

▶▶ **15 minute**



# everyday pilates

Get real results anytime, anywhere

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light blue tank top and dark pants, is sitting on the floor in a cross-legged position. She is performing a Pilates exercise, with her arms extended horizontally to the sides, palms facing each other. The background is a soft, out-of-focus studio setting with a circular light fixture visible behind her.

Hour >> 15-minute workouts, also on DVD <<

Alycea Ungaro P.T.







>> **15** minute  
everyday  
**pilates**

Alycea Ungaro P.T.





London, New York, Melbourne, Munich, and Delhi

**For my husband Robert**

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## Health warning

Always consult your doctor before starting a fitness program if you have any health concerns, and especially if you are pregnant, have given birth in the last six weeks, or have a medical condition such as high blood pressure, arthritis, or asthma.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this book is complete and accurate. However, neither the publisher nor the author is engaged in rendering professional advice or services to the individual reader. The ideas, information, and suggestions contained in this book are not intended as a substitute for consulting with your physician. All matters regarding your health require medical supervision. Neither the author nor the publisher shall be liable or responsible for any loss or damage allegedly rising from any information or suggestion in this book.

## >> author foreword



**This collection of four Pilates programs** is meant as a tool, to teach, guide, and inform and, hopefully, to inspire. The programs will excite your body and mind into action and launch you into a lifetime of wellness and health.

**Pilates is not “just another workout.”** Pilates goes where you do. It’s a mindset, a perspective, and a lifestyle. Approached in that way, Pilates guarantees results.

**When I first signed on to this project,** I was overwhelmed by the possibilities. Where to begin, I thought? Oddly, it was my practice of Pilates that gave me the wherewithal to accomplish the job. Pilates exercises are finite—or so I had been taught—in the same way as there has to be a finite number of words and images in this book. But the beauty of Pilates is that the more intimately you know the system, the more complex and fascinating it becomes. If you truly understand the method, you will always have the perfect exercise at your fingertips without having to beg, borrow, or steal from any other method or technique. Everything you need is right there. By drawing on what I have learned over the 25 years I have been a student of Pilates, I have composed a novel approach to a brilliant and timeless method of exercise.



**This project reignited my passion for Pilates** in a whole new way. The constraints imposed upon me became utterly liberating. What a luxury once again to reinvent the familiar. *Everyday Pilates* is a new approach—one intended to drive home the mission of Pilates. That is, to get you living a better life—off the floor and out the door.

**Here you have four distinct programs** that are derivative in nature. By and large, the choreography is pure Pilates. The order of exercises is my own and I believe the sequences to be effective and efficient, which is the hallmark of true Pilates work. Sadly, for the Pilates purist, there is no atlas to serve as a reliable resource for a concrete list of exercises. At best, we are piecing together memories that are subjective and interpretive. I so wish that Joe and Clara Pilates were here to share their gifts with us. I believe they would have been proud to see their work preserved yet progressing after all these years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Alyce Lynne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'A' and 'L'.

# >> how to use this book

Welcome to *Everyday Pilates*. These four 15-minute programs are the closest you can get to having a personal trainer right by your side. They offer you the flexibility and ease of use that our busy lifestyles demand. *Everyday Pilates* is meant to accomplish your everyday goals for your everyday life!

I am a huge fan of clichés. One that comes to mind when considering how best to approach these programs is, “Be prepared, or be prepared to fail.” The biggest mistake you can make is to dive into the material without reading through this book and watching the DVD. Pilates can be tricky. Exercises may appear to focus on one area but actually are intended to accomplish something different.

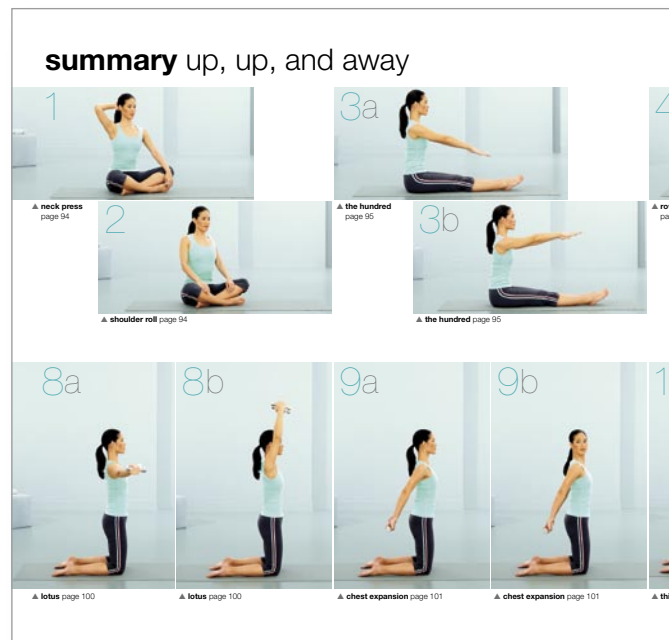
There are several tools to help you understand the details. The DVD is designed to be used with the book to reinforce the exercises shown there. As you watch the DVD, page references to the book flash up on the screen. Refer to these pages for more detailed instruction.

On each page, the photographs capture the essence of the exercises in simple step-by-step images. Some exercises require two or three images, while others only require one. Certain exercises contain smaller inset photos that depict the first step. You will also find targeted “feel-it-here” graphics on specific exercises. These are intended to emphasize the fact that there is always a different area of the body to focus on.

## The gatefolds

If I had a nickel for every time a client asked me if we had a chart of the Pilates exercises; well, you can figure out the rest! Lucky for you, at the end of each program, a gatefold chart of the exercises follows. These are meant to provide at-a-glance reminders. You won’t be able to learn how to do the exercises from the gatefolds since we have

pared down the images there, providing only one or two per exercise as your reminder. But once you have watched the DVD, read through the book, and practiced each move thoroughly, these gatefolds will become invaluable. For tips on how often to perform the programs and how to combine them for longer workouts, see pp. 116–117.



**The gatefolds** At-a-glance charts will help further your practice once you no longer need the step-by-step images. Review the full program before beginning.

**46 >> front curls**

**1a** Holding a small weight in each hand, stand in Pilates position (see p. 17) with heels together and toes apart. Tighten the seat and draw the waistline inward and upward. Raise the arms forward directly in front of you, in line with the shoulders, palms facing upward. Keep the elbows long but not locked.



keep arms at shoulder height

keep back of legs tight

**47 >> side curls**

**1b** With internal resistance (see p. 17), bend the arms in just 90°. Be sure the elbows remain high as you bend them. Now open the arms out with the same resistance. Repeat 5 more times, inhaling to extend, and exhaling to bend. On your last repetition, lower the arms smoothly down to your sides. Perform 6 repetitions.



keep elbows and shoulders in line

lean slightly forward


**2a** Now raise both arms up sideways, just in front of the shoulders. Be sure to maintain a long spine and a strong core. Don't allow your posture to sink or collapse. Tighten the muscles of the buttocks so the lower half of you continues to work.



keep arms within peripheral vision

don't lock the elbows

**2b** Use resistance to bend the arms to past 90°. Use even more resistance to open the arms out. Be sure the elbows remain high as you bend and straighten. Repeat 5 more times, inhaling to extend and exhaling to bend. On your last repetition, lower the arms smoothly to your sides.



don't fast arms too lightly

use internal resistance

>> from the top down >>

annotations provide extra cues, tips, and insights

**The step-by-steps** Work from left to right as you follow the step-by-step exercises. Be certain you understand the beginning and end position before progressing.

the gatefold shows all the main steps of the program



The gatefold displays thumbnails for exercises 1a through 16, arranged in two rows. Each thumbnail includes a small image of the exercise and a caption with the exercise name and page number.

- 1a rowing 1 page 96
- 4b rowing 1 page 96
- 5a rowing 2 page 97
- 5b rowing 2 page 97
- 6a spine twist page 98
- 6b spine twist page 98
- 7a the saw page 99
- 7b the saw page 99
- 10a high stretch page 102
- 10b high stretch page 102
- 11 footwork 1 page 103
- 12 footwork 2 page 103
- 13 footwork 3 page 104
- 14 tendon stretch page 104
- 15 front splits page 105
- 16 side splits page 105

# >> what you need to start

People spend so much time getting ready to exercise that many never actually do it. I have a button that reads, “I’m in no shape to exercise.” This is an unfortunate and all-too common sentiment. Contrary to popular belief it is unnecessary to prepare for exercise. You simply must decide to begin.

You will need nothing more than some 2-pound (1 kg) hand weights and a well padded mat. Since some rolling exercises can cause bruising on an unpadded surface, many yoga mats may be unsuitable. Instead, choose a mat specifically for Pilates. Finally, keep a towel handy as well as some water, and you’ll be ready to go.

Clothing is next. I once had a client with knock knees who happened to be wearing pants with a seam down the front of the legs. Without thinking, I asked her to position her legs so that the seam was perfectly straight. Voilà! Her legs were better aligned and most importantly, she could see it herself. Whenever possible, select clothing with stripes or visible seams. You’ll immediately notice asymmetries and will naturally correct them.

Pilates is normally performed barefoot. However, studios and health clubs often institute a footwear requirement. Bare feet are fine for the home, but for other settings, look for socks with grips to reduce slippage and protect your feet. There are even socks with compartments for each toe. Whatever you select, be sure to avoid slippery socks or cumbersome shoes that might reduce foot mobility.

## Where to work out

The single largest impediment to any exercise program is inconvenience, so find yourself an area

**A proper Pilates mat**, a hand towel, and some small hand weights (2 lb/1 kg) are all you need to begin these Pilates programs. Be sure you have a clear space to work out in.





that is easy to get to and a time that is convenient for your schedule. Pilates can be done anywhere you have enough room to stretch out on a mat. You can practice at a gym or at home. You can even practice on a lawn or beach, as long as you have an appropriate mat.

### The safety instinct

Have you ever heard a little voice inside your head cautioning you to stop what you were doing? Did you listen? If you did, you are probably naturally intuitive about safety. For the rest of us, developing that intuition will be largely trial and error. To keep you working out safely, here are some guidelines:

- 1 Begin with just one program.
- 2 Remember to hydrate. By the time you feel thirsty, you are already dehydrated.
- 3 Learn to distinguish between effort and pain. Effort is OK, pain is a signal to stop.
- 4 If something doesn't "feel" right, stop.

**Clothing can be a visual aid** as you work out. Selecting attire with stripes can help you establish good alignment and make improvements to your form.

### >> tips for getting started

- **Don't waste time** getting ready to exercise. You are ready. Just begin.
- **If a mat is not readily available** use some folded blankets or large towels instead. Plush carpeting can also be a suitable workout surface.
- **Find a time of day** when your energy is at its lowest. Just lying down for one exercise will get your blood flowing and will give you an energy burst.

# >> pilates from the inside out

Therapists train their patients to become self-aware. This is a significant step toward mental and emotional well-being. Similarly, exercise instructors teach you to become physically self-aware. By recognizing your habits and body mechanics, you can embark upon a path of physical health and well-being.

Your body is amazing. The coordination of events required for simple actions such as bending your knee or opening your hand is astonishing, yet they happen without us noticing a thing.

By contrast, Pilates teaches your mind to train your body very consciously. During the programs you will continually be required to recognize your positions, make adjustments and note your physical sensations. In addition, you must also be focused on the order of exercises, so that you can anticipate and prepare for the next move.

This “mind–body” connection often suggests a workout that is neither physical nor rigorous, but Pilates is both. Just because we think our way through Pilates does not make it less taxing on the muscles. In fact, just the opposite is true. In the words of the late Frederick Schiller, “It is the mind itself that builds the body.” Joseph Pilates (see pp. 122–123) was quite fond of this saying.

## Learning new patterns

Our brains are built to learn new patterns. As we learn new skills, connections between previously unconnected brain cells are formed. Repetition is key. Each time you do a correct abdominal curl you are building a connection that makes it easier to do correctly the next time. In sum, “cells that fire together, wire together.”

Pilates trains this mind-to-body dialog. You will learn to direct your actions on a gross motor scale as well as a fine motor scale so your results will be amplified and expedited.

