in my career. And if I'd have had more at the beginning, more while I was training, I think I've gone on quite well. I'm heading off into my twilight years, but if I'd have known those things earlier, gosh. Yeah, I don't know. I think it would have really helped.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:20:53] Oh, that's fascinating. So you mean even as a dancer you're not taught necessarily to work with your core in quite the same way?

**Heather Craig:** [00:21:01] I think that's it. I think the teaching of , dance particularly is changing. And I see now that the Royal Ballet have all sorts of different training programs. Not just doing ballet class, but they have lots of rehab , and pilates and gyratonics and things like that because , it's obviously come to light that , these things really help a dancer in the latter years of their dancing career to not leave a ballet company, with two hip replacements or something. They can leave that ballet company and they can go on to another career, be it in movement or not, but they will be able to move afterwards. They won't have to give up because they've just absolutely ruined their body.

I'm a seventies child, these things were very new then and a lot of the dancing training was really quite tough to say no, it's much nicer now.

And I think it's great. I think it does help everyone's body, whether you're a dancer or not really , just that peace of mind that you can move a little bit easier. And I think most people feel the benefits. They feel good afterwards. It gets the endorphins flowing, doesn't it as well. It's fundamental , breathing and you can feel it, you can feel tension rising if you're not breathing fully. So that is again, it's another benefit, isn't it? , pilates while on yoga itself as well. So yeah, if anything breathe more.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:22:20] Breathe and have a strong core. Prevents injury as well, doesn't it?

**Heather Craig:** [00:22:24] Yeah. Total injury prevention. That's exactly it. It takes that one thing to realize. I've got to really think about now what my body's doing, and I think it's like that for everyone, you've just got to , be in tune as much as you can, but generally you learn through an injury. So I'm not saying it's a great thing to have one, but you do learn how to manage things, I think.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:22:46] That's true. I think you learn so much through injury or any kind of failure if you want to call it that , in life or business. As long as you don't repeat the very same thing again, you're on your way to progressing.

**Heather Craig:** [00:23:04] Keeps you young.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:23:06] it does. And , I think youth is something Perhaps there's a warped concept of it in both sports and maybe dance as well. When perhaps just physically you can only be at the peak of a career like that for a certain limited amount of time. But do you think there's much preparation, like when you were still pursuing that full on professionally?

Did you have at the back of your mind? Oh at some point I'll need to figure out what to do or pilates kind of came at the right time, or did you think about that?

**Heather Craig:** [00:23:39] No, exactly that. I really did. I was quite conscientious and really, I'd come at the dancing side of things backwards. So I started as a teacher they've danced first. Then I went on and trained as a dancer. So I was a bit older than everyone else before I actually got to tread the boards.

But then, that was great because it gave me , I sort of backup. So anytime that I wasn't actually performing, I could drop back into teaching and it was just great. And again, I, came to pilates. Quite late must have been about 1996, I think out in Germany.

And because of that, that gave me another layer, body-wise. I've sorted out postural things that I'd never been really able to master and get stronger and yeah, my whole performance, I think I went on for another, yeah , another 10 years after that.

, and even today, still dancing and doing class regularly. The legs don't go up as high.

My imagination is good. Oh, I can't get my leg up to 180 degrees. Oh no, I can't. But nevermind. It's okay. So no, it's all good, but yes I did prepare and I think that's a really valuable tool for all the people training at the moment. The youth training always have a little backup plan. I think that's always a good thing to do.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:25:01] I think that's very true. And I certainly know many musicians who have been so focused on that world that they really haven't cultivated other skills or interests. So I think it's very hard if you are so focused on something that

**Heather Craig:** [00:25:16] Yeah,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:25:16] haven't looked beyond it.

**Heather Craig:** [00:25:18] Absolutely. No, absolutely. Keep a few things, in the pipeline there and have your plan B's and your plan C's just in case, because you never know, do you what's around the corner so...

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:25:28] No,

you never know when there's going to be a worldwide pandemic.

**Heather Craig:** [00:25:33] Exactly. You never know. No one would have ever thought.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:25:36] No, not in a million years! If you could just rewind even a year when we were oblivious of it in this part of the world.

**Heather Craig:** [00:25:44] Yeah, absolutely.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:25:46] Would you say that you've had any kind of lockdown realization that's changed your perspective or your priorities?

**Heather Craig:** [00:25:53] I think the big one , really for myself and my family is just the simplicity. It's brought it all back down to basics. We've got lots of family time , obviously, and have to look after the needs. I've got fairly young children. They're not that young now, but they're fairly young.

