



LIFESTYLE

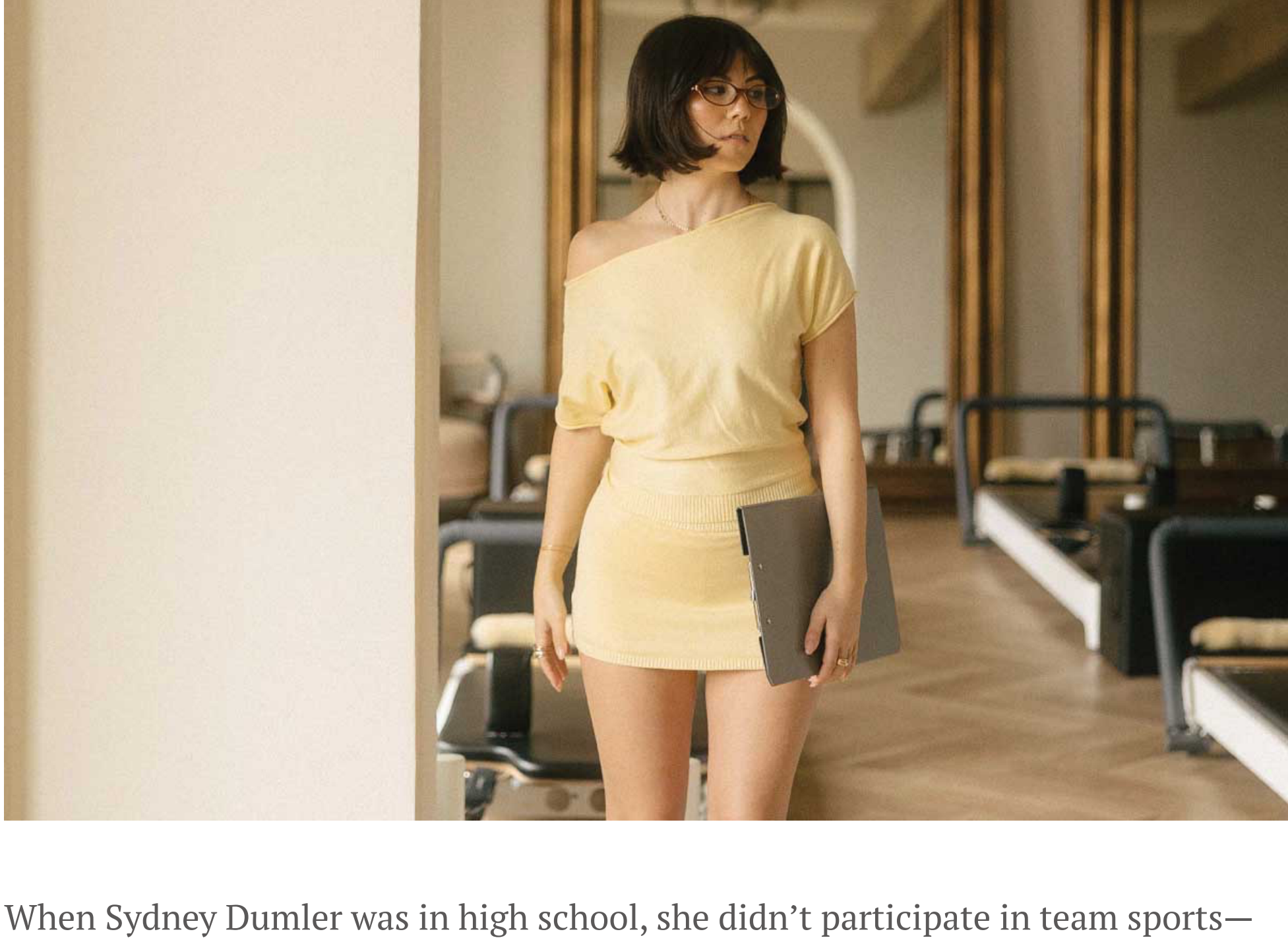
Core Values

Pilates, people, and the power of group fitness with Sydney Dumler

 **Gina Kelly**

PUBLISHED NOV 5, 2025
UPDATED NOV 6, 2025

✓ FACT CHECKED



When Sydney Dumler was in high school, she didn't participate in team sports—but she still desired that same sense of belonging. She decided to turn to yoga and Pilates as a way to move her body and connect with her community.

By the age of 18, Dumler had become so passionate about her practice that she chose to pursue her teacher training. After completing her certification and heading to Nashville for college, she managed and taught at a yoga studio.

Wanting to build on her certification, she saw a need for more group fitness spaces in Tennessee and took matters into her own hands by founding Forza Pilates in December 2023. After just a couple of years, Dumler has expanded her studio to two locations, with a third space on the way. Her passion for Pilates is evident—but it's her commitment to her community that is helping transform the fitness industry.

ADVERTISEMENT

300x250 RECTANGLE

ADVERTISEMENT

300x600 HALF-PAGE

ADVERTISEMENT

728x90 LEADERBOARD

The power of positivity

Things are changing in the group fitness culture. Dumler believes that people are looking for movement that supports their overall well-being, not just their bodies. “I do think just the popularity of Pilates is proof that we're shifting that way,” she says. Although intense training sessions will likely always be available, the industry recognizes that some people need low-impact routines. “They want something that is accessible, that they feel successful doing, so they feel like they can continue on with their day and not completely fatigue their bodies,” Dumler observes.