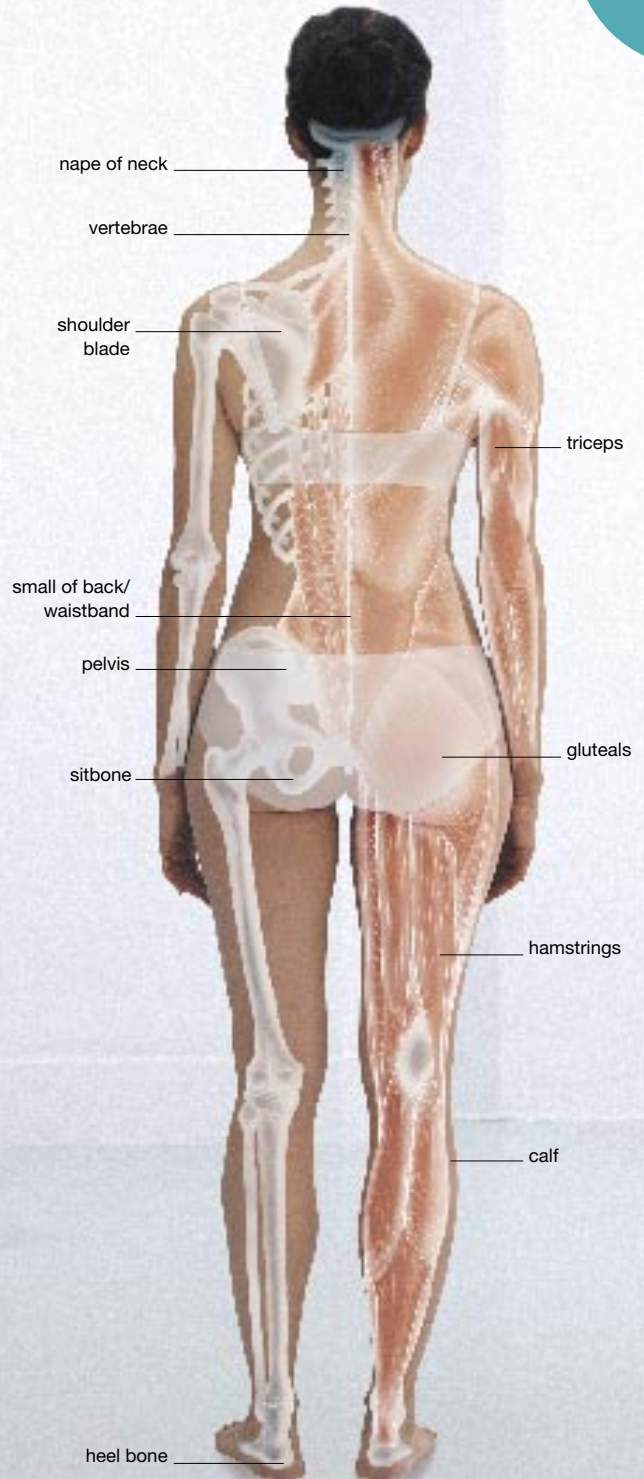
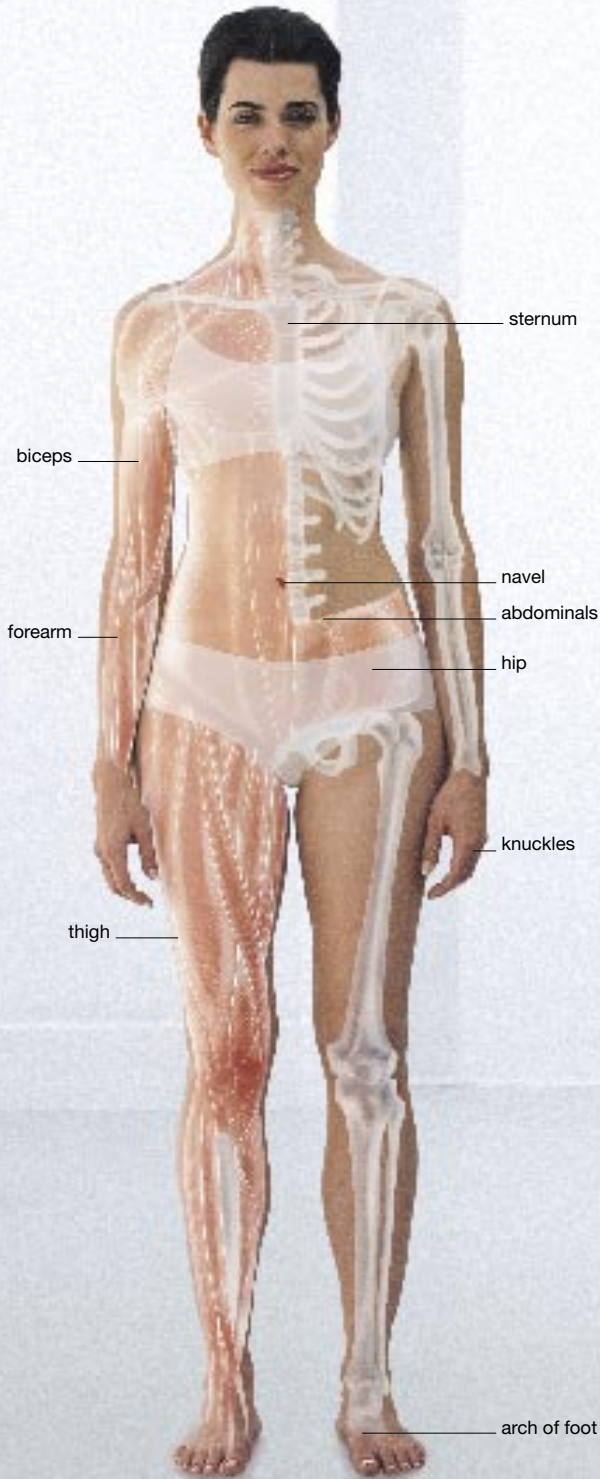
## >> just make it happen

- **Pay attention to your body** throughout your day. Self-awareness is key to good health. If you watch how you move, your exercise routine will improve.
- **Exercise is an activity.** It is not something that happens to you—you make it happen.
- **It requires more energy to avoid** something than simply to do it. Don’t waste any time making excuses. Just hit the mat and get started!

## Your Pilates body

As you read this book and progress through the workouts, you will find instructions for and mentions of specific parts of your body. The chart opposite is a handy reference guide to them. For ease of use, we have chosen layperson terms rather than anatomical ones. Names and labels allow your mind to grasp more effectively what is required of you, so become familiar with them and use them as you move through your workout. Think of the chart as a map for your mind.

**Remember these simple** names for your body parts. Learning about your anatomy will help you identify trouble spots as well as areas of strength in your body.



# >> pilates concepts

Your Pilates technique and form can constantly be improved upon. Just as musicians must rehearse tirelessly, Pilates will only get better as you train. Think of it as a language. First you learn the words, then some phrases, and finally you work on your accent. Let's begin here with your first Pilates words.

Before you can start on the mechanics of Pilates, there are six fundamental principles that you should become familiar with. These principles give substance and purpose to the workouts and help you learn to integrate your workout into your life so you begin to feel healthy and strong. Remember, the benefits of Pilates are meant to extend well beyond the actual workout.

## Control

This is the primary principle of the system. In his time, Mr. Pilates called his method "Contrology." His focus on controlled movement was a result of his years of blending Eastern and Western disciplines. As you work out, control your muscles, your positions, and your tempos. Your body is your tool and by exerting control over it, it will produce better and better results.

## Centering

This is a somewhat vague principle to many people. The idea is that all movement begins from your center. I'm of the mind that Pilates was really drawing on the principle that you must "stabilize before you mobilize." In Pilates we brace or stabilize the core and then mobilize the limbs. Beyond that, there is an energetic component in working from your center. It's as though you were able to harness and then project out through the limbs all of the energy and activity going on in your internal organs. Centering is akin to saying you should work from the inside out.

## >> tips for surefire success

- **Don't over-analyze the work.** Pilates is complicated but it's meant to be a moving system. Keep moving at all costs.
- **Working out is an extension of your life.** Put the same effort into it that you would into anything else.
- **Don't work out—work in!** Inner work shapes the outer body.
- **Never say die.** If an exercise is easy, you're not working hard enough.
- **Don't ask what** an exercise is good for. Mr. Pilates said, "It's good for the body."

## Concentration

Concentration is key to Pilates. Without focused concentration, any exercise can only be moderately beneficial. Concentration elevates your intensity and so takes your results up to a far higher level.

## Precision

This is the fourth principle and just as many of the other principles apply globally, so "precision" serves as an umbrella for this whole list. Attention to the smallest detail is what makes Pilates so effective.



## Breath

Breathing is a focus of the Pilates work. Many people come to Pilates because they have heard that it is a breathing technique. You will learn step-by-step breathing in these programs but it is not their focus. As a general rule, inhale to prepare for a movement and exhale as you execute it.

## Flow of movement

This is an element that comes later in the practice but can be incorporated early on. As you learn each exercise, be sure to perform it in a seamless, flowing manner. Eventually you'll work on creating one long routine.

## Minimum of movement

Other ideas and concepts, such as symmetry, balance, and integration arise as instructors make their own contributions to Pilates. All of these are

applicable but Mr. Pilates clearly intended his work to be succinct, so when establishing its main tenets, he chose only the key moves and critical concepts. This working list of six incorporates all the dozens of ideas and concepts at play in Pilates.

## Off the floor and out the door

Now that you've learned the six principles, think about how they apply to real life. Concepts such as control, precision, or breath can be applied to your life anywhere and anytime. Your workout should be a microcosm of how you live. If you never did any of these programs, you could still embark upon a brand-new lifestyle simply by incorporating these key principles.

**Working out on your own** should be just as focused as working with a trainer. Learn to be your own teacher by cueing and correcting yourself constantly.



# >> pilates top to tail

Now that we've covered the ideology of Pilates and the approach you will need to be successful, let's review the physical principles that are present throughout the programs in this series. Certain elements of positioning are specific to Pilates. Let's start at the top of the body and work our way down.

To keep your neck well aligned during abdominal work, imagine resting your head on a raised support. The curve should be long and natural both front and back. Avoid any crunching or tightening around the throat.

Your breathing in Pilates needs to be specific. The abdominals must work in a contracted fashion at all times so your breathing must be redirected both upward and outward. Be aware that your

lungs actually extend all the way above your collarbones. Practice breathing laterally, expanding the rib cage sideways as you inhale, and then contracting it inward as you exhale.

## Below the waist

Pilates teachers have several labels for the abdominals, including the core, the center, and frequently, the powerhouse. No matter the tag,



**Practice breathing laterally** with the hands on either side of the rib cage. On an inhale, the hands should pull apart.



**Exhale and feel the ribs narrowing.** The hands draw together. Keep the abdominals tight.



**The Pilates Scoop** activates the abdominal wall. Keep your waist lifted and narrowed. Never allow it to collapse.

your strength and control always spring from the center of your torso. Your powerhouse specifically incorporates your abs, hips, and buttocks as well.

The Pilates Scoop is the signature of the method. Even if you have difficulty pulling the abdominals inward, you must never allow them to push outward.

Optimal spinal alignment means positioning your spine to preserve its natural curves. To do this, when you are lying flat for abdominal exercises, keep from tucking or curling the lower back. Instead, try to lengthen the spine. The end result should be strong, supportive abdominal muscles.

Additionally, when you are working your seat muscles or gluteals, think of “wrapping” the muscles of the buttocks and thighs around toward the back. This will create a tightening and lifting of those muscles and will help to support your spine.

Pilates position or Pilates stance doesn't happen in the feet, although it looks that way. Working from your hips down, the gluteal muscles in your rear-end and in the backs of your thighs work together to rotate and wrap around. This causes a slight opening of the toes.

### Perfect the details

As you work out, focus on your symmetry. Imagine your torso in a box from shoulders to hips. If your box is square, you are likely well aligned. You also need to work within your “frame,” which means keeping your limbs within your peripheral vision and never going beyond a comfortable joint range.

Never forget that Pilates is strength training. To maximize its benefits you must always work with resistance. Some resistance is provided by gravity and your positions. More important is the internal resistance you create. Your entire Pilates routine should incorporate this internal resistance.

Opposition is a final but vital ingredient of your Pilates practice. For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. Pilates is the same. As one side reaches, another side contracts. If you lift up, you also anchor down. By using direct opposition you will find the stability and strength in your core to build a better body.



**In abdominal work** keep your neck lengthened and aligned. Don't force the chin down or tense the throat. Lifting the head comes from your abdominal strength.



**Performing exercises on your back** can be tricky for your spine. When working your abdominals, keep your spine lengthened rather than curling it up underneath you.



**In Pilates stance** the heels connect as the toes open. This is achieved by activating and rotating the buttocks muscles and the muscles in the backs of the thighs.

**15** minute





Focus on control  
Activate your powerhouse  
Learn the classic routine

**day by day** >>

# >> day by day

This program is designed to be the first routine you learn. Perform it every day if possible. If you can only commit to one program, this is your best choice. This classical sequence of movements contains all the benefits of the Pilates method and serves as a primer for all of your other programs.

Your goal here is to learn how to move according to the six principles and the physical guidelines of Pilates (see pp. 14–17). We begin the program with some specific abdominal recruitment exercises to get you breathing correctly and also to teach you to use your abdominals effectively. The remainder of the routine is as Mr. Pilates developed it. We end with a rolling exercise which may be challenging at first but will, with practice, be possible.

## Starting and finishing

Practice the initiation of each move in several ways. First, scan your body parts for their positions and for any necessary adjustments. Second, before moving anything, take a breath. Finally, brace or activate your center to stabilize your core and free your limbs to do their work.

To end an exercise, linger at the final moment as though you were posing for a photograph, but

rather than freezing your body in space, try to exaggerate the important points. Go for a deeper stretch, a longer leg, a more scooped-out midsection. Then you can rest.

## Transitions

Weaving your way from one exercise to another with elegance and precision is the goal. The images to the right illustrate proper transitioning through movements. Transition from sitting to lying through a curling-down movement, and from lying to sitting through a curling-up movement. If this is too difficult, simply roll onto your side to get down or up between movements.



# from move to move



To begin with, use this method to transition smoothly. From lying to sitting, roll over onto your side, prop yourself up with your hands, and come up to sitting. From sitting to lying, roll to one side, lower yourself to the mat, and roll onto your back.



If your core is strong enough, transition from sitting up to lying down by curling your tail under you and lowering down to the mat, one vertebra at a time. To rise from a lying exercise to a sitting one, hold behind your knees and curl up without allowing your feet to move.



## &gt;&gt; abs wake-up

- 1a Lie flat with your knees bent and your hands across your abdominals. Even lying flat, your posture should be perfect. Keep your neck long, your shoulders down, and your “box” square (see p. 17). Inhale deeply and let your abdominals expand. Your hands will lift as you do this.



- 1b Now exhale completely, emptying the lungs and sinking the abdominals. Don't crunch the midsection or hunch the shoulders. Just pull the belly in deeper, allowing the waist to hollow out. Repeat for 4 repetitions, exhaling longer and contracting deeper with each repetition.





## >> abdominal curls

**2a** Extend your arms forward so they hover just above the mat. Your feet remain firmly planted on the mat and your legs are pressed together. Your abdominals pull inward and upward. Prepare to curl up by inhaling.



**2b** Exhale, and without letting your abdominal wall expand, lift your head, neck, and shoulders, curling up off the mat. Reach your arms longer and keep focused on your midsection. Lower down smoothly with an inhale. As you repeat, pull in your abdominals even further. Repeat 3 more times for a total of 4 repetitions.



## &gt;&gt; the hundred

3a Begin with both knees drawn into your chest. Curl your upper body up off the mat and reach your arms along your sides just above the mat. Pull in your abdominals.



3b Take both legs up to a 90° angle, with the shins parallel to the floor. Pump the arms up and down vigorously, breathing in for 5 pumps and out for 5 pumps. Continue until you reach 100, resting briefly if needed. Keep the abdominals deep and the torso still and strong.



## >> the roll-down

**4a** Sit upright at the front of your mat, legs apart and feet flat, holding behind your thighs. Inhale and direct the back of your waistband to pull down toward the mat. Your tail will curl underneath and your abdominals will hollow.

draw shoulders down — lift chest up



**4b** Keep curling your tail as you aim the small of your back to the floor. Keep your legs still. Pause at your lowest point and take 3 breaths, hollowing your abdominals further. Exhale and fold back up. Roll up to your tallest posture and repeat one more set.

feel it here

fold in the waist



# >> single-leg circles



lift leg and  
cross it over

**5a** Lie flat with both your legs and arms extended. Fold your right leg in and straighten it to the sky. Fix the rest of your body solidly on the mat, stretching both knees and pressing your shoulders back and down. Cross your raised leg up and over your body, aiming for your left shoulder.

press triceps down

**5b** Continue making a circle with the raised leg, around and back up to center. Circle 4 more times, then reverse for another 5 repetitions. Bend the knee in, lower it, and repeat to the left side.

keep hip of  
bottom leg stable

keep bottom  
leg straight

## >> rolling preparation

**6a** Sit at the front edge of your mat, holding behind your thighs with your legs in the air. Keep your shins parallel to the floor. Hold your chest high and scoop your abdominals. Your elbows are open wide and your ankles are long.