And I think when you're reigned in, when you're closed in a bit, you can just prioritize, like you said before, you can prioritize things a bit more can't you. So it's just simpler. If you can't do that, then you do this. And if you can't go out and you have to exercise in and you have to do this, you have to just adapt.

And I think that has been quite nice. I'm not saying that I can't wait for this to be over because then I can run out and I can go into town again. I can explore the theater and see things all those sorts of things. But you can manage having a simple life, I think , and that's really good.

And I hope that we rescued the planet a little bit in this plight as well, look at what we're doing to the planet. Look at what we've done and what it's caused. So let's hope that we can just look after the planet and ourselves a bit more now. I hope that we don't go back. I hope you really assess the things that we do and, learn a little lesson from all of this. It is still really quite tough, but fingers crossed we'll learn.

**Review Ad Spot** [00:27:05]

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:27:05] hello. Can I just say, thank you. Thank you for listening. And if you're enjoying the show, it would mean the world to me if you'd rate and review ALSO in PINK. I'll make it super easy for you and you can even win a prize.

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**Interview Resumes** [00:28:17]

And, Heather, I don't think I've ever seen you outside of a fitness context. So involving leggings and clothes made for exercise.

**Heather Craig:** [00:28:28] Yeah, I know. I live in my clothes, my pilates gear.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:28:31] How would you describe your personal style then? Is it pilates-related or what do you wear when you're not working out?

**Heather Craig:** [00:28:39] Gosh, when I'm not working out, I'm normally probably in jeans or leggings still, so I'm not really a dress person. So often if people see me out and I've got a dress on, they'll be like, wooo, okay. Oh, you actually do wear things like that. For me, it's a comfort thing. The pilates stuff is very comfortable. The bulk of my wardrobe I would say is pretty much pilates stuff, but there are the odd dresses and the odd nice tops there that when I get the occasion to get out and about, I might dress up just a little.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:29:12] Thank goodness for athleisure. That's a whole new, brand of clothing now.

**Heather Craig:** [00:29:16] There's pajamas stroke fitness...

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:29:19] Depending on how chic you want to be, you can call it something different,

**Heather Craig:** [00:29:23] Loungewear, I believe is the popular name for it, isn't it? Loungewear.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:29:29] Yes.

I like things that hold me in.

Oh, yeah. I can see the benefit of that too. It'll be interesting I think coming out of the pandemic and seeing if there's more comfort that people stress in their work lives, or if they even go into the office, who knows.

**Heather Craig:** [00:29:46] Yeah, exactly. Yeah. A lot more people now are working from home and probably will be continuing that. I think that will be the new trend , when we come out of this. So it will be interesting. Yeah. To see how shops manage, , how we manage , as well. So yeah.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:30:03] You never think that the world could change so quickly, but when you have to, there are things that happen. There's something nice about that, as horrifying as the whole pandemic is of course.

**Heather Craig:** [00:30:14] Yes. I think it's good. I think it shows that , we may not think we're adaptable, but actually , when we put our minds to it , we can be adaptable. And I think that's a great philosophy, isn't it? , you don't have to say I can't do that. And I won't do that. I'm just thinking about maybe I should... try? At least that's what I say to my clients. Come on, it's okay. Let's coax you in there.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:30:37] Oh, that's lovely. And do you have any other lifestyle philosophies or mantras that help you hashtag live your best life?

**Heather Craig:** [00:30:46] For myself personally , , I have to move I get quite irritable if I don't move. My one thing that I do every day really is when I get up, no matter, if the children are chatting to me or everything's going on, my whole family laugh at me, they think I'm mad, but I will do about 10 minutes of pilates for myself. So I'll just go through things for my body, just a really tiny mini routine. And what I find is it just gets me focused on the day. I've breathed properly. I've moved various bits and then I'm like, yeah. Okay. I can do this. So it's quite a positive start. I think I've done that for years. Yeah, so it's like having a cup of tea, but you have the cup of tea still, and then you do the five or 10 minutes and it does, it really does work. You just have to set the alarm just a tiny bit earlier, that's all. That's the key.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:31:35] I think that's a lovely idea having a morning routine or even an evening routine, just something open and close your day.

**Heather Craig:** [00:31:42] Yeah, absolutely. I think it does you the world of good. It gives you a focus and a point and a time. Okay. Now it's time for switch off, as you say, at the end of the day.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:31:51] Do you have any kind of evening routine as well?

