

PILATES EXERCISES:

30 Minutes per day / 7 days a week

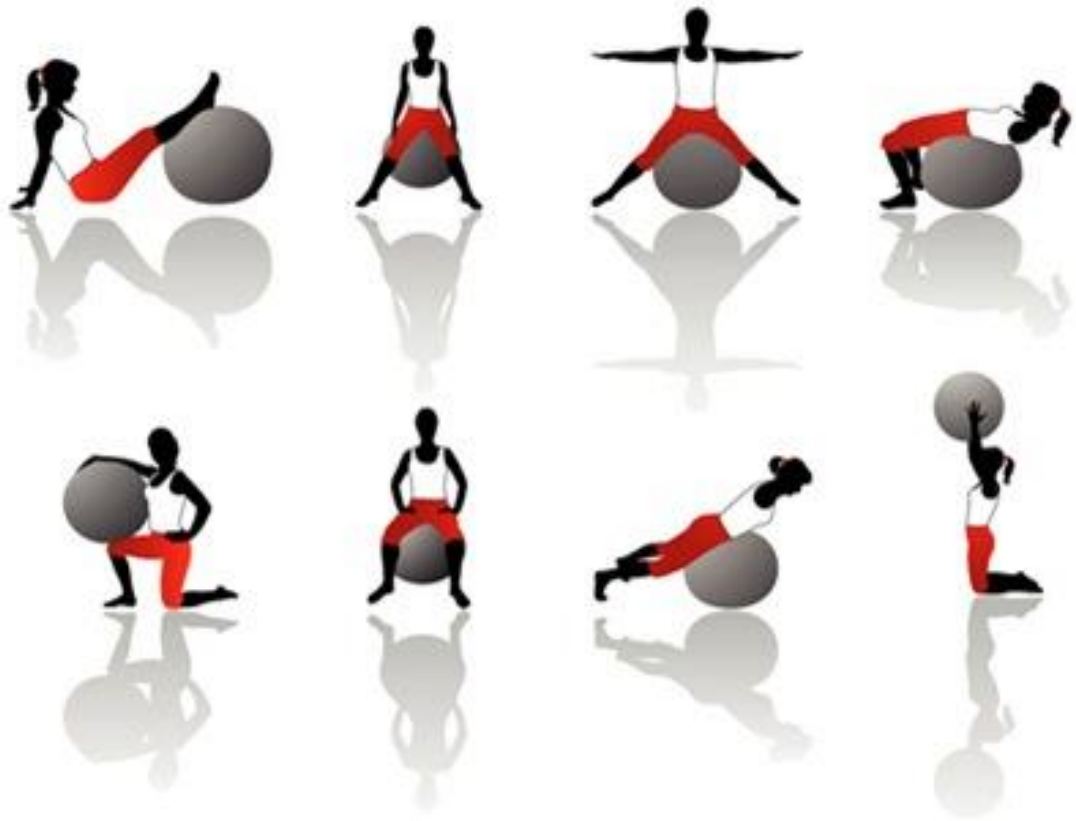
<http://www.pilatesforbeginners.ws/>

<http://hubpages.com/hub/core-muscle-stability-for-low-back-pain>

http://www.activefitnessworld.com/articles/pilates/pilates_workout.php

The Beginner's Guide to Pilates Pilates Workout- Workout Plan

To follow is
a basic
workout
plan which
can be
followed
step-by-
step. For
your



convenience, the workout plan is broken down into 7 sections:

- Warm Up
- Abdominal Strengthening
- Spinal Movement and Control
- Side Stability
- Scapula Stability and Back Strengthening
- Pelvic Stability and Hip Endurance
- Full Body Exercises

The foundation behind Pilates is that the positioning of your pelvis, ribcage, shoulder blades, and head affects the curvature of the spine. When the spine is in its natural position, it is referred to as *neutral pelvis*. In this position, your hip bones and your pubic bone should form a parallel level with the floor.

Your abdominal muscles reinforce the joints of your spine. Train yourself on breathing so that it is done normally and not too quickly. When conducting the following breathing exercise, focus on the control of your abdomen:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that your spine is in the natural position. This position will here forth be referred to as the *preparatory position*.

2. Rest your hands on your abdomen. Inhale through the back and sides of your lower ribcage so that your abdominal muscles are braced.
3. Breathing should be controlled, but not accentuated. Focus on exhaling, and try to develop a method of breathing that controls the abdominal muscles. Direct your breathing into the side and backs of the lower ribcages (this is called *lateral breathing*).