**6b** Tip your pelvis under you, then use your abs to ease back further. At your limit, pull your abs in further and fold your waist in, rounding forward. Sit tall and repeat 3 more times. Lower your feet only after the last repetition.



## >> single-leg stretch

**7a** Lie flat with both knees bent into your chest. Before you curl up, be sure your box or frame is square and then activate your powerhouse (see p. 17).



**7b** Curl the upper body off the mat and hold the left leg, reaching the left hand to the ankle and the other to the knee. Extend the right leg 45°. Control the torso as you switch legs, inhaling on one side and exhaling on the other. Continue switching for 8 repetitions. Bend both knees to finish. Rest the head.



## >> double-leg stretch 1 & 2



8 Curl the upper body back up and hug the ankles in tightly. Inhale to simultaneously reach the arms and legs forward. Exhale to hug them back in. Keep the upper body lifted off the mat and repeat for 4 more repetitions.



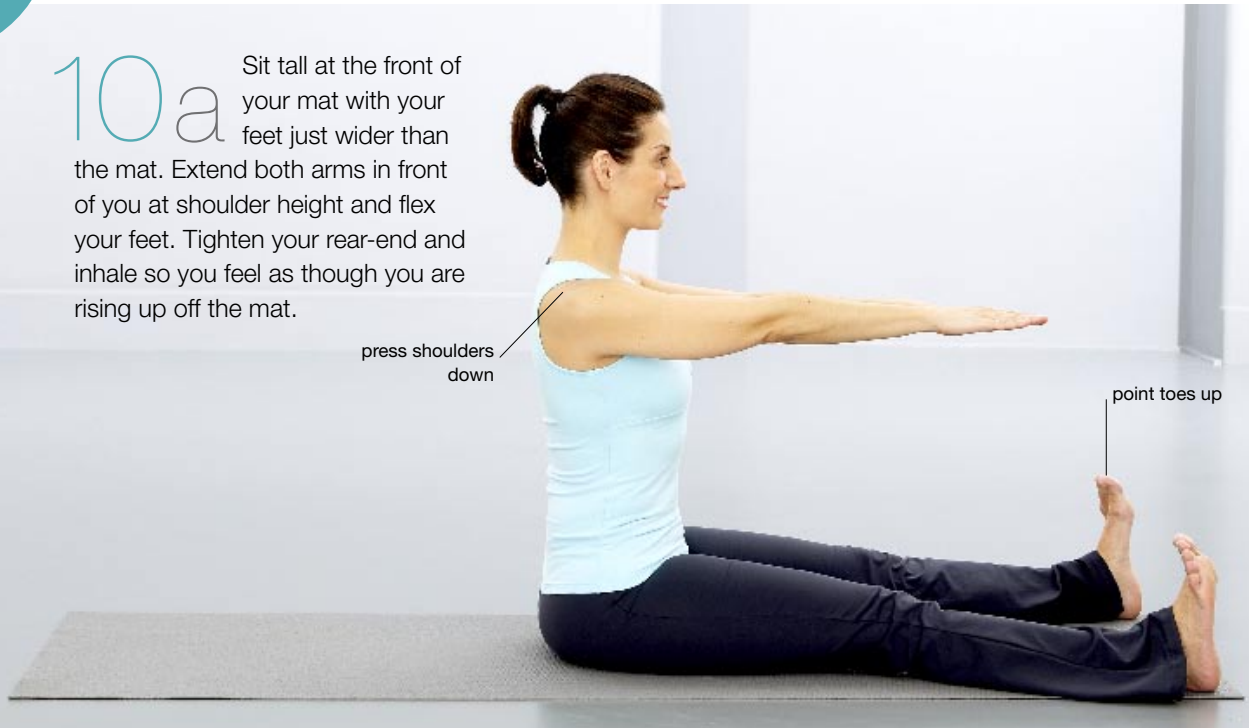
9 Repeat as before but now add a backward reaching of the arms. Hollow the abs even deeper as you repeat the sequence. The arms and legs now reach to a 45° angle. Repeat 5 times and rest.



## >> spine stretch forward

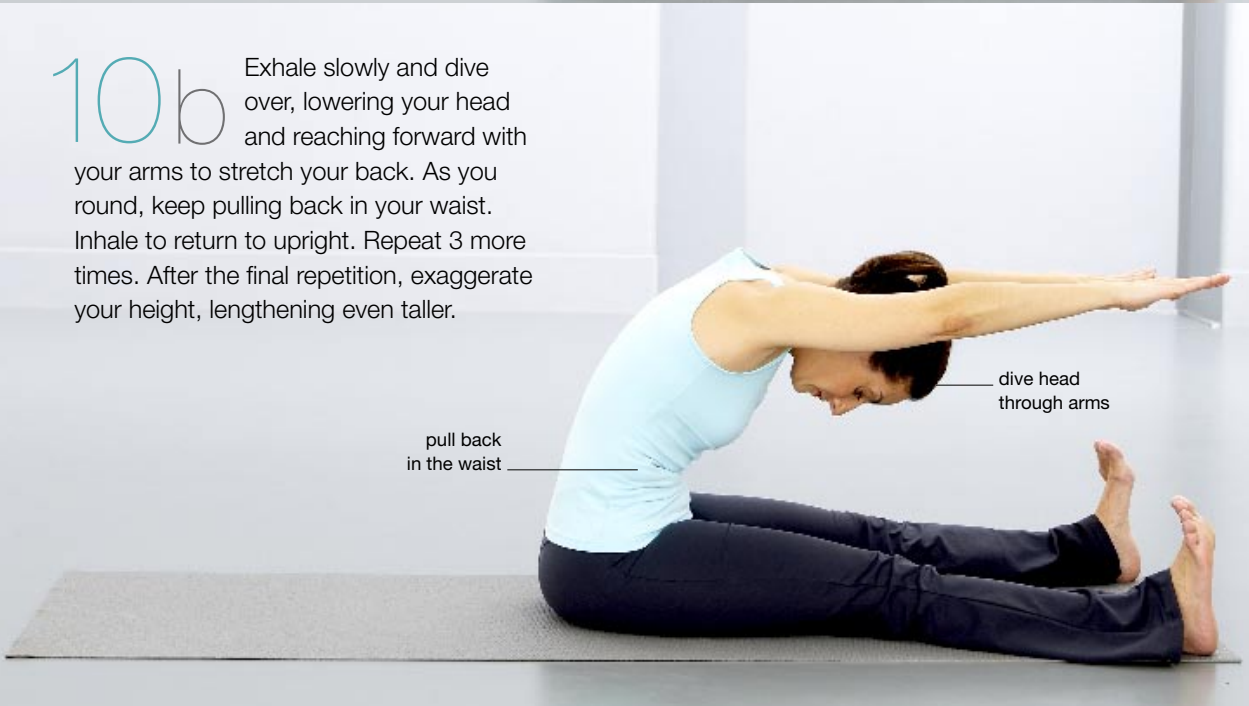
### 10a

Sit tall at the front of your mat with your feet just wider than the mat. Extend both arms in front of you at shoulder height and flex your feet. Tighten your rear-end and inhale so you feel as though you are rising up off the mat.



### 10b

Exhale slowly and dive over, lowering your head and reaching forward with your arms to stretch your back. As you round, keep pulling back in your waist. Inhale to return to upright. Repeat 3 more times. After the final repetition, exaggerate your height, lengthening even taller.

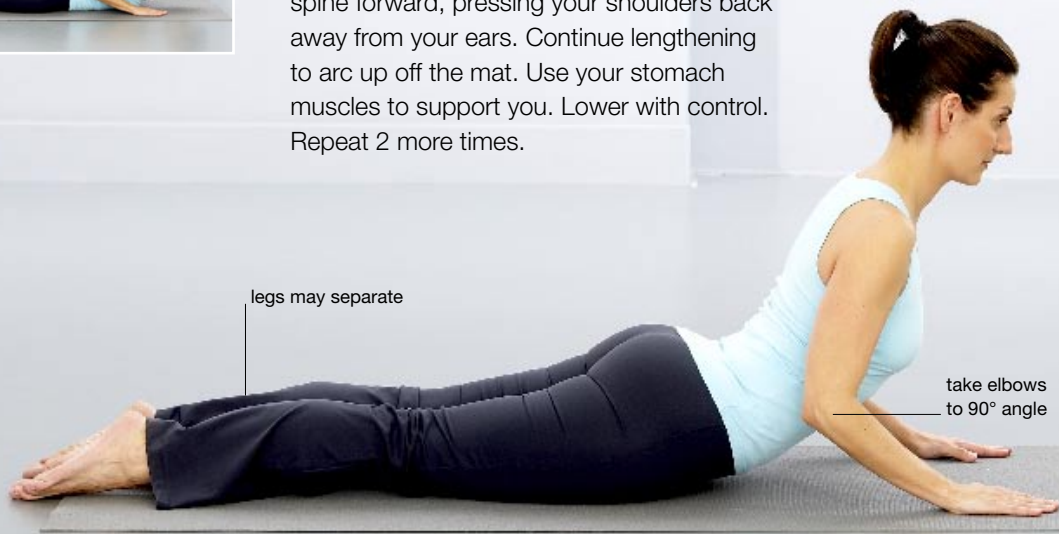




# >> the swan/neck roll



11 Lie face down with legs together and hands under your shoulders. Breathing normally, lengthen your spine forward, pressing your shoulders back away from your ears. Continue lengthening to arc up off the mat. Use your stomach muscles to support you. Lower with control. Repeat 2 more times.

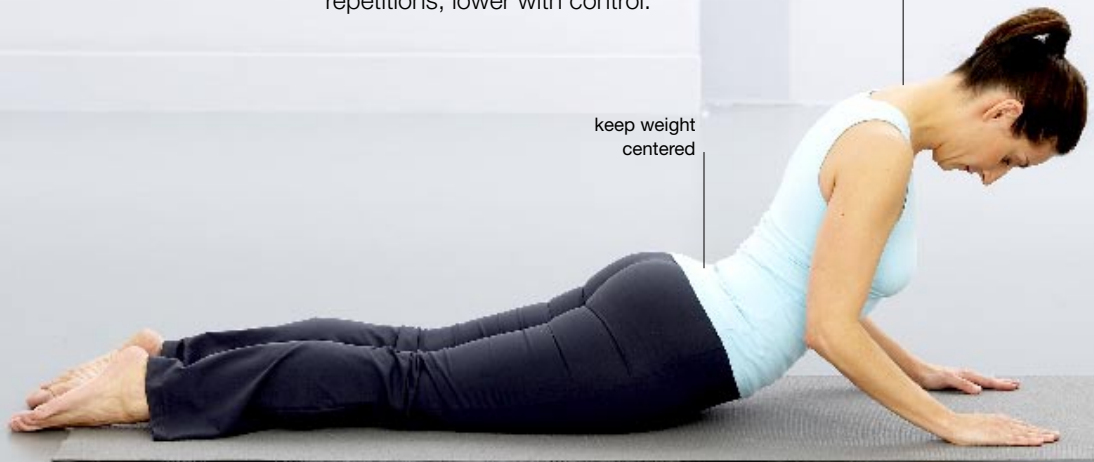


legs may separate

take elbows to 90° angle



12 From your final Swan, turn your head to the right, then circle your chin down and around to the other side. Return to center looking straight ahead. Reverse. Repeat 2 more times. After 4 repetitions, lower with control.



keep weight centered

stretch the neck

## >> child's pose/pelvic lift

**13** Push back to sit on your heels with your back rounded, hands in front of you. Open your knees slightly to allow your upper body to sink deeper. Keep your abdominals lifted as you take 3 deep breaths. With each inhale, try to stretch and release your lower-back muscles. With each exhale, draw your navel even higher upward. After 3 deep breaths, roll up to a kneeling position.



**14** Lie with knees bent and legs hip-width apart. Feel your chest open, shoulders back, and spine long. Inhale and raise your hips without arching your back. Exhale and lower down, one vertebra at a time. Repeat 3 more times, increasing the articulation of your spine each time.



