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20 Questions With: Hilliard Studio Method's Liz Hilliard & Clary Hilliard Gray



Like mother, like daughter.

When Clary Hilliard Gray needed to get in shape for her upcoming wedding in 2007, who better to turn to than her own [STOTT Pilates](#)-certified mom, Liz Hilliard? By the time Clary said her I do's, she had joined her mother's passion for fitness and the two teamed up to create the [Hilliard Studio Method](#), a.k.a. "Pilates on Steroids."

Now, Liz and Clary rank as Charlotte, NC's go-to fitness gurus counting a flagship studio offering 40+ weekly classes (taught by a team of devoted HSM-certified trainers, natch) a series of downloadable [workout videos](#), HSM-branded [apparel](#), numerous partnerships with leading lifestyle and fitness brands, and one killer [signature smoothie](#).

We caught up with the mother-daughter power duo on running a family-owned fitness empire, the active wear brands they can't live without, where you'll find them hanging out in Charlotte, and the 2 celebs they'd love to train.



1. What's surprised you the most about working together as mother & daughter?

We might have already known this, but we realized that we definitely share a brain! From making big business decisions to creating new moves to showing up to the studio in the same outfit, we are usually on the same page before we have even discussed it with each other. It is very special to be able to work with family every single day, and keep it fresh and fun after so many years.

2. Launching & running your own fitness empire is no small feat! What would you say has been your biggest career challenge, and what has been your biggest success?

Our biggest challenge has been learning how to grow! With two studios and a developing lifestyle brand, we cannot be everywhere at once. We have begun to build a strong team around us that we can trust to get the job done while we are looking forward to the next move.

Our biggest success was launching our flagship studio in 2013! At the inception of the method in 2008, we were teaching around 10 classes a week in a variety of places around Charlotte. Once we were able to open our current studio, we upped the class offerings significantly. Now at over 45 a week and over 20 workout videos, we're able to inspire a broader audience to "Be Powerful."

3. Top 3 DO's for a healthy lifestyle:

- a. Joie de vivre – the joy of living!
- b. Jumpstart your morning! We start with the [HSM Signature Smoothie](#), packed with 27g of protein and 20g of fiber, to set us up for a day of clean eating and continued energy.
- c. Move your body with intensity everyday! Whatever it is that keeps you moving – do it! Each week our classes are designed to work the body in multiple muscle confusing ways ensuring you get a full body workout in each class.

4. Top 3 DON'TS for a healthy lifestyle:

- a. Sugar
- b. Sugar – the white stuff
- c. Sugar – honey, agave, carob syrup, dextrin, fruit juice, lactose, turbinado, sucrose, molasses, cane sugar...we think you get the idea!



5. Top 4 gym gear essentials:

- a. Clothes that let your body move, sweat and look good while doing it.
- b. Pumped up playlist.
- c. Weight gloves for heavy weights, pushups and all those wicked 60-second holds.

d. [Golden Goose](#) sneaks.

6. Top 5 favorite active wear brands:

a. [Lucas Hugh](#)

b. [Alexis Mera](#)

c. [Track and Field](#)

d. Anything from [Carbon 38](#)

e. [Heroine Sports](#)

7. Top 5 go-to spots in Charlotte:

a. [Stagioni](#) – A bar and restaurant across the street from our studio featuring a seasonal Italian menu; so yum, yet healthy and a great wine list!

b. [Woo Skincare](#) – They carry all of our favorite products and have a fun atmosphere.

c. [The Ritz](#) – For a trip to their luxurious spa and a delicious dinner at BLT.

d. [Capitol](#) – We love their unique, curated collection of couture looks and their mission to inspire extraordinary women.

e. Bike ride on our amazing greenways to see the city.



8. My go-to healthy snack is:

LH – Any kind of raw nuts and of course, popcorn.

CHG – Plain Greek yogurt with chia seeds and blueberries.

9. If I weren't running a fitness empire, I would be:

LH – Traveling the world.

CHG – Traveling the world with mom!

10. If I could train any 1 person in the world (past or present), it would be:

LH – Beyonce

CHG – Karlie Kloss

11. If I could only do 1 yoga pose for the rest of my life, it would be:

LH – Plank

CHG – Plank



12. My workout power song is:

LH – Old school Rock n’ Roll – David Bowie, Jimi Hendrix, ACDC...

CHG – Anything off of Beyonce’s Lemonade! Obsessed!

13. Our perfect weekend is spent:

If we aren’t teaching, we love to spend time with each other and the entire family! Our weekends are usually spent watching Clary’s kids’ soccer games, biking to the park or local festivals with our husbands and spending time outside together. Of course, we compliment all of our activities with good, healthy food and fine wine.

14. If I could pack up and go anywhere in the world tomorrow, I’d go to:

We are both dying to go on a safari in South Africa!

15. Squats or Lunges?

Lunges, with heavy weights of course!



16. Coffee or Tea?

Matcha tea is our new go to; green tea high in antioxidants with the perfect amount of pick-me-up.

17. Peanut Butter or Nutella?

Peanut Butter made with organic peanuts, salt and nothing else.

18. Kale or Spinach?

You can't go wrong with any greens, but kale it is.

19. Early Riser or Night Owl?

Night Owls living Early Riser lives!

20. What's next for Hilliard Studio Method?

We're making moves to deliver this workout all over the world, stay tuned for details!

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