1. Pilates Workout- Warm-Up

Pilates Exercise- Hip Mobility Exercise

This exercise can be conducted in sets of 4 while alternative legs between repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
2. While breathing in, open one knee to the side and slide the foot away from you. Straighten the leg and try to keep both hips on the floor without arching your back.
3. While breathing out, rotate your leg inwards and withdraw the heel, while keeping your pelvis anchored to the floor and your abdominals flat.
4. Repeat steps #2 and #3 on the other side.



Pilates Exercise- Leg Floats

This exercise can be conducted in sets of 6-10 while alternative legs between repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
2. While breathing in, lift your knee towards you, while keeping the shin bone parallel to the floor. Your thigh and leg should form a 90 degree angle.
3. While breathing out, extend the leg away from you as far as you can, while keeping your pelvis and chest parallel to the floor.
4. While breathing in, bend your leg back towards you, so that you return to position #2.
5. While breathing out, return the foot to the floor (return to position #1).
6. Repeat steps #2 to #5 on the other leg.



Pilates Exercise- Scapula Movement

This exercise can be conducted in sets of 6-10:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
2. Raise your arms towards the ceiling. Keep your arms slightly wider than shoulder-width apart. Gently nod your chin and maintain stability around your waist.
3. While breathing in, reach both arms towards the ceiling and propel your shoulder blades forward, without elevating your shoulders past your head or moving your neck.



4. While breathing out, retract your shoulders without moving your head, neck, or chest.

Pilates Exercise- Chest Lift or Sit-up

This exercise can be conducted in sets of 5-10:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
2. While breathing in, draw your shoulder blades down, while keeping your ribcage and pelvis anchored to the floor. You can keep your arms behind your head as support.
3. While breathing out, gently roll your chest forward while dropping your chin gently. Move your lower chest down towards the floor.
4. Breathe in and hold this position.
5. While breathing out, roll back down into the position in step #2.



Pilates Exercise- Double Leg Slides

This exercise can be combined with the sit-up and conducted in sets of 3-5 repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position. Place your hands on your hips.
2. While breathing in, draw your abdominals inwards and upwards.
3. While breathing out, slide both feet away from you, while pressing down slightly on your abdomens.
4. While breathing in, maintain your posture and ensure your shoulder blades stay on the floor.
5. While breathing out, slide your heels back towards yourself.
6. The sit-up will now be incorporated into the routine. Position your arms behind your head to use as support. While breathing in, draw your abdominals inwards and upwards.
7. While breathing out, roll forward, while pressing your lower chest towards the floor.
8. While breathing out, slide your feet away as far as you can, without losing your sit-up position.
9. While breathing in, draw your feet back towards you.
10. Roll back down as you exhale.



Pilates Exercise- Chest Lift (Sit-up) Holding

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position. You can keep your arms behind your head as support.
2. While breathing in, draw your abdominals inwards and upwards.
3. While breathing out, roll your chest forward without moving your pelvis.
4. Maintain this position for 6 breaths. Emphasize the deeper abdominals with each exhale.
5. Exhale and roll back down.



Pilates Exercise- Hundred

The Hundred is an advanced progression from the held sit-up. If you have problems with this exercise, try focusing purely on the breathing portion. This can be accomplished by placing a pillow under your head and resting your feet on a chair.

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on
2. the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
3. Lift your legs, one leg at a time, such that both legs are bent at the knees bent at a 90 degree angle. Ensure that your pelvis and ribcage are anchored on the floor. Breathe calmly and place your hands by your sides.
4. While breathing out, gently nod your chin and roll your chest forward and raise both your arms slightly off the floor. Move your abdominals toward your spine while stabilizing your hip on the floor. Extend both your legs upwards while keeping your torso stable.
5. Hold this position and continue to breathe by inhaling with two short breaths, and exhaling with two short breaths (accent the second breath while inhaling and exhaling).
6. Breathe for 10 full breaths. Ensure that your abdominals are firm and flat. When extricating yourself from this position, ensure that you bend your knees toward your chest to protect your back.



2. Pilates Workout- Abdominal Strengthening

Pilates Exercise- Single Leg Stretch

Pilates focuses on strengthening the center of the body. The following exercise will require you to keep your pelvis anchored, abdominals flat, and will focus on the control of your upper body.