# >> rolling like a ball



**15a** Balance on your sitbones at the front edge of your mat, hugging your ankles into your body and nestling your head between your knees. Without letting your feet touch down, tuck your tail under you and begin to roll back.



hold ankles snugly

keep head tucked in

**15b** Keep rolling through your spine back to your shoulder blades, then return to the starting point. Use your abdominals for control, especially on the return. Try not to skip any sections of your spine. Repeat 5 more times, inhaling as you roll and exhaling as you return.



take feet close to buttocks

aim sitbones to the sky

don't rock onto neck



**day by day program**





15

minute **summary**

# summary day by day

1a



▲ **Abs Wake-up**  
page 22

1b



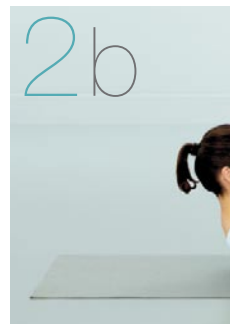
▲ **Abs Wake-up** page 22

2a



▲ **Abdominal Curls** page 23

2b



▲ **Abdominal Curls**

7a



▲ **Single-leg Stretch**  
page 28

7b



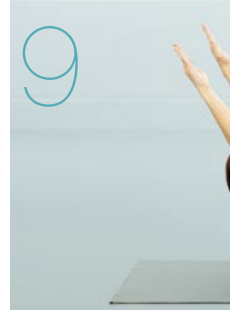
▲ **Single-leg Stretch** page 28

8



▲ **Double-leg Stretch 1**  
page 29

9



▲ **Double-leg Stretch**



page 23



▲ **The Hundred**  
page 24



▲ **The Hundred** page 24



ch 2 page 29



▲ **Spine Stretch Forward**  
page 30



▲ **Spine Stretch Forward** page 30

4a



▲ **The Roll-down**  
page 25

4b



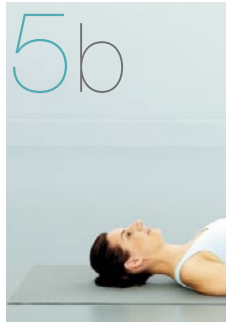
▲ **The Roll-down** page 25

5a



▲ **Single-leg Circles**  
page 26

5b



▲ **Single-leg Circles**

11



▲ **The Swan**  
page 31

13



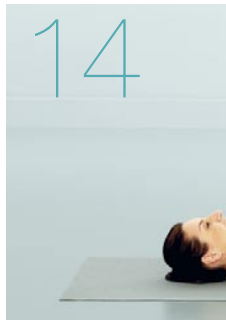
▲ **Child's Pose**  
page 32

12



▲ **Neck Roll** page 31

14



▲ **Pelvic Lift** page 32





page 26



2



6a

▲ Rolling Preparation page 27



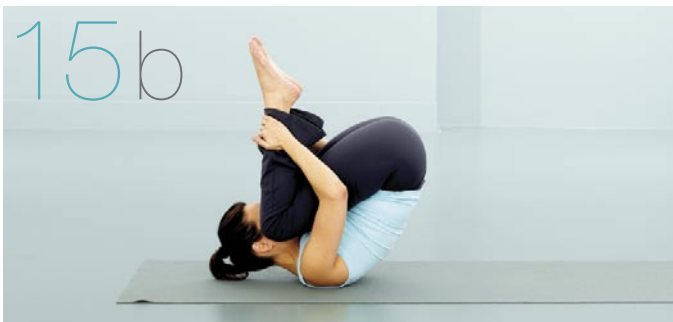
6b

▲ Rolling Preparation page 27



15a

▲ Rolling Like a Ball page 33



15b

▲ Rolling Like a Ball page 33

## >> **day by day** extras

The most important thing about this program is making sure you do it. Once you have the routine memorized, it will take less time and effort to perform. To help you commit the order to memory, try writing the names of the exercises down or singing them along to a familiar tune.

### >> **Checklist**

Be sure to scan your moves for evidence of the six principles at work. The choreography of each move is less important than the quality of those movements.

- Did you transition smoothly between exercises using minimal movement while you were performing this program?
- Have you accomplished the “scoop” of the abdominals to draw the muscles inward instead of distending them?
- When curling up, were you able to contract the abdominals fully without allowing any pushing outward?
- During the Hundred did you manage to keep your upper body fixed at one height, resisting any shaking in the body?
- For the Single-Leg Circles, the hips must remain stable. Were you able to accomplish this?
- Were you able to isolate the pelvis in the Rolling Preparation so that no other body parts were moving?
- The Spine Stretch Forward should be performed as though your body were fixed against a wall and the upper back were peeling away from it. Did you feel that?
- The Pelvic Lift is a variation of a Pilates equipment exercise known as the Breathing. Were you able to articulate your spine fully as you lowered your hips back to the mat?
- Rolling like a Ball is an exercise in control. Are you able to sustain your balance momentarily between each repetition?

## >> **Modify/Adjust**

It will benefit you more to perfect your form in a less advanced move than to force your body past its comfort zone. Modify as necessary.

- Change the bottom leg to a bent-knee position during the Single-Leg Circles.
- Alter your position to separate the legs slightly when lying on your stomach to alleviate lower-back pressure.
- Lower the head to avoid neck strain during exercises where the head is raised.
- Hold behind your knees rather than around the ankles in Rolling like a Ball.

## >> **Challenge**

As you incorporate challenges, do so incrementally. This workout is meant to stay with you for a lifetime.

- Remember to linger at the end of each exercise to perfect your position even more for optimal results.
- Try to increase the resistance by creating internal pressure in your muscles as they push and pull against gravity.
- Vary the tempo to go slower during the hardest parts of each exercise—don't throw it away.
- Work to extend the legs a bit lower yet still remain scooped during the Single- and Double-Leg Stretch.
- Use the curling-up transition rather than rolling through one side.

## >> **Trainer tips**

The goal of this program is to get you acquainted with your body. Focus your attention to problem areas within exercises.

- Connectivity is key. Stop moving between exercises and your body forgets that it is working out. No matter what—keep moving.
- Every movement has a countermovement, so if you twist your torso you'll find one side is pulling backward while the other pulls forward. Pay attention to these naturally opposing moments in each exercise.
- When curling up, imagine four points at your ribs and hips and draw them together, sinking your abdominals.

**15** minute





# from the top down >>

Focus on centering  
Activate your Pilates box  
Learn Pilates with weights

# >> from the top down

This program is comprised of standing exercises and is performed almost entirely with hand weights. I've structured the routine to show that Pilates is not confined to the mat. The program you are about to do not only gets you upright, but also trains you to carry this work with you wherever you go.

We begin by standing for a series of arm and upper-body exercises, performed in Pilates stance. Then you move on to a flat-back series, which challenges your core, coordination, and alignment, before coming upright again. Now the fun begins. The next set of exercises requires you to be utterly stable in movements that are targeted to bend you, shift you, and shake you. You'll close the routine with some modified Pilates Push-ups and a historical breathing exercise—The Windmill.

## Starting and finishing

To start off, you will need to establish a solid standing Pilates stance (see p. 17). The hamstrings will wrap tightly around the back and the buttocks will tense. For standing exercises in Pilates, there is a bit of an incline in the body. It's often described as "leaning into the wind." The position requires you to shift your weight slightly forward toward the fronts, or balls, of the feet. You will sustain this position for each upright move in the program.

At the end of this program, we take a breathing reminder from a vintage exercise. Mr. Pilates developed a small handheld device for improving breath control during the exercise. Today, we do it without but must remember to challenge our lungs to empty every drop of air before inhaling again.

## Transitions

Linking the hand-weight exercises requires keeping your torso strong and stable and the arms moving fluidly. In the flat-back series, move from your flat

## >> secrets of success

- **Use the Side Bends exercise** to emphasize opposition. As you reach up and away, anchor the opposite side of the body down into the ground.
- **Push-ups are a great move** for working on spinal alignment. Once in your "plank" position, arrange your spine in one solid line from your hips to the top of your head.
- **Baby Circles** reinforce the idea of stability before mobility. The temptation to waver and vacillate as you circle must be resisted at all costs.

back into a rounded spine as though you were melting over your legs. From your lowest stretch, roll back up through your spine. In this series you will be shifting your body weight from upright, to bent over to rounded over. No matter your body position, keep your weight centered through the middle of your feet. Don't sink back in the heels or rise up on the toes. Like all Pilates movements, these transitions are mindful and precise.

**From the Top Down** seems to focus on the upper body only. With practice, though, it becomes clear that every Pilates exercise is a full-body experience.



## >> front curls

**1a** Holding a small weight in each hand, stand in Pilates position (see p. 17) with heels together and toes apart. Tighten the seat and draw the waistline inward and upward. Raise the arms forward directly in front of you, in line with the shoulders, palms facing upward. Keep the elbows long but not locked.



**1b** With internal resistance (see p. 17), bend the arms in past 90°. Be sure the elbows remain high as you bend them. Now open the arms with the same resistance. Repeat 5 more times, inhaling to extend, and exhaling to bend. On your last repetition, lower the arms smoothly down to your sides. Perform 6 repetitions.





## >> side curls

**2a** Now raise both arms up sideways, just in front of the shoulders. Be sure to maintain a long spine and a strong core. Don't allow your posture to sink or collapse. Tighten the muscles of the buttocks so the lower half of you continues to work.



**2b** Use resistance to bend the arms in past 90°. Use even more resistance to open the arms out. Be sure the elbows remain high as you bend and straighten. Repeat 5 more times, inhaling to extend and exhaling to bend. On your last repetition, lower the arms smoothly to your sides.



## >> zip-ups

**3a** Still holding the small weights, rotate the backs of the hands toward each other so the knuckles face each other. Scoop the abdominals up, tighten the backs of the legs, and shift the weight a tiny bit forward toward the fronts of the feet. Keep the heels flat as you do this. Inhale to prepare.



**3b** Exhale, open your elbows wide, and pull the weights up under your chin, keeping your neck long and your shoulders relaxed. Lower the weights back down as though you were pushing something heavy away from you. Repeat 5 more times, inhaling to lift and exhaling to lower.



## >> salutes

**4a** Still holding the weights, place both of them behind your head at the nape of your neck. Tip your chin down slightly and be sure to keep your elbows open wide. Your feet remain in Pilates position with your legs pressed together tightly. Incline your body forward as though you were “leaning into the wind.”



**4b** Without locking the elbows, extend the arms overhead. Hold the powerhouse strong (see p. 17) and keep the fingers of each hand in contact with each other. Lower with resistance. Repeat 5 more times, exhaling to extend and inhaling to lower.



## &gt;&gt; the boxing



**5a** Open the feet into parallel, hip-width apart, and stand tall holding the weights. Bend both knees deeply and fold over the legs with a long flat back. Tuck the arms in by your sides, keeping the elbows tight to the body. Lift the abdominals without disrupting your posture. Inhale to prepare.



**5b** Exhale and simultaneously extend the right arm forward and the left arm back in a boxinglike movement. Inhale to fold the arms back in. Continue, creating resistance and alternating sides for 3 full sets. Complete a total of 6 repetitions. To finish, round over the legs, stretching the back and legs. Slowly roll back up to standing.



# >> the bug

**6a** Start by standing tall, holding the weights, and with legs parallel. Bend your knees and fold over, keeping your spine long and flat. Frame your arms in a circle directly underneath you, bringing your fists toward each other. Lift your powerhouse and inhale to prepare.



**6b** Exhale and lift both arms to the sides of the room. Don't allow your body position to change as you do this. Inhale and lower your arms as though you were squeezing something together. Perform 2 more repetitions, then reverse your breathing and exhale to prepare for an additional 3 repetitions. Finally, round over your legs to release the spine.



>> **triceps**

**7a** Holding the weights, stand tall with your legs parallel. Fold at your waist over your legs and tuck your arms in by your sides. Bring your elbows up a little higher than your back. Activate your abdominals and inhale to begin.



**7b** Exhale and extend both arms behind you, holding strong in your center. Fold them back in slowly and with control, as though you were pulling something toward you. Repeat 5 more times. Stretch over your legs again before rolling up through your spine, one vertebra at a time.



## >> baby circles

**8a** Standing in Pilates stance (see p. 17), hold your weights just in front of your legs on a slight angle. Shift your weight toward the fronts of your feet, leaning slightly forward and tightening your gluteal muscles. Begin circling the arms 8 times, raising your arms higher with each circle until you are reaching overhead.



**8b** Reverse your circles, lowering down for 8 circles. Repeat another full set. Try not to shake or bounce your body as you circle your arms. Hold your torso strong and breathe naturally.



## &gt;&gt; lunges



**9a** Holding the weights, stand with your feet in a “Y,” nestling the heel of your left foot into the arch of the right. Angle your body toward your left foot, holding the weights just in front of your thighs. Tighten the backs of your legs and draw your waist in and up. In a fencinglike motion, shoot your left leg out into a deep lunge position as your arms rise quickly up.



**9b** Shift back onto your straight leg, dragging your left foot back to your right foot as you lower your arms. Repeat 3 more times and switch sides.





## >> side bend

**10a** Stand in Pilates stance and extend the right arm up toward the ceiling, hugging the arm against the side of the head. Inhale and lift even higher, arcing up and over to the left.



**10b** Bend up and away, reaching further over and allowing the bottom arm to hang loosely. Now return to the centerline, resisting on the way up. Lower the arm down by your side and repeat to the left side. Perform 2 more sets for a total of 6 repetitions.



## &gt;&gt; push-ups



11a

Stand upright in Pilates stance, tightening the backs of your legs. Reach your arms overhead for a breath, then dive over your legs, reaching for the floor and keeping your abdominals lifting. Walk your hands out until you are in a plank position and bend your knees up.



11b

Open your elbows and lower your upper body up and down for 3 push-ups. Straighten your legs behind you, tuck your toes under, and lift your hips, pressing back into your heels for a stretch. Carefully walk your hands back to your legs, stretch a moment, and roll back up to standing. Repeat 1 more set for a total of 6 push-ups.

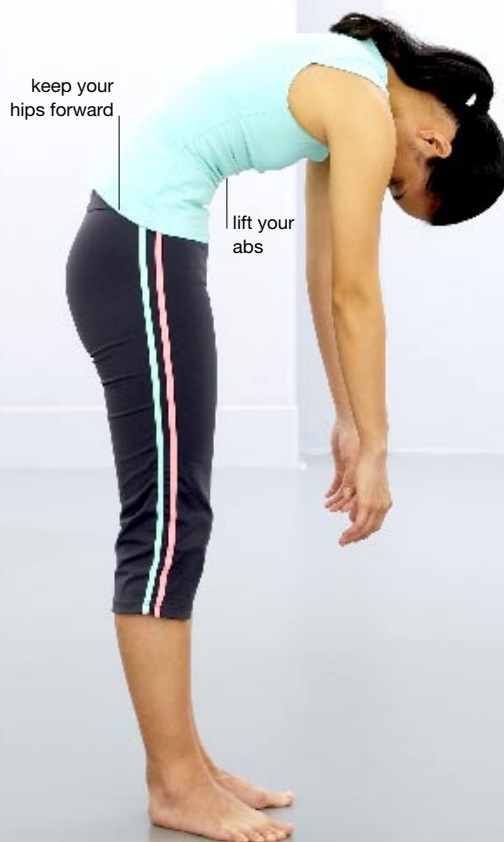


# >> windmill

**12a** Stand tall and envision your spine as a wheel as you inhale. Exhale, tucking your head down and folding over your legs. Try to keep your weight shifted slightly forward. Continue exhaling and rounding your spine down in a curling motion.



**12b** When you are folded over and have no air left, slowly inhale and uncurl the spine, rolling back up to standing. Repeat 2 more times, exhaling progressively longer each time. Finally, roll the shoulders back, lengthen the neck, and stand tall.



