

# Now, that's a stretch!

His successful Stott Pilates franchise is no act, although life started out that way for Lindsay Merrithew

**LEADERBOARD MEMBER:** LINDSAY G. MERRITHEW  
**JOB TITLE:** PRESIDENT AND CEO, STOTT PILATES  
**HANDICAP:** 8  
**HOME COURSE:** ST. GEORGE'S G&CC, TORONTO, ONT.

**GOLFSTYLE:** I see you attended the Juilliard School for the Performing Arts in New York City.

**LINDSAY G. MERRITHEW** Juilliard was a pretty intense experience. There are four major disciplines offered at the school, music by far being the largest. There's also an opera department, dance and a theatre arts program. I was in the latter. One of the most amazing things about going there is that you're with a very talented and diverse group of people immersed in one of the most culturally rich cities of the world. I had previously lived in Halifax, where I attended Dalhousie University, studying commerce. Theatre arts? Commerce? Strange bedfellows, but I feel these two disciplines greatly complemented my business/entrepreneurial endeavours. Creativity is such an essential ingredient to successful businesses, and my experience at Juilliard and subsequent work in the theatre has proved to be really beneficial.

**GS:** You're a member of Ontario's Innovators Alliance and a two-time nominee as Ernst & Young's Entrepreneur of year. How did you come to work for yourself?

**LGM:** To be perfectly honest, it happened somewhat by accident. I had been pursuing an acting career and the opportunity simply presented itself. Mind you, both my grandfathers were entrepreneurs.

**GS:** What advice do you offer to those wanting to start their own business?

**LGM:** My advice is to recognize the importance of building a team very early in the process—to surround themselves with great people. There are very few successful solo acts.

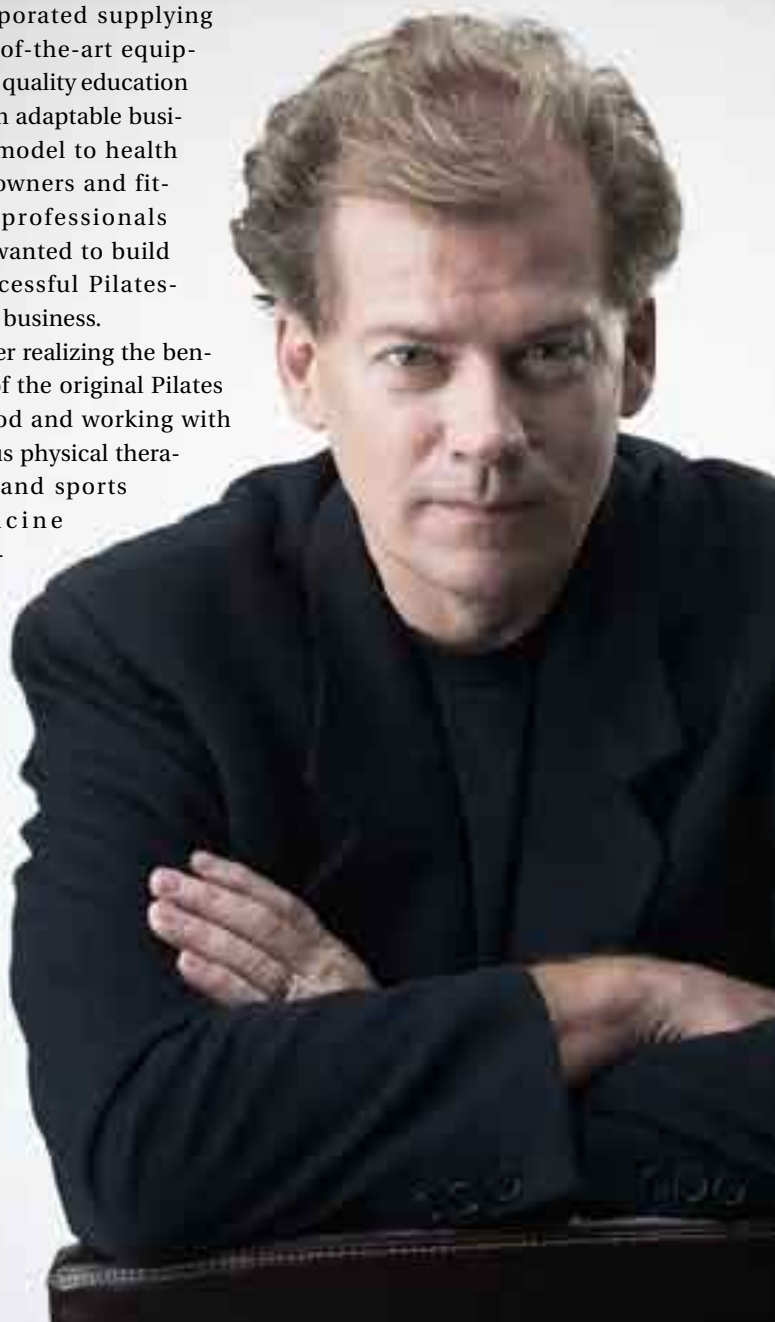
**GS:** Tell me a bit about the Stott Pilates story.