This exercise can be conducted in sets of 10-20 repetitions while alternating legs between repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
2. Lift your legs, one leg at a time, such that both legs are bent at the knees bent at a 90 degree angle. Ensure that your pelvis and ribcage are anchored on the floor. Breathe calmly and place your hands by your sides.
3. While breathing out, extend a leg away from you. Maintain optimal low-back stability.
4. While breathing in, return your leg to position #2. Keep your shoulders down and your stomach in.

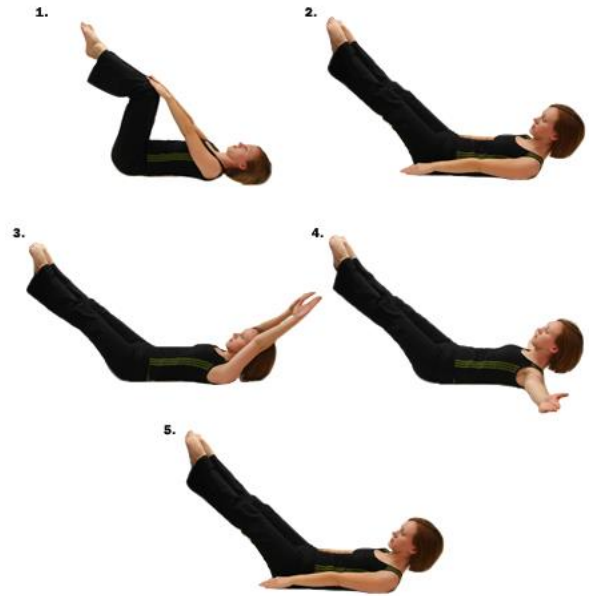


Pilates Exercise- Oblique Lifts

Pilates focuses on strengthening the center of the body. The following exercise will require you to keep your pelvis anchored, abdominals flat, and will focus on the control of your upper body.

This exercise can be conducted in sets of 6-10 repetitions while alternating sides between repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
2. Lift your legs, one leg at a time, such that both legs are bent at the knees bent at a 90 degree angle. Ensure that your pelvis and ribcage are anchored on the floor. Breathe calmly and place your hands behind your head.
3. While breathing out, drop your chin and slowly roll your shoulders forward, leaning towards one side of your body. Do not over-rotate the body and ensure that your hips are still.
4. While breathing in, roll the upper body back down.
5. While breathing out, repeat step #3 but lean towards the other side of your body.
6. With breathing out, roll the upper body back down.



Pilates Exercise- Double Leg Stretch

Pilates focuses on strengthening the center of the body. The following is an advanced progression from the single leg stretch that will require you to keep your pelvis anchored, and your abdominals flat.

This advanced exercise can be conducted in sets of 5-10 repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position.
2. Lift your legs, one leg at a time, such that both legs are bent at the knees bent at a 90 degree angle. Ensure that your pelvis and ribcage are anchored on the floor. Breathe calmly and place your hands on your knees.
3. While breathing out, drop your chin and slowly roll your chest forward. Extend your hands by your hips and lift them slightly off the floor.
4. While breathing in, raise your arms to the ceiling.
5. While breathing out, circle your arms sideways so that they are back beside your hips.
6. While breathing in, bend your knees, and then return to step #2. Flatten your abdomens as you lie down.



3. Spinal Movement and Control

Pilates Exercise- Pelvic Curl

Spinal exercises can help to both improve and restore mobility to your spine.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 3-5 repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position. Rest your arms by your sides.

2. While breathing out, press your abdominals inwards while moving your tailbone upwards. Continue to raise your pelvis and your spine from the floor. Plant both feet firmly into the floor to ensure that both hips remain symmetrical.
3. While breathing in, hold the high position. Relax your neck, shoulders, and ribcage, while strengthening your ankles, thighs and hips.
4. While breathing out, roll back down, starting from the shoulders. Return to the position in step #1.



Advanced progression: While in the high position, lift one foot off the floor. Continue to do leg lifts with each foot, without straining the lower back or dropping one hip down.

Pilates Exercise- Spinal Mobility

Spinal exercises can help to both improve and restore mobility to your spine.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 3-5 repetitions for each side of the body:

1. Lie on your side with a pillow underneath your head. Bend your knees and keep your legs together. Keep both arms together, and reach with them, directly in front of your chest.
2. While breathing in, raise the upper arm to the ceiling without rolling backwards. Keep your shoulder blade flat and on the ground.
3. While breathing out, roll your ribcage, shoulders, and head backward. Your raised arm should now be behind your back. Do not allow your shoulder to collapse towards your neck.
4. While breathing in, hold this position. You should feel the stretch to your upper back, the upper-ribcage, and your chest.
5. While breathing out, return to the initial position in step #1.