**from the top down**



15

minute **summary**



# summary from the top down

1a



▲ **Front Curls** page 46

1b



▲ **Front Curls** page 46

2a



▲ **Side Curls** page 47

7a



▲ **Triceps** page 52

7b



▲ **Triceps** page 52

8a



▲ **Baby Circles** page 53



▲ **Side Curls** page 47



▲ **Zip-ups** page 48



▲ **Zip-ups** page 48



▲ **Baby Circles** page 53



▲ **Lunges** page 54



▲ **Lunges** page 54

4a



▲ Salutes page 49

4b



▲ Salutes page 49

5a



▲ The Boxing page 50

10a



▲ Side Bend page 55

10b



▲ Side Bend page 55

11a



▲ Push-ups page 56

11b



▲ Push-ups page 56



5b



▲ The Boxing page 50

6a



▲ The Bug page 51

6b



▲ The Bug page 51

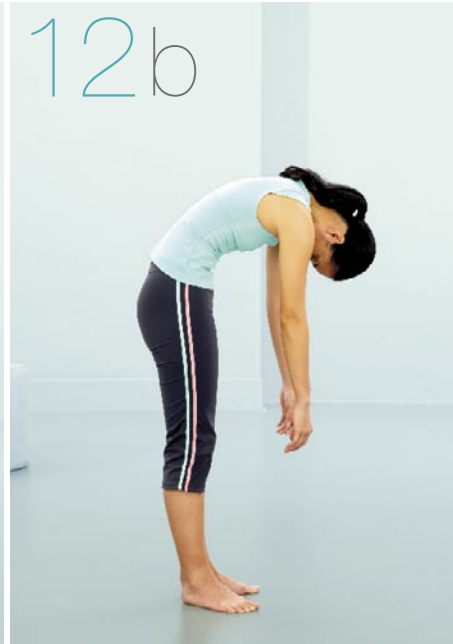


12a



▲ Windmill page 57

12b



▲ Windmill page 57

## >> from the top down extras

It's easy to feel the pull of resistance when you do this routine, which involves working with weights. As an experiment, once you've performed this program, do a run-through without any weights but force your muscles to behave as though you were still holding them. This is the essence of internal resistance.

### >> Checklist

Remember to move from your center. Although these exercises appear to be for the limbs, they are just as much for your core.

- Did you work within your “frame”—keeping your arms within your peripheral vision?
- Have you worked with internal resistance throughout each movement of the program?
- Can you feel how the lower body must stabilize in order to mobilize the upper body?
- During the Front Curls, as in all Pilates standing positions, were you positioned very slightly forward on your feet as though you were “leaning into the wind?”
- For the Side Curls, were you able to keep pressing the shoulders down using the muscles of your back?
- Are you able to maintain your vertical alignment during the Zip-ups and Salutes so that your spine does not waver?
- Some of the hand-weight exercises are done in parallel. Can you keep your legs aligned so that your feet, knees, and hips are all pointing straight forward?
- Did you remember to keep some weight on the outside foot while side-bending away from that leg?
- The Lunges can be tricky with respect to timing. Did you coordinate the return of the leg and the lowering of the arms so that they end simultaneously?

## >> **Modify/Adjust**

Hand weights add another element to your workout. Be sure to work deliberately and carefully through each section.

- Change the angle of the limbs to reduce your range of motion for the arm-weight exercises to make them slightly easier.
- Alter your position if you must, bending the knees less deeply during the flat-back exercises to reduce the intensity.
- Remember to decrease your weights or eliminate them as necessary if undue strain occurs.

## >> **Challenge**

You can make an exercise harder by increasing your repetitions or slowing down your tempo. You can also focus on the exacting detail of each move for a real challenge.

- Learn to hold your body still regardless of the movement of the circling arms while you perform the Baby Circles.
- Practice the Lunges focusing on the drag-in to work on activating that hard-to-reach area, the inner thighs.
- Try to increase the weights by a pound or two (0.5 to 1 kg) as you improve. Don't go above 4 to 5 pounds (1.8 to 2.25 kg) total.

## >> **Trainer tips**

Work the transitions. Make your connecting movements every bit as important as the main exercises.

- Be sure your breathing is focused and targeted. Always inhale to prepare and exhale as you execute a movement.
- Work with the joint. Be careful not to lock or jam your elbows or knees as you move through the series. Remember that your muscles move your bones, not the other way around.
- As you perform your hand-weight series, aim to keep your wrists in an elongated hold. Extending the wrists long provides increased stability to your forearms as opposed to bending or cocking the wrists and weakening your grip on the weights.



# 15 minute





Focus on precision  
Activate your Pilates stance  
Learn the Side Kicks series

**from the**  
bottom up >>

# >> from the bottom up

This program begins with some preparatory moves and concludes, as does the last program, with an upright exercise. It will build stamina and emphasize centering. By now you should begin to feel comfortable executing the exercises without sacrificing either your form or the key concepts.

We begin with two exercises of my own design that use the Pilates stance with the legs extended in a non-weight-bearing position. We then move into a side-lying position for the classic Pilates Side-Kicks series. Transferring to a seated position, we'll perform a modified Teaser—the “poster pose” for Pilates exercises. This version is meant to work your abdominals and challenge your control as you descend from the pose. The routine rounds out with some moves taken from the Pilates equipment, namely the Hug and the Standing Arm Circles. In between, you'll find the Mermaid, an exercise which embodies the grace and fluidity of the Pilates system.

## Starting and finishing

As you sit on the mat at the start with your legs outstretched, forget about the muscles you are planning to work. Begin by activating all the other muscle groups. Sit with tall posture, a lifted waist, and a long neck. As you adjust your body to get ready for Pilates stance, take note of how much should be done in preparation for each exercise.

The final exercise, Arm Circles, is done standing in this program. Although Arm Circles are traditionally performed on Pilates equipment, this variation gets you off the floor and ready for real life.

## Transitions

Here, the links between exercises are more complex than before. Approach the Side Kicks Preparation as a position of stability. If you are

## >> secrets of success

- **Pilates stance** is initiated from the buttocks. To do this correctly when sitting, draw the buttocks muscles together. You should then rise slightly off your mat.
- **During the up/down** in the Side Kicks, pay special attention to the tempo changes. The leg travels up loosely but lowers down with increasing resistance.
- **The Mermaid** is a lengthening exercise, not a bending one. Be sure not to collapse into your waist. Instead pull up out of your bottom half as though you were being lifted up by your upper arm.

properly positioned you should require very little adjusting. As you progress, resist relaxing your leg in between moves, but stay controlled, using the end of one exercise as the start of the next. When you transfer onto the stomach for the Beats, use minimal movement. Although the Teaser's focus is in its second half, don't ignore your form in the first. This program synthesizes all you have learned.

**The Mermaid is a classic** Pilates exercise. By anchoring the lower half of the body, the upper half is free to lengthen and stretch.



# >> pilates stance 1 & 2



- 1 Sit tall with your legs in front of you, pressing your inner thighs together and keeping your feet long. Place your hands on the outside of your thighs and squeeze your bottom, rotating your legs and feet so they are slightly open. Continue to tighten your buttocks muscles, returning your legs and feet to parallel. Perform a total of 5 repetitions.

keep shoulders  
back



feel the move with your hands

- 2 Lie on your back, legs upward, heels together, and toes apart. Tighten your buttocks and rotate your legs slightly out. Use your hands to cue your muscles to work from your hips. Rotate your legs back to parallel. Repeat 4 more times.

keep legs together

lift the chest





## >> side kicks preparation



**3a** Lie on your right side at the back edge of your mat. Prop your head up with your hand, resting on your elbow, and place your left hand in front of your powerhouse (see p. 17). Keeping your chest lifted, pull your abdominals in firmly and lift both legs up in the air, squeezing them tightly.



**3b** Without disrupting your posture, carry your legs forward to the front edge of the mat and lower them with control. You should be at a 45° angle on the mat, with your hips and shoulders stacked one on top of the other.



# >> side kicks front



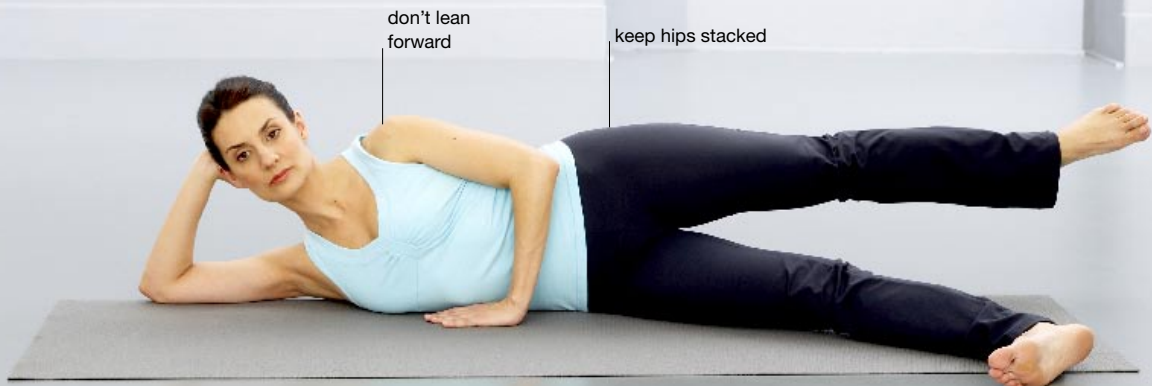
## 4a

Lying on your side at a 45° angle on the mat, elevate your left leg and slightly rotate it up to the ceiling. Your right foot remains solidly on the mat, slightly flexed and pressing down into the floor. Carry your leg forward in a kicking motion, pulsing twice at the height of your kick.



## 4b

Sweep the leg down and back behind the body, tightening the buttocks muscles. Keep the upper body still and strong. Repeat a total of 6 times, perfecting your form each time. Bring the leg back to its starting position.



## >> side kicks up and down



**5a** Keeping the left leg slightly elevated, rotate it again, turning the foot and knee up to the ceiling. Inhale and kick the left leg high in one swift movement. Aim the leg for a spot just behind the ear as you kick up.



**5b** Lower your leg down, creating resistance (see p. 17) as you go, for a count of 3. Use opposition (see p. 17): as your leg lowers, your abdominals should draw inward and upward. Lift your chest as you repeat 5 more times — for a total of 6 repetitions.

## >> side kicks circles

**6a** Remain lying on your side. Carry the top leg just in front of the bottom leg. It should feel very heavy at this point. Keep it rotated up to the sky with the ankle long.



**6b** Draw 10 tiny circles with the leg in the air without shaking your body. Pause briefly. Switch immediately, taking the left leg back and reversing the circles. Keep the circles tiny and emphasize the downward portion of the circle. Repeat 10 circles and pause before resting the left leg on the right.



## >> side kicks inner-thigh lifts

**7a** Remain lying on your right side. Cross the left leg in front of the right leg and take hold of the ankle. Place the left foot flat on the floor with the knee and foot pointing down toward the bottom foot. Now, flex the right foot and lift the entire right leg just above the mat.



**7b** Without hunching or collapsing, raise the right leg to its highest point and lower it back to above the mat. Repeat 7 more times for a total of 8 repetitions. On the last repetition, remain at the highest point and perfect the position by lengthening, straightening, and rotating just a little bit more. Finally, lower the leg with control.



# >> side kicks bicycle



**8a** Lie with the legs together at a 45° angle in front of you. Raise the left leg slightly. Swing it out in front of the body without hunching or rounding the back. Create opposition by pulling back, or retracting, the left hip behind you slightly. Bend the left knee in toward the shoulder.



**8b** Sweep the left knee down next to the right knee before extending it behind you. Pull the waist up in opposition to the leg reaching down. Repeat 2 more times and then return the leg to its start position. Reverse direction for 3 more repetitions.



## >> beats on stomach

**9a** Transition onto your stomach, then lie face down on your mat. Place your hands under your forehead and stretch your legs out. Tighten your abdominals and elevate both legs slightly. Keep your shoulders pulling back and down as you open your legs and start to beat them together.



**9b** Breathing naturally, continue beating briskly for 20 counts. Beat the legs from the upper inner thighs and keep the knees straight. Pause at the end to lengthen the legs, tighten the abs, and soften the neck and shoulders, before lowering the legs with control. Roll over onto the other side and repeat the Side Kick series (Steps 3a–8b) with the opposite leg.



## &gt;&gt; the teaser

10a

Transition onto your back and bring your knees into your chest as you reach your arms overhead.



10b

In one count, sweep your body up to sitting, balancing with your legs at 90°, arms reaching forward, abs deeply scooped, chest open. With control, curl your tail under you, laying your spine onto the mat. Fold your knees in, arms overhead to repeat. Perform 5 repetitions.






## >> the hug



tense arm  
muscle

lengthen  
sides of waist

11a Sit cross-legged with your arms open to the side as though you were holding a weight in each hand. Angle your arms so they slope down from shoulders to elbows to wrists. Press your shoulders down and elongate your neck. Feel that your arms are heavy.



keep neck long

draw shoulders  
down

11b Inhale and hug with the arms, creating a huge circle in front of you. Exhale and open the arms with even greater resistance. Repeat 3 times, then reverse the breathing for 3 more repetitions. Keep the abdominals pulled inward throughout.

## &gt;&gt; the mermaid

**12a** Sit to the right side of your legs with your knees, shins, and ankles stacked on your left. Reach your left hand underneath your bottom ankle and hook onto it, holding firmly. Sweep your free right arm up overhead and inhale to prepare.

lengthen waist \_\_\_\_\_

hold the bottom ankle firmly



**12b** Bend lightly over the legs, exhaling as you stretch the right side. Reach the arm and body higher up as you return to upright. Repeat 2 more times, pausing at the end, lifting the waist, and pulling the shoulders down. Swing the legs to the other side for 3 more repetitions.