**Heather Craig:** [00:31:54] I always try and read , a few pages of a book before I , unwind and try not to look at the phone too much. And that sort of thing, really get away from that , screen time. If you can get involved with a really good book that's top tip. And I think most people are the same. Grab a few pages of a book because that will send you off into probably your best sleep. . , Sleep mode. Although, if you have a dancing career, sometimes you're on such an adrenaline high, if you performed late, that it does take that little bit of extra time just to. Wind down. And I know in my youth yeah, the night could go on a little bit longer than it should have done, really, , yeah, finding wind down time then is a little trickier.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:32:34] Oh, I can completely relate to that since I've always been a morning person. I was one of those weird kids who got up at 6:00 AM even as a teenager, and it wasn't until performing more that that shifted a little bit just because physically, I just felt like I couldn't do that staying up a bit later.  ~~,~~  But I'm definitely returning more to my natural state now.

And with that in mind, do you have a daily habit or ritual that brings you joy?

**Heather Craig:** [00:33:02] The one that does bring me to it really is just moving straight away. I think that's the thing that just really helps to bring my mind into the day and, no matter if I'm feeling a little bit low or whatever, once I start moving, that's when it all just starts to settle. So any sort of, you wake up with that wish of anxiety. Just again, just getting up going, even if you think I won't do my usual routine. I'll just do some stretching, but anything, and it just puts you into such a good frame of mind. So I can really advocate that it works for me and I hope it works for other people too. I'm sure it does. I'm sure I'm not alone.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:33:44] No, you're not. I think , whenever I have a morning walk or a run or something, , it definitely helps to get that fresh air.

**Heather Craig:** [00:33:52] Yeah, just once a day, you need to get out. You need to go and see what's going on around you. Even if it's only a short walk. 15, 20 minutes, but just to get out and just. Yeah, just get that space, get that air.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:34:04] Or in the afternoon too, if you're feeling a bit muddle headed and stuck.

**Heather Craig:** [00:34:09] If you've had too much screen time, that is it. Just turn everything off, get your coat on, wrap up if you need to and then it's just out. Walk. Yeah, absolutely. Nothing like it. And it's so simple, isn't it really. Everyone can do that.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:34:23] That's so true. Or have a little stretch in your seat, like your lovely pilates routine.

**Heather Craig:** [00:34:28] Oh, yeah, absolutely. You do need to just take stock hour or two and have a little stretch.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:34:34] Excellent advice. And something I talk about in my business? There's this concept of a vision for your ideal life. For how you want to live. Would you say that you have a vision for what your ideal life looks like?

**Heather Craig:** [00:34:50] Yeah, I feel quite positive. I feel quite lucky and I feel I'm not far off that actually. I know lockdown is, obviously offered quite a few restrictions but I love my family and I love the work that I do. I really like working with people and helping people to move better.

And I think, in terms of my dance career, I did more than I thought I would ever do. So, that's a bonus. And I think the only thing is something like moving down to the seaside. The call of the sea I think has become much more important to me now. But obviously I think we'll stick around here for the children to grow up, but , that would be rather lovely. And then, even to have maybe one day my own studio or maybe offer retreats, pilates and things like that, something , quite holistic, but something maybe a little bit different. I don't think I'm far off. I feel quite lucky.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:35:41] That sounds delightful with the prospect of life by the sea sometime in the future.

**Heather Craig:** [00:35:45] Oh yes. Definitely. The sea , itself is just, yeah, I just find that very , therapeutic. Yeah, it can be a horrible day by the sea, but it's still therapy, isn't it? That I don't know. There's something about it. It's quite exciting as well. Calming and exciting.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:36:01] The wooshing of the waves.

**Heather Craig:** [00:36:03] Just lovely. Oh, and your skin feels amazing. You've had a walk along the beach and you feel all oh, perfect.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:36:11] Oh, you're conjuring a lovely image. I can just see it. What's your top tip for living something listeners can take away with them and apply in their own lives?

**Heather Craig:** [00:36:22] Would be to remind yourself to drink enough water. And I'm saying that because I'm sitting here with my water, cause sometimes I just get so busy that I forget. And then I think, why have I got a little bit of a headache and it's generally , hydration. So I'd say yes, definitely drink enough water. And obviously my other one. Oh, it has to be keep moving.

