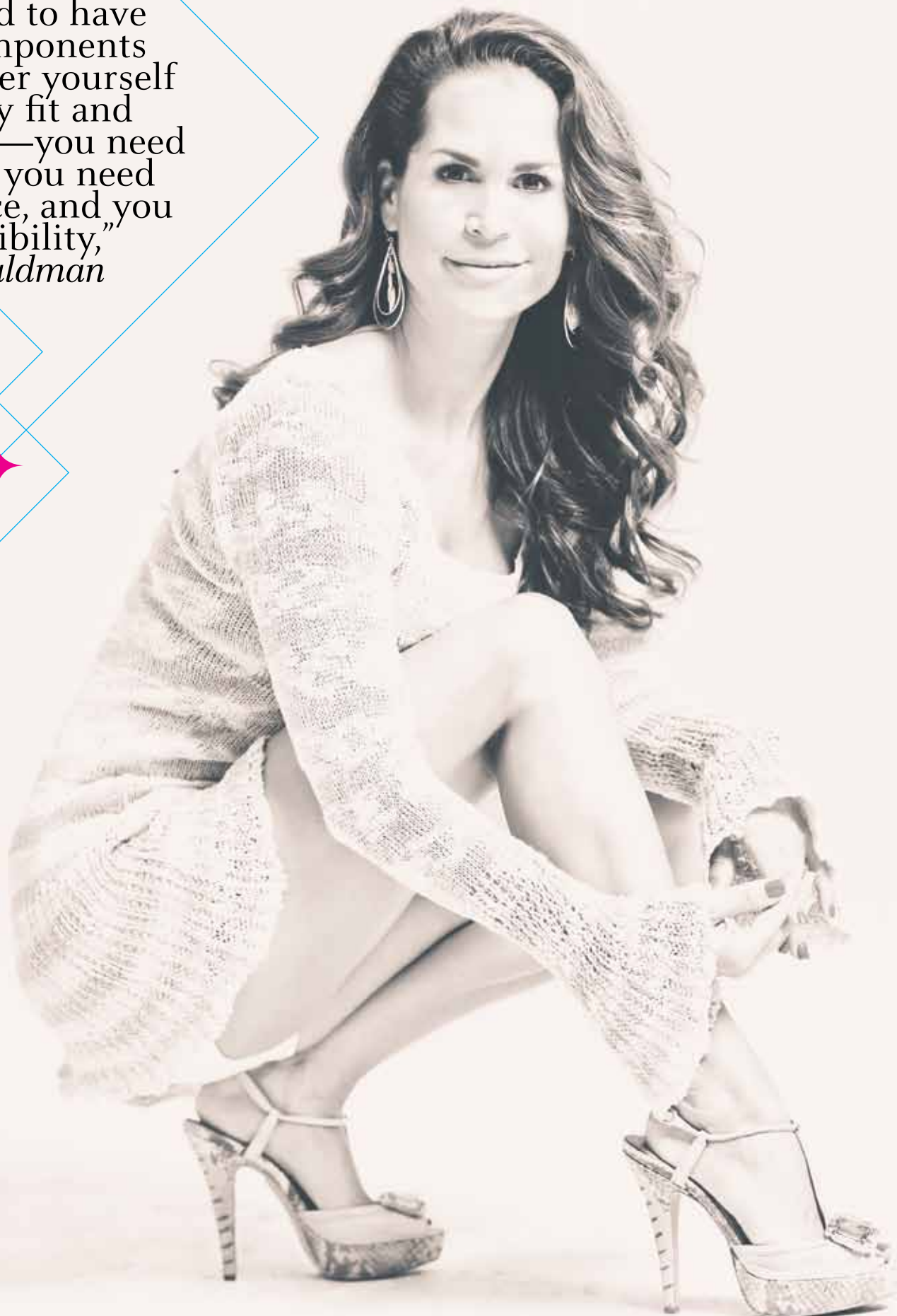
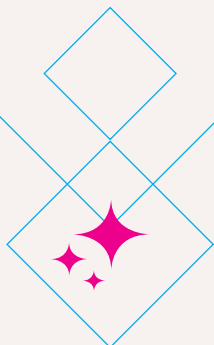


“You need to have three components to consider yourself physically fit and balanced—you need strength, you need endurance, and you need flexibility,”  
—*Nina Waldman*



FEEL-GOOD  
MEDICINE/ Waldman  
stresses the importance  
of fitness as a way  
of feeling good, not  
looking good.