\_\_\_\_\_ reach up and over

\_\_\_\_\_ open elbow out



## >> arm circles



**13a** Stand in Pilates stance (see p. 17).

Shift your weight slightly forward. Hold your arms by your thighs with your palms facing forward. Inhale, then exhale and raise your arms straight up to the sky.



palms face  
back

lean slightly  
forward

**13b** Flip the palms outward and circle the arms down, exerting pressure as though the air were thick. Repeat 2 more times, then reverse the breath, inhaling on the raise and exhaling on the lower, for another 3 repetitions.



take arms  
slightly  
forward

resist as  
you lower

**from the bottom up**





# 15 minute **summary**



# summary from the bottom up



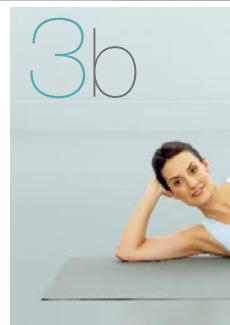
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▲ **Pilates Stance 2** page 70



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▲ **Side Kicks Prepara**



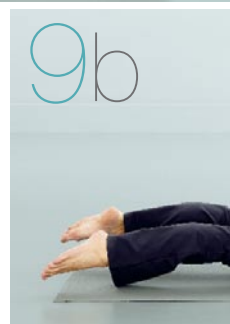
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▲ **Side Kicks Bicycle** page 76



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▲ **Beats on Stomac**



▲ **Side Kicks Front**  
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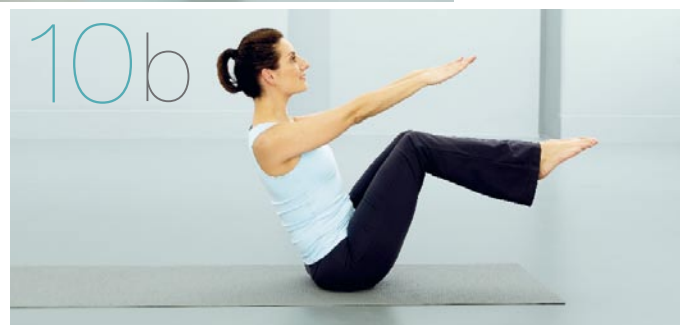
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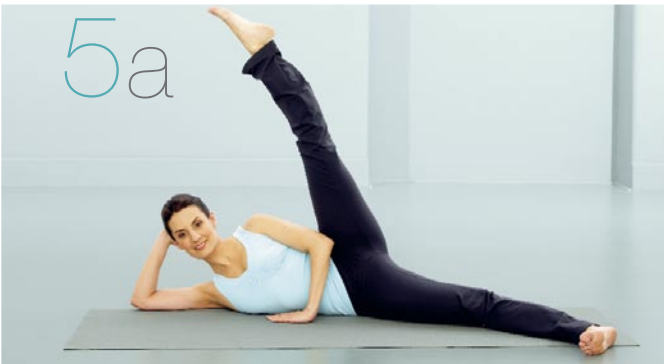
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▲ **The Teaser** page 78



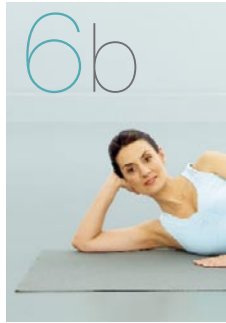
▲ **Side Kicks Up and Down**  
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▲ **Side Kicks Up and Down** page 73



▲ **Side Kicks Circles**  
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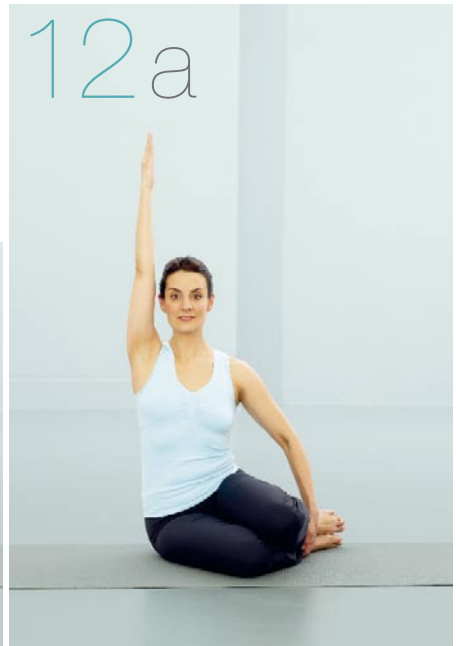
▲ **Side Kicks Circles**



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▲ **The Hug** page 79



▲ **The Mermaid** page 80





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7a  
▲ Side Kicks  
Inner-thigh  
Lifts  
page 75



7b  
▲ Side Kicks Inner-thigh Lifts page 75



12b  
▲ The Mermaid page 80



13a  
▲ Arm Circles page 81



13b  
▲ Arm Circles page 81

# >> from the bottom up extras

Remember the old style workouts like calisthenics? The Bottom Up program looks eerily similar. The critical difference is precision and form. Focus on controlling your movements rather than hurling your body around. You'll accomplish both form and function at the same time.

## >> Checklist

Every portion of every exercise is equally important. If you believe you've mastered a move, look again.

- Did you work with opposition, lengthening the torso against the limbs and vice versa?
- Have you focused on what the top half of the body is doing during this lower-body series?
- Can you incorporate your Pilates Stance exercises into the rest of the mat exercises, even when the legs are in the air?
- During Pilates Stance 2, could you feel with your hands that your rotation muscles were pulling the legs into position?
- The Side Kicks focus so heavily on the lower body that people forget their upper bodies. Did you keep your chest lifted and shoulders down throughout?
- For the Side Kicks Front and the Side Kicks Circles, did you maintain your torso alignment without rolling onto the front hand when the leg traveled behind you?
- When you are performing the Beats on Stomach, can you actively draw your shoulder blades down and together in order to avoid hunching and to keep the chest open?

## >> **Modify/Adjust**

Remember, to decrease the intensity you must draw your limbs closer to your center. If you must bend them, go ahead.

- Change the leg position into parallel if the rotation of the hips is too intense during the Side Kicks.
- Alter your position to separate your legs for the Mermaid instead of allowing your shins to rest against one another.

## >> **Challenge**

Experiment with your own positions. A slight pivot or angle change can alter an exercise dramatically.

- Learn to anchor the bottom leg while you are performing the Side Kicks series to increase your stability.
- Attempt to perform the Teaser with legs extended at a 45° angle as you rise up and as you lower.
- Try to add light ankle weights to the Side Kicks if the exercises become too easy.
- Switch the hand on the mat to behind the head for the Side Kicks series. Keep your elbow pointing to the sky.

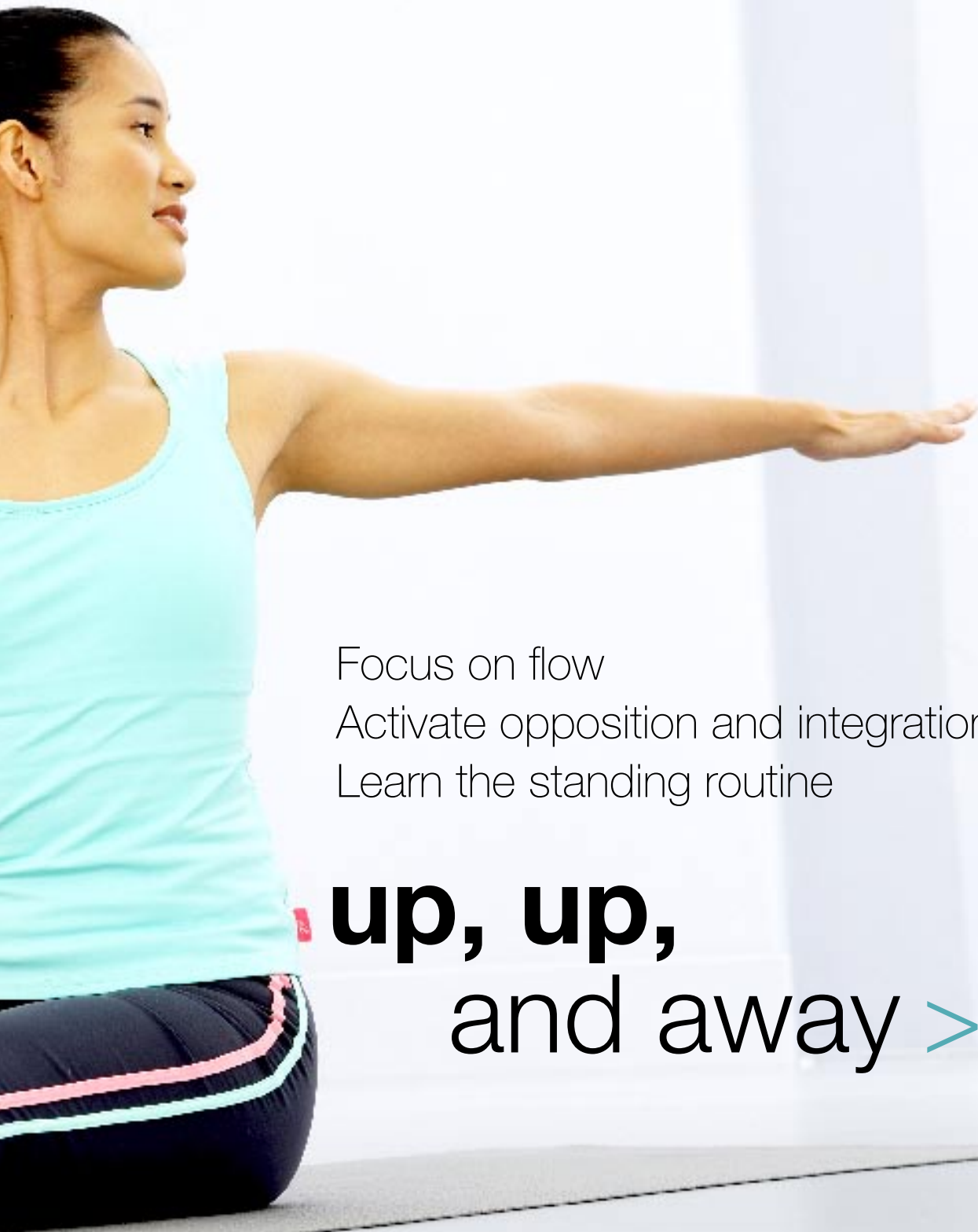
## >> **Trainer tips**

Use your eyes to position your legs where they look the best, then work from there, making sure the muscles look taut and shapely.

- I constructed the Pilates Stance exercises to provide a support system for much of the work we do in the Pilates method, so practice those regularly. Remember to initiate from your hips.
- This Teaser version is my own and is meant to eliminate self-doubt and to work the core. Remember to focus on the descent.
- It's a good idea to trick your body every now and then by starting on a different side. If you typically begin your leg series on the right, alternate on certain days to begin with the left. Similarly, if you find that you sit cross-legged with the right leg on top all the time, make a change every now and then.

**15** minute





Focus on flow

Activate opposition and integration

Learn the standing routine

**up, up,**  
and away >>

# >> up, up, and away

This last program establishes the muscle memory you will need to set you up for everyday life. We often need to bend, twist, lean, and reach—all moves you will perform here. Your ultimate goal is to subconsciously incorporate your Pilates practice into every waking moment for a stronger, safer body.

The program begins with two seated exercises that help with those all-too-common neck misalignments. We follow these with a challenging variation of the Hundred and some classic Pilates Rowing exercises. Then it's onto our knees for some more classic exercises that reinforce our use of internal resistance. When we come up to standing, we will perform some historical Pilates exercises to strengthen our lower limbs.

## Starting and finishing

As you begin the Neck Strengtheners, take a minute to fix your posture. Your neck is an extension of your spine and it will be impossible to align your neck if your spine is rounded over. Take note of the top of your head where it begins to slope downward in a curve. This is the crown of the head. As you sit, stand, kneel, or lie, you should always be reaching the crown of the head up and away from you.

You end with the Sides Splits—a functional exercise group. By training your body to engage your core during these dynamic moving exercises, you are preparing for the unexpected movements that you will encounter in real life. Here, focus on your waistline pulling up and away from your legs as you drag the legs together each time.

## Transitions

Transfer in controlled, neat movements from the opening neck exercises to the seated movements. To transition to kneeling, tuck your knees into your

## >> secrets of success

- **Many find the Chest Expansion** rather subtle. Remember to activate your powerhouse (see p. 17) and pull the arms behind you as you turn your head.
- **When you kneel** during the Thigh Stretch, tighten all your muscles from top to tail. You should lock your body as though it were a piece of steel.
- **The Footwork series** are historical Pilates moves. These squatlike movements require full-body integration.

body and then bring them underneath you, raising up your torso as you do so. When it's time to stand, you need only to place your hands on the mat, tuck your toes underneath you, and roll up to standing. As you move from one exercise in the Footwork series to the next, pay special attention to the alignment of your upper body. No matter how you get there, using symmetrical efficient movement without expending excess energy should be your goal.

**Up, Up, and Away** will reinforce the total-body integration of Pilates. Prepare your body for everyday life by taking the philosophy of Pilates with you everywhere.



# >> neck press/shoulder roll



keep elbow open

keep hips relaxed

- 1 Sit cross-legged and place one hand behind your head. Draw your chin in and slightly down, thereby pressing your skull back toward your hand. Your neck will lengthen and your waist will draw inward. Meet the resistance of your head with your hand and hold for 3 counts. Release gently. Repeat 4 more times for a total of 5 repetitions.



squeeze shoulder blades close



hold abs tight

- 2 With the hands on the knees, inhale and shrug the shoulders forward and up toward the ears. Then roll the shoulders back, pulling them down as low as they can go, exhaling as you do so. Inhale and repeat 2 more times. Reverse the shoulder circles for 3 more repetitions.



# >> the hundred

sit very tall



keep the  
abs working

## 3a

Sit upright with your legs in front of you. Reach your arms over your legs and draw your waistline in and up. Press your shoulders down firmly and begin pumping your arms briskly up and down, breathing in for 5 counts and out for 5.

## 3b

Continue pumping as you squeeze the legs and buttocks muscles tight. Hold the body strong so as not to bounce or sway. When you reach 100 pumps or 10 breath cycles, sit taller. Hold for one final moment, then rest.



pump the arms

hold legs  
together tightly

## &gt;&gt; rowing 1



press shoulders down



keep ankles long

**4a** Holding the small hand weights, sit tall with your legs extended forward and pressed together. Bend your elbows and pull them behind you to tuck the weights in by your sides. Inhale and extend your arms up without allowing your shoulders to rise.

rise up as  
arms lower



lift chest high

**4b** Exhale and lower your arms straight down by your hips. Inhale and lift them up overhead again. Now, reach higher and open your arms sideways, circling them down to begin again. Tuck them in, and repeat twice more for a set of 3 repetitions.