It can't be anything else, can it's going to be just keep moving. It doesn't need to be complicated. Walking, dancing, HIIT, stretch. Know, stick on a bit of music, have a boogie. Yeah, lovely. So easy.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:36:59] So what are you looking forward to this year? ,

**Heather Craig:** [00:37:02] Spending a bit more , family time. I've got elderly parents, so I'd like to be able to be a bit more on hand for them. Not doing too badly, I'm in a bubble with them and my husband's parents they live in that idyllic place, which is near the sea. So definitely get down and see them.

~~,~~  But also I think working towards , keeping my client base really happy with their classes. Making sure that they've got new things to work on. New inspiration. So lots, lots to look forward to really. And nothing major, nothing you don't need to travel miles away or anything like that, but just really nice, simple things, getting on with life, getting on, but getting on with life.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:37:43] Simple, yet satisfying.

**Heather Craig:** [00:37:44] Yes. Exactly. Yeah, absolutely.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:37:48] And Heather, for listeners who'd like to have a bit more of you in their lives, are your classes currently full or are you taking on new students?

**Heather Craig:** [00:37:57] It's always great to have new people. I would probably any new , recruits to come and have a chat with me for half an hour, just so that I can get to know them and know their bodies a little bit before they come to a class. I teach four times a week at the moment for the classes and then I teach privately as well. , I teach an adult ballet class too. So four pilates classes, one adult ballet class, and then I mix and match with the , private sessions as well. And the classes are generally are, I'll give a list of equipment but people have been fairly creative around the house. Found all sorts of bits of equipment to use. It's great. So yeah, you just need yourself, a mat, probably a cushion, and a dyno band and a ball And if you want any of the other bits, then that's great but, people are welcome to join it's is I try and make it as a workout, but a gentle approach to the workout. I don't want it do too crazy things when I'm not there in person to oversee. So yeah.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:38:54] Sounds good. And, now we've come to the finale. So I have a few quick-fire questions for you to end the show.

**Heather Craig:** [00:39:02] Oh my goodness. Okay, I feel, still scared now.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:39:07] Pretend you're sitting by the sea enjoying the lovely waves lapping and yes. Yes, you can hear my soothing voice, I didn't realize this before podcasting, but people said, Oh, you should be like a yoga instructor or something.

**Heather Craig:** [00:39:22] Honestly, I have to say, I totally agree. Maybe I should use you Alexandria and I should just do the session and you could be my voiceover.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:39:31] That would be hilarious. You have such a lovely voice too.

And yeah.

**Heather Craig:** [00:39:36] Very kind.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:39:37] Oh, no, you do. It's really very relaxing. I remember that. From class

You're well-suited to what you do in all ways.

**Heather Craig:** [00:39:47] Oh,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:39:49] , what's your most treasured possession and, of course, no judgment.

**Heather Craig:** [00:39:54] So no judgment. We couldn't use it today, but actually my most trusted possession my Mac Air Book but because it's given me the capacity to do the work that I've been able to do during lockdown. So I, yeah, don't judge me on that, but that is. That has been a lifesaver. Yeah, it really has, because I was completely not a technophobe. I had nothing. I had a couple of tablets , which just didn't really cut the mustard. So there we go. Oh,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:40:23] That's amazing. You've achieved a lot then already to become technically apt, which I'm sure you are to do your classes.

**Heather Craig:** [00:40:31] And I'm internally grateful to someone for the capacity to have that Mac Air. If you're listening, thank you.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:40:40] And what's your favorite article of clothing or accessory in your current wardrobe?

**Heather Craig:** [00:40:47] Oh, my goodness. I will tell you, and I don't know if I'm allowed to mention a brand, but they are a pair of leggings and they are, Oh my goodness. They're from Lululemon and the material they've used, it's like skin. It's just really unusual. , I do love those. Yeah. I am a particular fan of , quite , funky leggings. Yeah, that is my clothing accessory.

I'd like to say it was a pair of Manolo Blahnik shoes, but no, sadly not. Oh, if only. My feet are ruined Alexandria. Bunyons,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:41:19] oh, no, we don't need to wear shoes anymore, so it's fine.

**Heather Craig:** [00:41:23] That's it. Just trainers.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:41:25] And where do you go to get inspired?

**Heather Craig:** [00:41:29] I do love going to the theater. I love that. I think that is just so inspiring and , maybe people get annoyed when they go with me cause I'm not very critical. I think it's just the joy of going out and just actually sitting and watching something and really appreciating what they're going through in order to deliver that out to the audience. So for me, theater, cinema . . Going outdoors. Yeah. Doing outdoor stuff. Great. And I will say I've been really inspired during knocked down to have a little view in on other teachers teaching , either PRTs or yoga or, maybe even other stuff. But I found that So there's my inspirations.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:42:07] Wonderful. And what's one book or resource that you'd recommend for everyone?