**LGM:** We started our business over 20 years ago, long before the Pilates method of exercise gained its widespread appeal. At that time there were few manufactures of equipment or comprehensively styled teacher training centres.

My wife and business partner, Moira, and I were of the view that there was a sound business model that incorporated supplying state-of-the-art equipment, quality education and an adaptable business model to health club owners and fitness professionals who wanted to build a successful Pilates-based business.

After realizing the benefits of the original Pilates method and working with various physical therapists and sports medicine

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professionals, we dissected and reconnected it into a comprehensive, systematic approach to the original teachings.

**GS:** What's the key to continued success?

**LGM:** I'd say it's the importance we've placed on building and maintaining relationships with the people who license our Pilates method, purchase our equipment and replicate our business model. Today, we have over fifty-five licensed training centres in twenty-three countries worldwide, and three corporately owned centres—one in Toronto, Denver and New York City. The company has trained more than 25,000 instructors around the world and is highly regarded within the fitness community. Athletes of all levels are realizing the benefits of "alternative" methods of exercise to increase power, align the body and work the core.

**GS:** Given its benefits regarding stamina, stress relief, focus and core stability, Pilates must be ideal for golfers.

**LGM:** Golf demands a delicate balance of mental and physical skill. Pilates enables you to focus on both through mind-body awareness by gaining insight into the connection between the physical and psychological components of athletic performance. Tiger Woods, David Duval, Rocco Mediate, Sean O'Hair, Lee Jansen—they all incorporate Pilates into their training regimen.

**GS:** How did you get introduced to golf?

**LGM:** My father was an avid golfer. I used to caddie for him at our club in Woodstock, N.B., back when going to the range was defined a little differently. I would stand out in a field and shag golf balls as my father bombed them out at me. I caddied at my local course and played golf throughout my teenage years, but it has only been in the last ten years that I have returned to the game more regularly.

**GS:** What's your best golf memory?

**LGM:** One of my most memorable rounds of golf was playing the Old Course in St. Andrews, Scotland, with Moira. It was certainly not the most ideal weather conditions the day we played—wet, wild, very windy and bone-chillingly cold too—but it's not often you have the opportunity to play the Royal and Ancient course in St. Andrews!

I also had the privilege of playing Old Head in the southwest corner of Ireland. I was there with my son Michael and two dear friends from Europe. The views were stunning! It's on a 220-acre peninsula that juts out more than two miles into the Atlantic Ocean and is surrounded by jagged sea cliffs rising more than 300 feet from the water's edge. We played on a bright sunny day, but were warned that if the fog rolled in, we would have to literally be led off the course individually by our caddies or risk plunging headlong off an unseen precipice. It's probably the most unforgettable course I've ever played or seen. **GS**

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