



From top: Shannon Bynum Adams teaches Pilates; Adams using equipment in her studio.



WELLNESS

TURNING POINTE

Shannon Bynum Adams, founder of San Jose's first classical Pilates and Gyrotonic studio, knows a thing or two about making professional pivots.

BY NIKOL SLATINSKA

At Urban Body San Jose (urbanbodysanjose.com), classes are largely led by former professional ballerinas. Their lithe figures stretch with ease over wooden framed pulley towers and archways. But the idea that these workouts are exclusively aimed at athletes couldn't be more untrue, says Shannon Bynum Adams, founder and co-owner of Urban Body. "We serve every single person with a spine, whether you've never moved in your life or you're a runner or a dancer," she says.

Adams was at one time the latter, but at the end of 2014, things took a turn. She ended her career with the former Ballet San Jose following five orthopedic surgeries, including two hip replacements. Throughout her time as a dancer, she used Pilates and later tried Gyrotonic—the extended movement-based exercise system—as rehabilitation methods, and eventually became certified to teach

both. Combining her need for regular cross-training and a lifelong desire to help others, she leased a small office space in downtown San Jose in 2014 that came to be Urban Body.

Word of the city's first Pilates and Gyrotonic studio spread quickly among the ballet community. Adams mentored many of her former dance colleagues so they could obtain their own teaching certifications. "They got into it as a form of cross-training and realized that the benefit is just so profound," she says. In a short couple of years, she expanded to a larger studio.

After multitudinous operations, Adams was able to give birth and can now squat and play with her 2-year-old son. "Don't get me wrong, we work your physical body a lot," Adams explains. "But there's so much mental clarity and mental stimulation that it offers that it felt selfish to not provide this to the people in my community." This dedication to helping clients has motivated

Urban Body to provide top-tier services, even amid unanticipated challenges like the global pandemic.

Adams' quick thinking helped the studio launch online classes the day after San Jose invoked a shelter-in-place order, allowing clients from all over the world the opportunity to stay consistent with their workout regimens. On Sept. 14, the space reopened at 25% capacity, serving patrons in its clean, pristine environment. Regardless of what city ordinances may arise in the future, Urban Body will continue to be there for its clients. Adams says her silver lining has been watching people realize how important it is to take care of their bodies.

Still, working out at the studio is an investment. The way Adams sees it, however, the consequences of not taking your health seriously are far more costly. "I think most importantly the message right now is that you only have one body," she says. "And if you don't invest in your body, you're going to be investing in your medical bills later. So which do you choose?"