Pilates Exercise- Spine Stretch

Spinal exercises can help to both improve and restore mobility to your spine.

The following exercise is an advanced stretching exercise. For some people, it may be more suitable to conduct this stretch on a chair with your feet flat on the floor.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 3-5 repetitions:

1. Sit up straight with your legs stretched out in front of you, slightly wider than your hips.
2. While breathing in, lift your abdominal muscles and drop your shoulders.
3. While breathing out, nod your chin down and slowly roll your abdomen towards the floor in front of you. Roll forwards as far as you are comfortable with.
4. While breathing in, relax your shoulders while keeping your abdominal muscles lifted.
5. While breathing out, use your abdominal muscles to lift away from the floor and return your back up to a neutral position. Return your spine to an upright position.



4. Side Stability

Pilates Exercise- Side Leg Lifts

When balancing on the smaller surface area of your side, your core stabilizer (abdominal) muscles and your hip muscles are forced to work harder.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 8 to 10 repetitions for each side:

1. Place a pillow underneath your head and lie on your side with both legs straight and on top of each other.
2. While breathing in, lift your top leg slightly without moving your pelvis. Use your waist muscles to lift your leg, and do not bend your knees.
3. While breathing out, contract your abdominals towards your spine. With your abdominals contracted, lift your bottom leg such that it touches your top leg. Lower both legs together with your abdominals contracted.



Variations:

- **Repeated lifting of top leg.** Keep your legs together and hover them off the floor. Lift and lower just your top leg, breathing out every time you draw the legs back together. Repeat.
- **Repeated lifting of bottom leg.** Bring the lower leg from a position that hovers just about the ground, to a position wherein it touches the raised top leg. Return the bottom leg to the position wherein it hovers just above the ground. Repeat.

Pilates Exercise- Side Kick

When balancing on the smaller surface area of your side, your core stabilizer (abdominal) muscles and your hip muscles are forced to work harder.

The following exercise is a movement that targets the top hip joint, and strengthens the muscles of the outside and back of the hip. It can be conducted in sets of 8 to 10 repetitions for each side:

1. Lie on your side with your bottom leg bent forward and forming a 90 degree angle. Your top leg should be straight and directly below your hip.
2. While breathing in, keep the top leg straight and rotate it clockwise as far as you can move it. Hold this position.
3. While breathing out, point your top foot and sweep the top leg back into its original position, without distributing the position of your pelvis and spine.



5. Pilates Workout- Scapula Stability and Back Strengthening

Pilates Exercise- 4-Point Kneeling and Swimming

Upper back, shoulder, and abdominal muscles are key for proper posture. One of the most effective way to strengthen and stabilize these muscles is to challenge their endurance in less stable positions.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 8 to 10 repetitions for each side:

1. Kneel on your hands and knees, with your knees underneath your hips, and your hands underneath your shoulders.
2. While breathing in, slide your opposite hands and feet along the floor, and lift both slightly. Focus on keeping your abdominal muscles contracted.
3. While breathing out, return both your hands and arms to the position in step #1.



Pilates Exercise- Gluts Pulses

Upper back, shoulder, and abdominal muscles are key for proper posture. One of the most effective ways to strengthen and stabilize these muscles is to challenge their endurance in less stable positions.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 10 to 20 repetitions (or pulses) for each leg:



1. Kneel on your hands and knees, with your knees underneath your hips, and your hands underneath your shoulders. Keep your spine level with the floor.
2. While breathing out with each movement, lift one leg backward, and pulse it with small lifts towards the ceiling (while keeping it bent).

Pilates Exercise- Plank Prep

Upper back, shoulder, and abdominal muscles are the key for proper posture. One of the most effective ways to strengthen and stabilize these muscles is to challenge their endurance in less stable positions.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 4 to 6 repetitions:

1. Kneel on your hands and knees, with your knees underneath your hips, and your hands underneath your shoulders. Keep your spine level with the floor.
2. Move the heels of your hands forward and lean on your hands, without moving your knees.
3. While breathing in, straighten one leg so that the knee on the other leg is bent, and is touching the floor.
4. While breathing out, straighten the other leg, so that you are in a push-up position. Your toes and the palms of your hands should now be supporting your weight. Hold this position and focus on keep your abdomen muscles up.
5. While breathing in, bend your first knee to enable you to kneel again.
6. While breathing out, bend your other knee. You should now be back in the position you were in during step #2.