# IN PURSUIT OF WELLNESS

NINA WALDMAN MAKES THE CITY HEALTHIER ONE BODY AND MIND AT A TIME

BY JESSI C. ACUÑA  
PHOTOGRAPHY ANTHONY MAIR

**O**n a Saturday afternoon a small group of women gather in Body in Mind studio inside Palms Place for a workout. This isn't just any workout, though. It's Bootylates, a fusion of yoga, cardio, lots of squats, guided meditation and, at the heart of it, the core-strengthening regime of Pilates. Over the course of 2 1/2 hours, studio owner Nina Waldman leads the ladies through a carefully mapped-out routine of varied exercise movements broken up by inspirational quotes, occasional jokes and discussions of health and beauty. See, Bootylates isn't just a workout—it's a workshop for your mind, body and soul. As such, Waldman isn't just any fitness instructor. She's a teacher of wellness.

Each class begins by candlelight and starts with introductions where participants are prompted to say something they like about themselves. Easier said than done in a society that constantly asks us what we can improve. Waldman works with people of all shapes and sizes. With more than 15 years in the business—she's taught out of Gold's Gym and Las Vegas Athletic Club, and prior to relocating Body in Mind to a cozy space in Palms Place mid-recession, she owned her own studio in Henderson—the soon-to-be 40-year-old ensures all of her workouts, not just Bootylates, capture multiple elements.

"You need to have three components to consider yourself physically fit and balanced—you need strength, you need endurance, and you need flexibility," Waldman says. She would know. She got into Pilates while living in Jerusalem, where

her husband played basketball professionally. After a back injury, he sought rehabilitation through Pilates, which eventually led Waldman to the practice. Now having taught professional athletes, celebrities and her loyal local following, she's one of the best in the city.

From honing her skills as an instructor over the years, including getting additional timely and costly certifications, the pint-size beauty knows the physical aspect is not enough for lasting improvement. "My job as a trainer is to teach my clients how to get back to center," Waldman says. "If you come into any workout to look better, you're going to fail every time." Waldman stresses working out to feel better instead, adding that looking better will come as a result.

To keep things exciting for her clients, as well as hotel guests who often drop in her classes, the studio offers options outside of Pilates, including yoga, indoor cycling, Zumba, cardio striptease and kickboxing. She's particularly enthusiastic about her pre- and postnatal Pilates classes, as she credits her strong pelvic floor for allowing a natural birth when her daughter was born 6 1/2 years ago. She wants all mommies-to-be to have access to that same joy, if they so choose.

Much of Waldman's success stems from her attitude. For example, the Bootylates workshop has a girls'-night-in component. During one break between workouts, she asks a few of the ladies to share personal beauty tips. This not only makes the class feel less strenuous and makes the time fly

by, it builds camaraderie among the women. (Everyone seems to have an opinion on coconut oil!)

Waldman is now focusing on taking this spirit of sharing and wellness to the corporate level. Twice a week, she and her Body in Mind instructors teach classes for staff at Hard Rock Hotel as well as for Zappos employees, trying to break up the sedentary lifestyle of too many hours at a desk ("15-minute chair workouts have been great"). Meditation, along with subtle circles of movement, start the blood flowing, and Waldman knows how beneficial even the smallest actions can be in improving one's well-being.

The Bootylates class wraps with a meditation and closes with a talk from a healthy pre-packaged food-service representative. As Waldman says, working out isn't enough—the body needs the right fuel, too. A family-feel fills the room as the women grab a glass of champagne and strawberries (Waldman loves to play host) and begin to say their goodbyes.

Waldman is constantly inspiring her clients, whether pushing them through their workouts or sharing a smile so wide it looks like her tiny frame might fall over. It all comes from the love of her profession. "When you do Pilates, you can't let your mind stray," she says. "You're taking time to yourself to connect your mind and your body." She wants people to experience life in the moment, even if just for a couple of hours. And, yes, even if that includes firming a booty or two along the way. [bodyinmindpilatesstudio.com](http://bodyinmindpilatesstudio.com)