To ensure every client feels seen and supported, she gives tours to new clients and provides a concierge-level service. She's also designed her studios to feel warm and inviting, like home, and makes sure to hire a personable staff, all with the goal of fostering a welcoming environment.

Busting the blues

According to a recent study, group fitness classes can reduce depression more effectively than solo workouts by boosting physical engagement and easing feelings of loneliness.



ADVERTISEMENT

728x90 LEADERBOARD

Everyone welcome

Yet accessibility goes beyond offering low-impact workouts and a comforting studio design. An inclusive program is important. Dumler provides instruction from novice to expert by using modifications. “All classes are all levels, but we like to point people in a specific direction based on what they want,” she explains. “All of our instructors are trained to have options in each exercise to change the way it can feel, either making it more supportive or more challenging.”

Creating a more inclusive and accessible fitness culture also includes body-positive language and safe spaces. Dumler understands that people notice the difference in the way they feel after attending classes in a more supportive environment. “I do think people are starting to pay more attention. We definitely encourage our instructors to avoid any type of earning mentality or toxic language,” she says.

At Forza, Dumler provides a few class options based on customer need. “We have monthly plus-size Pilates classes that we host with a local, plus-size influencer,” she says, emphasizing the desire for a relatable experience. “Just to see people in the room that have a similar body to you or just to feel like, ‘Oh, I can be accepted and feel safe in a space like this.’ I think it's so important for studios to do those kinds of things.”

She also realizes that new parents feel vulnerable and believes in providing them with community support. “I think it can be really scary postpartum to go back to the gym. There's this mom guilt of not wanting to leave your baby with a babysitter,” says Dumler. For this reason, Forza offers a BYOB (bring your own baby) class, so parents in Nashville can socialize while staying healthy, physically and mentally.

ADVERTISEMENT

728x90 LEADERBOARD

Strength in numbers

Exercising with others isn't just fun; it's beneficial for our health. Dumler acknowledges that her clients want to stick around after class to socialize because it makes them feel good to be part of something, which speaks to the health benefits of togetherness. “We're always trying to have fun monthly community events,” she says.

Researchers have found that people who join group fitness classes stick to their workout routines more so than those who exercise alone. Whether it's a friend or instructor, knowing that someone expects you at class is a great motivator, making it less likely that you'll skip your workout.

Additionally, group fitness classes reduce stress more than individual workout programs. Community is a key component to living a healthy lifestyle, and group classes allow us to support, motivate, and bond with each other, leading to a more robust and positive health response.

Workout your immune system

Working out reduces the risk of heart disease and cancer and improves your mood, but did you know exercise can also boost your immune health? By exercising regularly, you may be able to prevent viral and bacterial infections.

Moderate workout sessions help your body release important immune cells into your bloodstream, which patrol your system for viruses and bacteria. With regular exercise, this process happens often enough that your body builds a stronger immune system over time.

Establishing a fitness routine can reduce inflammation too. Since inflammation can weaken your immune system, making you more susceptible to viruses, moderate exercise for about an hour every day is recommended to keep inflammation in check.



ADVERTISEMENT

728x90 LEADERBOARD

Finding the right fit

Although group fitness classes are healthy and engaging, some people are still nervous about attending them. Dumler suggests people who feel this way start by taking online classes at home. That way, they get used to the moves and lingo before attending in-person. “Then, one day, work up the courage to go into that group class having some basic knowledge, which is really helpful,” she says.

It's also important to have grace with yourself, and work on adjusting your mindset. “I think it's normal to feel intimidated,” says Dumler. “I remember being intimidated going to Pilates for the first time, but I think just not putting so much pressure on yourself, just going in with an open mind, is number one.”

Energy-boosting supplements

When the days get darker and the temperature dips, you might need an extra boost of energy before heading to your workout class. Here are a few supplements that can help put a little pep in your step:

- **Vitamin B12:** turns certain fats and proteins into energy. Although it's found in food, taking a supplement could give you an extra boost, especially if you're deficient.
- **Vitamin C:** turns fat into energy. Not only can it give you a jolt, but it also impedes the oxidative process and slows down aging.
- **Iron:** transports oxygen from your lungs to the rest of your body, helping to maintain energy levels. Taking a supplement may give you more energy levels and improve cognition.
- **CoQ10:** is found naturally in the body, and cells use it to make energy. Taking a supplement may help reduce fatigue, especially as we age.



This article was originally published in the November/December 2025 issue of *alive* magazine (US edition).

Next »



Gina Kelly

Gina Kelly is a freelance writer and editor located in New Jersey, US. She is a certified health coach and writes about health and wellness.



TAGS: COMMUNITY | FITNESS MOTIVATION | GROUP EXERCISE

ADVERTISEMENT

728x90 LEADERBOARD

READ THIS NEXT

LIFESTYLE

In Awe

LIFESTYLE

Digital Rewilding

LIFESTYLE

Night Lights

LIFESTYLE

Finding Freedom in Frugal Living



Subscribe to Our Newsletter

Email address

SUBSCRIBE



The information provided on this website is for educational and informational purposes only. It should not be used as a substitute for the advice of an appropriately qualified and licensed practitioner or healthcare provider. The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of Alive Publishing Group Inc., its affiliates, or parent company. Different views may appear in future articles or publications. Information on alive.com is copyrighted and must not be reprinted, duplicated, or transmitted without permission.