**Heather Craig:** [00:42:14] At the moment I'm reading Claudia Winkleman's ~~i~~ biography, well not really a biography. It's called Quite, and for me, that's just quite uplifting. She's quite funny. She's quite practical. So I am enjoying that. I'm not sure I'd recommend it to everyone because obviously it's for maybe a certain , age group, maybe a certain sex as well. Maybe. I don't know.

And I think from a practical point of view for the work that I do, I've always been drawn back to a book called Dance Technique and Injury Prevention, which is a really old book by Howse and Hancock. And back in the day, they were sort of the physios that you would probably go to for your rehab if you were injured as a dancer. And this book is, yeah, it's quite a phenomenonal. I mean, it's quite dated now, but the information in there , it's really good. So that's my sort of top reference book I'd say. It doesn't work for everyone's , injuries, but it's something I will refer to quite a lot.

So there's my , probably my book recommendations, not for everyone really,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:43:19] but for enough people.

**Heather Craig:** [00:43:21] But for enough people, maybe you'll find Something from them, either one.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:43:25] Great. And here's a very KonMari question for you. What would you say that you're grateful for?

**Heather Craig:** [00:43:33] Oh , yeah, definitely the love and support my family and especially my husband. He's my rock.Yes. He knows that I can be quite crazy at times, but he, yeah, he does , put up with me really well. And the ying and yang. So he's the yang to my ying? Ohh something like that anyway. Yeah.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:43:56] Oh,

**Heather Craig:** [00:43:57] Eternally grateful.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:43:59] And finally, what do you love most about life?

**Heather Craig:** [00:44:05] I never want to stop learning. So I don't ever want to rest on my laurels and think, yeah, but you know what? I know it all. I know all about pilates. I know all about dance. No, I always, there's always something to learn. And I think for me, always think , if I can continue to learn and I can continue to evolve and become a much more , rounded person from that. Yeah, that would be my, the thing I love most about life, just to continue that learning experience.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:44:33] Yes. Stay curious and keep learning.

**Heather Craig:** [00:44:36] Yeah. Get the kitty cat out. Be curious.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:44:40] Oh, lovely.

Thank you so much, Heather. It's been a great pleasure catching up and talking about crunchy fascia. And keeping curious and all of these things.

**Heather Craig:** [00:44:53] Yeah, absolutely. No, it's been a real joy. Thank you so much, Alexandria. Lovely. Really nice to talk to you again.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:45:00] Yes, you too. And I do love the way that you say lovely. I remember that from the class it has a special place in my heart.

**Heather Craig:** [00:45:06] Oh, that's really nice to hear.

Oh,

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:45:10] one word? Just, to enjoy

it?

Oh,

**Heather Craig:** [00:45:14] Lovely. That's lovely.

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:45:17] Delightful.

**Heather Craig:** [00:45:18] Oh, Oh,

**Key Takeaways** [00:45:20]

**Alexandria Lawrence:** [00:45:20] Well, hope you enjoyed that chat with pilates and dance instructor Heather Craig. If you'd like to join one of Heather's virtual classes, have a look at the show notes. There's a link to her website and you can email her and arrange a time to discuss your fitness needs. So here's some key takeaways from our conversation.

Remind yourself to drink enough water. And as Heather says pilates on its own won't to get your fit, but it's a wonderful supplement to other exercise. After all pilates helps strengthen your core and the stronger your core, the less likely you are to get injured. Pilates also helps you be balanced and move more fluidly. Keep that fascia nice and lubricated and not crispy.

Most importantly, just move. Once a day, you need to get out. Even if it's only a short walk, get out and get some fresh air.

Why not start your day with a mini pilates routine? The one Heather guided you through. Some lovely stretches might be just the thing to get your day off to a wonderful start. That's our show then. Thank you so much for listening. I'm Alexandria, and this is ALSO in PINK. The podcast, all about lifestyle design. If you enjoyed the show, please subscribe to ALSO in PINK, wherever you get your podcasts. And the absolute best way to show your support is to write a review on Apple Podcasts or iTunes. This really helps more than anything to promote the show. And, of course, tell all your friends. Thank you so much for your support. Until next time, have a wonderful week. Redefine what's possible and create your ideal life.