## >> rowing 2



**5a** Sit tall with your legs extended, feet flexed, and holding the weights by your hips. Inhale and round over your legs. Exhale and press your hands forward along the mat toward your feet. Keep your abs lifted. Inhale and roll up through your spine to sitting, reaching your arms over your legs.

take shoulders over hips



press heels forward

circle arms within peripheral vision

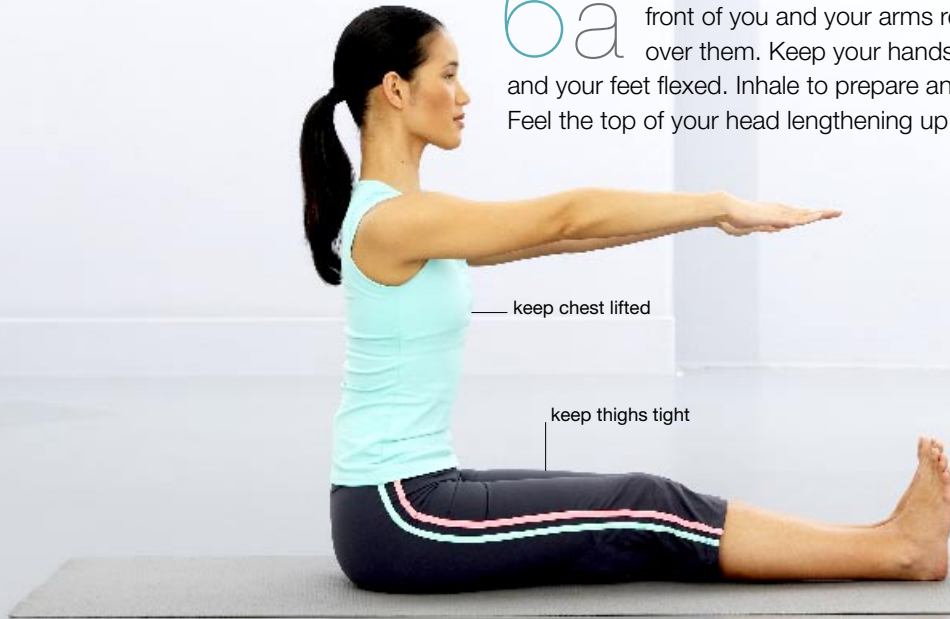
**5b** Continue reaching the arms forward and then take them up to the sky. Circle the arms down and around by your sides to begin again. Repeat a total of 3 times.



press legs together

# >> spine twist

**6a** Sit tall with your legs pressed together in front of you and your arms reaching directly over them. Keep your hands reaching long and your feet flexed. Inhale to prepare and lift your waist. Feel the top of your head lengthening up to the sky.



**6b** Exhale and twist right, taking the right arm backward and rising up in the torso simultaneously. Make another small twist, then rebound to your starting position. Repeat to the left. Perform 4 sets for a total of 8 repetitions, opposing the arms strongly with every twist.



# >> the saw



**7a** Open the arms side to side, palms face down. Open the legs just past mat-width. Flex the feet and lift up tall to begin. Inhale and twist to the right, keeping the hips and legs planted firmly on the mat.



grow tall as you twist

take legs hip-width apart

**7b** Turn your head to follow your back arm. Dive forward, reaching your left hand outside your right foot as though you were sawing off your little toe. Continue to exhale and stretch. Return upright and repeat, twisting to the left. Complete 3 full sets, alternating sides.



let head hang

feel it here

reach past the little toe

>> **lotus**

**8a** Take your weights and kneel upright on your mat with your knees comfortably apart. Your arms extend to the sides of your body with the palms face up. Hold strong in your core and keep your chest lifted.



**8b** Without disrupting your posture, raise the arms straight up, framing the head and neck in an oval. Lower the arms back down with controlled resistance (see p. 17). Keep the elbows soft. Repeat for a total of 8 times, exhaling to lift and inhaling to lower.



# >> chest expansion



**9a** Still kneeling upright, hold the weights just in front of you. Tighten the buttocks and pull up in the waist to activate the core. Inhale and sweep the arms behind you with resistance, opening the chest and drawing the shoulder blades together as you go.

**9b** Keep the arms behind you as you look over the right shoulder and then the left before returning to center. Exhale and take the arms back in front of you. Repeat 3 more times, alternating the initial direction you turn the head with each set.



## &gt;&gt; thigh stretch

**10a** Remain on your knees holding the weights with your arms extended directly in front of you just below shoulder-height. Face your palms down and tighten your powerhouse (see p. 17) to begin. Inhale to prepare.



**10b** Allow your chin to dip down slightly then hinge back, stretching the fronts of your thighs but not arching your spine. At your lowest point, tighten your buttocks and bring your body back up to start again. Perform a total of 4 repetitions, exhaling each time you rise back up. Put the weights down. Tuck your toes under you to come up to standing.





## >> footwork 1 & 2



**11** Come off your mat and stand up tall in Pilates stance (see p. 17). Place your hands behind your head, elbows wide. Inhale and bend your knees to lower into a squat. Allow your heels to rise. At the bottom of the squat, press your heels into the floor to rise back up. Perform 6 times, inhaling to lower and exhaling to rise.



**12** Stand with feet parallel, hip-width apart, arms folded in front of you at chest height. Bend your knees as low as you can go, then push your feet into the floor to rise. Repeat for 6 repetitions. Inhale to lower and exhale to rise.



## >> footwork 3/tendon stretch



**13** Standing with feet together and arms extended in front for stability, curl the toes up and press the rest of the foot firmly down. Pull the abs in, then bend into a squat. Keep the heels down if possible and stay as upright as you can, resisting the urge to bend too far forward in the spine. Exhale to rise back up with resistance. Don't rush. Repeat a total of 6 times.



**14** Return to Pilates stance, with your arms folded in front at chest height. Press down firmly into the floor with the balls of your feet so your heels rise up for 3 counts. Lower down with control. Continue for 6 repetitions, exhaling as you rise and inhaling as you lower.



## >> front splits/side splits



**15** Once again, stand in Pilates stance, arms out to your sides. Lunge forward with your left leg, transferring all your weight onto it. Keep your right leg firmly planted into the floor. Drag your left foot back to the right foot to start again. Inhale to lunge and exhale to pull back 4 times on each leg.



**16** Return to Pilates stance, with the arms reaching out to the sides. Lunge sideways with the left leg, then drag the leg home, straightening it as quickly as possible to activate the upper inner thighs. Repeat 3 more times. Repeat with the other leg to the side.





**up, up, and away**





15 minute **summary**

# summary up, up and away

1



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2



▲ Shoulder Roll page 94

3a



▲ The Hundred  
page 95

3b



▲ The Hundred page 95

8a



▲ Lotus page 100

8b



▲ Lotus page 100

9a



▲ Chest Expansion page 101



▲ Rowing 1  
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▲ Rowing 1  
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▲ Rowing 1 page 96



▲ Chest Expansion page 101



▲ Thigh Stretch page 102



▲ Thigh Stretch page 102



▲ **Rowing 2**  
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▲ **Rowing 2** page 97



▲ **Spine Twist**  
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▲ **Spine Twist** page



▲ **Footwork 1** page 103



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▲ **The Saw**  
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▲ **The Saw** page 99



▲ **Tendon Stretch** page 104



▲ **Front Splits** page 105



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## >> up, up, and away extras

Consider the pace of your everyday life. Do you ever have time truly to prepare for a movement, a reach, or a shift of your weight? Not likely. Life happens fast. The ideal exercise routine will prepare you for that speed. Use this routine to prepare for your regular day.

### >> Checklist

As you work through this program, be certain not to limit your attention to one area of the body. All of your muscles should work.

- Did you focus on your posture for the whole program?
- Have you established the feeling of making space between your vertebrae to elongate your spine?
- Can you feel the level of work required in the waistline and the fatigue it can cause to sit up tall?
- Were you able to keep your inner thighs drawn together and the legs zipped up during the Hundred?
- For the Rowing 1 exercise, the torso is challenged to remain vertical while the arms sweep up and down. Did you manage to initiate the movement from your core to keep your body stable?
- Opening the back arm during the Spine Twist is fairly simple, but turning the whole opposite side of the rib cage to the front is tough. Were you able to spiral around your own spine, lifting taller throughout the torso the whole time?
- At the most intense portion of the Thigh Stretch, where your body is hinged backward, were you able to tighten your buttocks to create even more stretch in the front of the thighs?
- Timing is everything in the Footwork series. Rather than rushing your body through moves, slowing down slightly will increase the work to your muscles and have a greater benefit.

## >> Modify/Adjust

Adding weights to your program can be a challenge. Practice the exercises without the weights before adding them.

- Soften the knees or sit cross-legged for any seated exercises that cause strain in straight-legged positions.
- Reduce the depth of the knee bends for Footwork 1, 2, and 3.
- Place a cushion under you to protect your knees when kneeling.
- Take your hands across the chest or behind the head as you perform the Spine Twist, to reduce the range.

## >> Challenge

Remember, if the exercise doesn't seem challenging, you aren't working hard enough. Review the details and try again.

- Remember, continuously feel the top of your head growing higher up during Rowing 1 and 2.
- Learn to stretch a bit deeper in the Saw—coming up only after you've gone as far as possible.
- Train yourself to work the inner thighs tirelessly whenever seated with the legs together, as in Rowing 1 and 2.
- Try to exaggerate the opposition in twisting or rotary movements.

## >> Trainer tips

Be mindful that your center of gravity and balance will change as you rise up through different positions.

- Our bodies follow a developmental sequence from birth to childhood, moving from lying to sitting, kneeling, and, finally, standing. This program takes you through that sequence but gives you the opportunity to check your symmetry.
- When performing the Footwork series, the rising up with control is the hardest movement. Rather than try to get up away from the floor, think of boring a hole into the floor with your feet. The harder you push down, the more the floor will push up against you.
- The Front and Side Splits mirror with the limbs what's going on internally. Envision your muscles pulling inward and upward as the legs pull together.



**15** minute



Focus on consistency

Activate proper body mechanics

Learn the story of Pilates

# **beyond the** workout >>



## >> workout schedule

*Everyday Pilates* is meant to be accessible, attainable, and convenient. Whether it's 15 minutes three times a week or 45 minutes every day to devote to your daily fitness, *Everyday Pilates* can be structured to suit your schedule. Below are three programs to start you off.

If you only have 15 minutes a day three times a week, simply rotate the four programs, choosing a different one each day until you've cycled through all four and are ready to begin again. If you can squeeze in between 15 and 30 minutes per day, the Day by Day workout should be done on alternating days three days per week to emphasize and develop the core of the body. On Tuesdays

and Thursdays you will get to test how well you can integrate the main principles and positions in the other three programs in an extended 30-minute workout. If you can manage 30 to 45 minutes a day, I recommend performing the Day by Day workout every day and following up with alternating programs, choosing one day as your longest workout day.

### >> pilates workout planner

|                  | Available time   |  |   |
|------------------|--|--|---|
|                  | 15 minutes, 3 times a week   | 15–30 minutes a day                    | 30–45 minutes a day                                   |
| <b>Monday</b>    | day by day (week 1)<br>up, up, and away (week 2)<br>from the bottom up (week 3)  | day by day                             | day by day<br>from the top down                       |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   |  | up, up, and away<br>from the top down  | day by day<br>up, up, and away                        |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | from the top down (week 1)<br>day by day (week 2)<br>up, up, and away (week 3)   | day by day                             | day by day<br>from the bottom up<br>from the top down |
| <b>Thursday</b>  |  | from the bottom up<br>up, up, and away | day by day<br>up, up, and away                        |
| <b>Friday</b>    | from the bottom up (week 1)<br>from the top down (week 2)<br>day by day (week 3) | day by day                             | day by day<br>from the bottom up                      |

### **Built-in flexibility**

There is a high degree of flexibility in this series. You can decide to do one program each day or all four if you choose. In the beginning, it is always wise to ease in slowly, limiting your day to one or two programs. After two or three weeks, you can attempt a longer routine.

To help keep you on track, be sure to plan actively for your workout. I recommend that you make a note of your workout in your planner so that it is given just as much importance as all your other obligations. Remember that your health and wellness should always take center stage in your life.

If there are days you just can't get to your workout, read about it, or watch the DVD. Either way, studying a physical method without engaging has an astounding benefit. You could actually improve your form, elevate your technique, and refine your practice, even without performing the workout. This phenomenon is known as physiological empathy and although it won't build muscle mass or shrink your waist, you can learn and improve significantly by keen observation alone.

**Take time to learn** about your workout. Simply looking at images and reading about the exercises you do will actually help you improve your practice significantly.



## >> after the workout

When I attend fitness events I am always amused by a particular phenomenon. After their workouts, and at the first opportunity, students revert quickly to their poor posture and slink out of the room with stooped shoulders, sunken chests, and protruding midsections. Not so with Pilates.

In your *Everyday Pilates* routines you have been required to build stamina in your postural muscles. The muscles surrounding your spine and running alongside it from your tail to your head have been called upon to perform throughout. Sadly for this particular group of muscles, unless you are lying on your back, they don't get to rest. By working on these postural muscles you are in a better position to employ body mechanics after your workout. When they count the most!

This doesn't mean that poor body mechanics won't resurface occasionally. I am sympathetic to the pull of bad habits. I personally descend from poor posture lineage. For instance, something terrible happens when your body assumes a seated position. All muscle activity arrests. To combat this state of muscle inertia, be sure to leave your chair at regular intervals. At minimum, stand up and reach overhead, stretching your body. Sustained inactivity is unnatural and damaging. When a hospital patient is bedridden, it takes only 12 hours of immobility for bedsores to begin to form. Movement and blood flow are vital to life.

If you are working out and then returning to work, take advantage of the jolt of energy you get immediately after your workout. Rather than revert to a sedentary role, try to keep moving as long as possible. If you commute after your workout, stand for some portion of the trip so your muscles have time to adjust. If you must sit, take the opportunity to work on your sitting posture. Try to keep the chest lifted and the abdominals supported.



**Sit up straight!** Once you return to your normal activities, remember to maintain your spinal alignment. Good sitting posture will improve your internal organ function and increase your energy levels.

### Stretching

Stretching is good for the body, but never before your workout. Cutting-edge research shows that this is detrimental! Your strength is dramatically reduced as your muscles simply shut off in response. This is not to say you shouldn't stretch. By all means, do. But do so after your workout when your stretching will have the most benefit.



There is always one person in my class stretching away in a straddle position, bobbing up and down trying to get a deeper stretch. Nothing could be less effective. This “ballistic stretching” actually causes your muscles to contract even tighter. Only by sustained static stretching, that is, holding the stretch completely still and relaxing into it, will you



become more flexible. This is the only method of increasing tissue extensibility. If you don't have time to stretch after your workout, do some simple stretches after your shower when your muscles are sufficiently heated.

### Soreness

As with any effective training regimen, some soreness is normal. It is caused by micro-tears in the muscle fiber but the good news is that, as the muscle rebuilds, it reshapes into a toned, sculpted, and slightly larger version of its former self.