Pilates Exercise- Back Extension With Arms

Upper back, shoulder, and abdominal muscles are the key for proper posture. One of the most effective ways to strengthen and stabilize these muscles is to challenge their endurance in less stable positions.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 3 to 6 repetitions:

1. Lie face down with your forehead on a roller towel. Place your arms at 90 degree angles next to your head, with your palms faced-down. You should be anchored to the floor with your ribcage and your pelvic bones.
2. While breathing in, draw your abdominal muscles up without moving your spine.
3. While breathing out, draw your shoulders away from your ears and hover your forehead and chest slightly off the floor. Your lower ribcage should still be anchored to the floor.
4. While breathing in, lift both your arms and your hands slightly off the floor.
5. While breathing out, lower your hands without allowing your shoulders to fall forward.



Pilates Exercise- Caterpillar

Upper back, shoulder, and abdominal muscles are the key for proper posture. One of the most effective ways to strengthen and stabilize these muscles is to challenge their endurance in less stable positions.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 3 to 4 repetitions:

1. Kneel on your hands and knees, with your knees underneath your hips, and your hands underneath your shoulders. Keep your spine level with the floor.
2. While breathing out, draw up your abdominal muscles and slowly curve your lower back. Try to round your back as much as possible in a convex and rounded shape. When your back is fully rounded, drop your head downwards slightly.
3. While inhaling, expand your ribs.
4. While exhaling, lift your tailbone upwards to allow your lower back to flatten. Gradually return your spine to a neutral position and look up slightly. Keep your stomach and pelvic floor muscles lifted during this entire step.
5. Inhale and repeat.



6. Pilates Workout- Pelvic Stability and Hip Endurance

Pilates Exercise- Cushion Squeeze

Pelvic stability will result in greater hip joint mobility, greater hip tone, and better-toned thigh muscles.

The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 4 to 5 repetitions:

1. Lie on your back with your legs bent and feet face-down on the floor so that you are in the preparatory position. Place a cushion between your knees. Breath-in and focus contracting your abdominals.
2. While breathing out, squeeze your thighs together without moving your pelvis. Elongate your breath so that the squeezing lasts for a count of 5.
3. While breathing in, release the pillow in 5 counts. While releasing the pillow, ensure that your abdominal muscles are still being applied inwards.



Variation:

This exercise can also be conducted in a tabletop position (with your legs raised and your knees bent at 90 degree angles). This variation will ensure greater stability throughout the spine and pelvis.

Pilates Exercise- The Clam

Pelvic stability will result in greater hip joint mobility, greater hip tone, and better-toned thigh muscles. The following exercise can be conducted in sets of 10 to 15 repetitions for each leg:

1. Lie on your side with your knees bent and your feet in line with your spine. Place your head on a pillow.
2. While exhaling, keep your knees together and lift your top knee in an arc, without moving your pelvis.
3. While inhaling, slowly lower your upper leg.



7. Pilates Workout- Full Body Exercises

Pilates Exercise- Teaser Preparation Routine

Now is the time to integrate all of the Pilates Principles together. After you have mastered all the basics, you are now ready to apply everything that you have learned.

The following exercise is different from a sit-up in that it allows you to feel the resistance of yourself rolling your back on a steep incline angle. It can be conducted in sets of 3 to 5 repetitions:

1. Lay on your back with your knees bent.
2. Reach up with your arms and brace your abdominal muscles.
3. While breathing in, reach both arms to the ceiling and brace deeply with your abdomens.
4. While breathing out, nod your chin and roll your spine off the floor until you are balancing on the back of your pelvis. Reach forward with your arms and keep your legs still.
5. While breathing in, lengthen your chest on an incline away from your chest. Your back should now be straight and should form approximately a 45 degree angle with the floor. Lift and press your abdomen firmly to your spine and hold this position. Raise your arms to test your strength.
6. While breathing out, roll through your lower back. Return to the position in step #2.



BUT DO NOT EVER DO THIS:



ADDITIONAL CORE STRENGTHENING EXERCISES TO PERFORM ON THE EXERCISE BALL



Back Extension

(lean forwards then raise up 10 times)



Opposite Arm/Leg

(Raise R arm and L leg 10 times

Then alternate to L arm R leg)



Plank Position

(hold for 1 minute)



Stability Ball Squat

(roll ball up and down wall 10 times)



Vertical Leg Raise

(alternate R and Left leg for set of 20)