Pilates soreness often occurs two days after a workout and not the very next day. To help alleviate it, make sure to hydrate before you start your workout. On days that you do feel muscle aches, the best remedy is movement. It sounds unlikely, I know. Most people think that you should rest if you feel sore, but by flushing blood through the painful areas you are restoring balance to your system and quickening your healing process. Whenever possible you should perform a few Pilates moves on days that you feel the most sore.

**Stretch it out!** Stretching should be done only after your workout—never before. This simple hamstring stretch can be done anywhere you can prop up your foot. Simply keep your hips square and your chest lifted. Place your hands on your thigh and gently lean into the stretch.

# >> motivation tools

Exercise will help you get through your daily life, but life offers you cues to motivate your exercise. If you want to go higher, faster, better, exercise will help you. Mr. Pilates understood that motivation is cumulative. He said begin with just 10 minutes a day. That small start can have far-reaching effects.

One of my favorite Pilates quotes is “Physical fitness can neither be obtained through outright purchase nor wishful thinking.” Overcoming the psychological barriers to exercise can be daunting. Here are a few alternative thoughts to ignite your exercise impulse:

**It takes energy to make energy:** You will feel more awake, not more tired, after you exercise.

**Exercise only works as hard as you do:** If you feel low on energy, work out lightly. You do not have to push yourself to the limit each time you work out. It’s all right to take it easy on some days.

**A workout isn’t work:** Think of your fitness regimen as a luxury. It’s maintenance for sure, but it’s not a chore for your body; it’s more like dessert!

## Staying motivated

Here are a couple of my favorite tips for staying motivated that are culled from my clients and staff members:

**Rewards:** Do something nice for yourself for every week you complete your workout regimen. For instance, have a manicure, buy tickets for an event.

**Reality check:** Cut yourself some slack. Simply performing the exercise is enough. If you don’t have the energy to put extra effort into it, it will still be beneficial.

**Rhythm:** It’s taboo in the Pilates world, but if you’re sure that music will unleash your inner Pilates superhero, then go for it. Put on your favorite mix of tunes and get started.

**Reinforcement:** If you like a certain exercise, do

## >> tips to help your practice

- **Rhythm counts.** Remember to work out at the rhythm of your heart. As you get better, your workout should get shorter and faster.
- **Live Pilates!** Use your Pilates in everyday life to keep you symmetrical and well aligned; stand on equal footing instead of leaning to one side; sit with your ankles crossed instead of your knees; walk with generous strides, leading with your hips as you go.
- **Make a Pact!** Create a support system with a friend to make sure you keep on track no matter what.

some extra ones during the day. You can also take a moment to show someone else how good you are at it. Positive reinforcement goes a long way toward motivation.

## Buddy up

Studies show that people who work out with a friend work out longer and harder. Plan to do Pilates with someone and then police each other so you don’t fall off the wagon. It’s infinitely harder to turn down a friend than just to skip out on yourself. And a bit of competition among friends can also be very inspiring. Finally, try teaching a

friend some of the moves you've learned. Teaching is very often a learning process. As you dissect and explain the exercises to someone else, you will be absorbing information for your own body.

### **Be committed**

Experts say it takes 21 days to build a new habit. You won't see a change after one workout, but you will feel it! Commit to 21 days of this. Grab a calendar and check off the days. I expect that by the last few days you won't be counting down any more. You'll be counting up instead—counting the increased number of repetitions you are able to perform, the longer workout you're able to get through and, finally, the hours to go until your next great workout.

### **Complementary workouts**

I suggest swimming, weight-training, and yoga to complement Pilates: swimming for its nonimpact cardiovascular benefits; weight-training to increase bone density and your metabolic rate; yoga for its quiet and stillness. The caveat here is: mix it up. Your body will accommodate to training benefits over time and so it is important to change things around periodically. Whatever other type of training you choose, be certain you incorporate all of your Pilates principles. And remember, the best exercise you can do is the one that you enjoy!

**Don't go it alone!** Change your exercise routine and take a friend along with you. Instead of going out for a coffee, work out together.



# >> the story of pilates

Fitness fads come and go. New exercise systems crop up and disappear overnight. Few stand the test of time. Pilates formally established his method in the 1920s and today his system of body conditioning is stronger than ever. Worldwide, some 10 million people practice Pilates. Clearly, Pilates works!

So many versions of the Pilates history exist side by side, it can be hard to weed out the truth. But sometimes it's easier to discern what isn't true than to look for what is. Here are some of the common myths about Pilates debunked.

- **Pilates is for dancers.** False. Pilates is certainly enjoyed by dancers. But Joseph Pilates did not have a specific audience in mind when he was devising his system.
- **Pilates was a dancer.** No. Joseph Pilates was many things—a diver, gymnast, boxer, and acrobat, but he was never a dancer.
- **Pilates is a stretching technique.** No. But every exercise has a lengthening component. A Pilates session can certainly be tailored to address muscular tightness but this is not its sole focus.
- **Pilates requires machines.** Yes. And no. The Pilates Mat work is a total body workout requiring no apparatus. To do the entire Pilates system, one must find a studio with the proper equipment.
- **Pilates is a woman's workout.** Absolutely not. Joseph Pilates did not invent his method for women. In fact, these days men are reclaiming Pilates and there are more male instructors available than ever.

## The man

Joseph Pilates was born in 1880 near Dusseldorf in a town called Mönchengladbach. His parents were in the health and fitness fields, his father having been a gymnast and his mother, a naturopath.



**Joseph Pilates** was a fitness pioneer who borrowed from ancient disciplines and modern technology to create an entirely new system of body conditioning.

Despite a rocky start as a frail, sickly boy, the young Pilates became passionate about anatomy and movement, and studied yoga as well as Zen and ancient Greek and Roman training regimens. As a result, by the age of 14, he was in extraordinary shape and began to model for anatomy charts.

In reading through the things Joseph Pilates said and his history, it becomes evident that he was

indeed a visionary. And that was by no means limited to exercise. One could argue that, with his invention of the Wunda Chair—meant to function as furniture when not used for exercise—he created the first home gym. He also recorded an infomercial of sorts, showing his work and machines to the public. He routinely photographed his clients before and after exercise, to record their dramatic results. Were he alive today, Pilates would be up-to-date with his marketing strategies. Sadly for him, he did not realize the success of his method in his lifetime.

One of his greatest dreams was to see his method practiced in schools worldwide. In the United States today, there is a movement underway and several schools have adopted the system.

## The machines

Although Mr. Pilates began with his system of floor exercises, he did turn his attention toward the invention of apparatus specifically for his method. His inspiration came from various sources and there is no limit to the tales that surround his creativity. For example, it is often told that Pilates created his Magic Circle (an original thighmaster if you will) from the steel bands of beer kegs. How he came to invent his larger spring-driven equipment was a result of his internship on the Isle of Man during World War I. Pilates was training his captive comrades, many of whom were bedridden. At the



time, hospital beds were constructed with springs so Mr. Pilates began to experiment by attaching these springs to the posts of the beds, thereby providing assistance to weakened muscles.

This particular device went through several transformations and is known in the modern Pilates world as the Cadillac or sometimes as the Trapeze Table. In addition, Pilates created a wooden frame with a sliding carriage and variable springs that outperformed his other inventions in terms of variety and accessibility. He labeled this apparatus the Universal Reformer. The Universal Reformer is by far the most commonly used apparatus today and can be found in most, if not all, dedicated Pilates studios around the world.

By the time of his death in 1967, Mr. Pilates had created several dozen distinct apparatuses to accompany his tremendous library of exercises.

## The method

Today, Pilates is everywhere—in people's homes, on TV, and in the gyms. The method is available in some form or other at fitness facilities worldwide. There are fusions, hybrids, and cross-training models, all of which are based either fully or in part on the Pilates method.

The Pilates tradition is being passed on to myriad teachers via the five remaining students of Joseph Pilates himself. These master teachers have dedicated their lives to teaching and have passed on their versions, thereby continuing the evolution of the work. Yet, as the method grows, it will become increasingly important to preserve the original work so that the material retains integrity.

What Pilates was or is becoming is less important than what Pilates is to you today. If you experience Pilates as I do, as a comprehensive workout, which delivers the strength, stability, and mobility necessary for overall health, then there is simply no reason not to do it.

**Shown in a studio setting**, a row of Universal Reformers, as they are made today. It is the most commonly used Pilates apparatus worldwide.

# useful resources

The Pilates method has grown tremendously in recent years and, as a result, hundreds of products are now available to the consumer. Use discretion when choosing Pilates products and be sure to verify the company's credibility and experience with the method. I have listed some reliable sources for all things Pilates-related below.

## Other books by Alycea Ungaro

*Pilates: Body in Motion*

(Dorling Kindersley, 2002)

The original resource for the complete Mat repertoire including leveled workouts for beginner, intermediate, and advanced exercisers.

*The Pilates Promise*

(Dorling Kindersley, 2004)

Joseph Pilates made a guarantee that he could give you a whole new body in 30 sessions. Alycea tests his promise with three different women and charts their progress and amazing results.

*Pilates Body in Motion*

*Flashcards*

(Dorling Kindersley, 2007)

Based on the book, these flashcards are designed for easy portability. Take your favorite exercises with you.

*Portable Pilates™* (Pilates Center of New York, 2000)

With user-friendly illustrations, spiral binding, and a 38-minute audio workout on CD, this Pilates set is a great primer to take on your travels.

## Books by Joseph Pilates

From the master himself, these two resources boast the virtues of exercise and criticize the sedentary lifestyle that has been imposed on us by civilization.

*Return to Life through Contrology*

(Bodymind Publishing Inc., 1998)

Learn the classic Mat exercises as demonstrated by Joseph Pilates. The complete original Mat work is presented in this historic text.

*Your Health*

(Presentation Dynamics, 1998)

With recommendations ranging from dry-brushing to proper breathing, this is Mr. Pilates' essay on total wellness.

## Audio downloads

Exercise should go where you do. The internet now offers a host of options for accessible exercise.

### [www.iAmplify.com](http://www.iAmplify.com)

Bringing together fitness and lifestyles, iAmplify offers material you can simply load directly onto your desktop, mp3, or iPod for instant accessibility. Log on for live recorded workouts with Alycea.

### [www.Podfitness.com](http://www.Podfitness.com)

Bringing together the top fitness trainers in a variety of disciplines, Podfitness offers you the ability to upload workouts designed by your favorite trainer. Alycea works together with Podfitness to develop Pilates programs suitable for all levels.

## Alycea Ungaro's free downloads and Pilates printables

[www.realpilatesnyc.com](http://www.realpilatesnyc.com)

## Pilates blog

If you have exercise questions specific to Pilates or just want to read what others have to say, a blog is a great source for a variety of information.

## PilateSpeak

This blog provides a forum for Pilates professionals and students alike. All questions are answered personally by Alycea.

## Apparel

Pilates wear is subject to individual requirements and tastes. Some of the companies that cater specifically to the needs of Pilates exercise are listed below.

### Lululemon

[www.lululemon.com](http://www.lululemon.com)  
Functional and fashionable apparel for Pilates.

### Marika

[www.marika.com](http://www.marika.com)  
The softest fabrics and clever designs keep the Marika crowd completely loyal to the brand.

## Equipment

If you are ready to move on to the next level in your Pilates training and invest in some equipment for your home, try the following manufacturers.

### Balanced Body

Produces the entire line of Pilates equipment for home and studio needs.  
[www.pilates.com](http://www.pilates.com)

### Gratz Pilates

Pilates equipment based on Joseph Pilates' original specifications.  
[www.pilates-gratz.com](http://www.pilates-gratz.com)

## Pilates periodicals

Although there are dozens of fitness magazines, Pilates has relatively few references devoted to the craft.

### Pilates Style Magazine

[www.pilatesstyle.com](http://www.pilatesstyle.com)

## Pilates for special populations

### Pilates For Men

*The Complete Book of Pilates for Men*, Daniel Lyon Jr. (Regan Books, 2005)  
This book promises quick and long-term results to any man who seeks optimal fitness and a competitive edge in all aspects of his life.

*Post-Pregnancy Pilates*, Karrie Adamany (Avery, 2005)  
A guide to heal and reshape a new mother's body. How Pilates can change your body after birth.

*Classical Pilates Technique in Consideration of the Neck and Back*, Peter Fiasca (Classical Pilates, Inc., 2006)  
This video demonstrates a progression of safe and educational workouts for the body, attending to today's most common stress-related concerns: neck and back complaints.

## For Pilates professionals

### Pilates Pro

[www.pilates-pro.com](http://www.pilates-pro.com)  
*Pilates Pro* is an online magazine for all Pilates professionals. It provides the industry with access to vital information, tools, services, and opportunities that promote community and provide teaching and business solutions.

### Pilates Method Alliance (PMA)

[www.pilatesmethodalliance.org](http://www.pilatesmethodalliance.org)  
An international not-for-profit professional association for the Pilates method. The PMA's mission is to protect the public by establishing certification and continuing education standards for Pilates professionals. Find teachers internationally online.

## Pilates legacy

Pilates trained many people in his lifetime. Several of them still teach today. It is an honor and a privilege to work with them.

Ron Fletcher  
[www.ronfletcherwork.com](http://www.ronfletcherwork.com)

Kathy Grant  
<http://dance.tisch.nyu.edu/object/GrantK.html>

Romana Kryzanowska  
[www.romanaspilates.com](http://www.romanaspilates.com)

Lolita San Miguel  
[www.lolitapilates.com](http://www.lolitapilates.com)

Mary Bowen  
[www.pilates-marybowen.com](http://www.pilates-marybowen.com)

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## about Alycea Ungaro

Alycea Ungaro, PT, is the owner of Alycea Ungaro's Real Pilates in New York City and the author of several best-selling Pilates titles including *Portable Pilates™*, *Pilates: Body in Motion*, and *The Pilates Promise*, some of which are available in 17 languages worldwide. Alycea's personal mission is to make Pilates available to everyone regardless of age, fitness level, or geographic location. To that end, Alycea has created Pilates products in every

possible medium. She presents seminars and workshops nationally and also serves on the advisory board of *Fitness Magazine*. Alycea is a featured personality on podfitness.com and iamplify.com, where you can download her signature workouts to your desktop or iPod. She lives in New York City with her family. To learn more about Alycea or Alycea Ungaro's Real Pilates, visit [www.realpilatesnyc.com](http://www.realpilatesnyc.com)