

Message from the Author



While working at In-Sync Pilates Studio, I have helped many individuals through the exciting and rewarding experience of improving the body's posture and increasing its strength and flexibility.

My goal with this Manual and my classes are to pass on the knowledge that I have acquired over the years and to share the secrets I've found that make this work successful. Pilates is a varied technique, and it can be taught in many forms and styles.

The exercises described in this Manual are my favourite collection, based on knowledge gained from my ongoing Pilates Education through Stott and Polestar Pilates, including my personal experience with clients.

With this manual, I hope that you will be able to develop a program to help keep you strong and healthy.

I believe that, once you have experienced the benefits of Pilates, you will want to continue your program as part of your daily life, for many years to come.

Anita Lewis

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DEFINITIONS

Starting Positions of Exercises

Supine:

Lying face up on your back.

Prone:

Lying face down on your belly.

Table top legs:

Both feet lifted off ground, legs bent in 90 degree angle.

All four position:

Hands and feet on floor. Neutral spine (pulling the navel up towards the spine).

Avoid over extension (locking) of the elbows. Slightly 'soften' the elbows (turn hands slightly inwards to get that 'softening' of the elbow.

Draw shoulders away from your ears to 'open up' shoulders and avoid tension in the shoulders (also applicable to Down Dog position).

Pelvic placement positions

In general, the Contemporary Pilates 'school' of thought differs from the original Classical Pilates as developed by Joseph Pilates. The Contemporary Pilates Method believes that movement and shock absorption is limited when the spine is in a rigid 'imprint' position.

The Contemporary Pilates Method focuses on keeping the spine (pelvic placement) in a 'neutral' position rather than an 'imprint' position when both feet or one foot is on the floor (closed kinetic chain). Each individual has different abilities and core strength. Beginners or individuals with weak inner core muscles may still be recommended to use the imprint spine position when performing most mat exercises.

On the other hand, intermediates or individuals with a strong core, should be recommended to maintain a neutral spine in most mat positions where both or one foot is on the floor (closed kinetic chain).

In short, the pelvic placement for each individual could be different, depending on possible postural alignment deviations and core strength.

Neutral Spine:

The spine has a natural curve when lying in supine position. Sitting bones are wide and pressed lightly into mat. The hip bones (ASIS) and pubic bone are on the same plane.

Exercises with one or both feet on the mat (closed kinetic chain) are performed with a neutral spine.

Imprint Spine:

In supine position, the pubic bone is slightly higher than the hip bones (ASIS). The lumbar spine lengthens and 'flattens' onto the mat.

Exercises with both feet off the floor, such as the 'table top' position (open kinetic chain) should be performed with an imprint spine.

The Core muscles

The core muscles include an outer as well as the inner layer of muscles, each group having a unique function. The deep layer of core muscles has a stabilising function while the outer core has a movement function. The inner core consist of slow-twitch, type I muscles that need sustained contraction for 6-20 seconds to be make an effective difference. The inner layer core muscles wraps around the lower torso like a 'corset', supporting the spine.

The outer core muscles are there mainly to keep the body upright and for movement/flexion to the front and the side.

Inner Core Muscles:

- Transversus Abdominus (front area of 'corset' supporting torso)
- Internal Obliques (inner layer side muscles)
- Lumbar Multifidus (muscles transversing lumber spine area)
- Diaphragm
- Transversospinalis group (deep back muscles)
- Pelvic floor muscles

Outer Core Muscles:

- Rectus Abdominus (main abdomen muscle involved in flexing the torso)
- External Obliques (outer layer of side muscles)
- Erector spine (muscles that line both sides of the spinal cord)

Breathing

During Pilates exercises, we inhale deep into the lower part of the lungs to expand the lungs three dimensionally. When the core is contracted and breathing through the anterior (front) part of the lungs is difficult, the lungs expand to the sides and back (also called lateral or intercostal breathing). When lying in supine position, ribs will be pushing into the mat when inhaling. Breathing should be controlled, deep and slow.

Pulsation/shallow breathing should be avoided in most of the exercises, except if mentioned otherwise.

Breathing exercise:

Lie on your back and put your hands on your ribcage. Breathe in through your nose, being aware of the ribcage expanding to the front, sides and into the back. Breathing out through the mouth (with pursed lips), allowing the ribcage to soften or 'melt' towards the mat.

Rule of thumb for breathing during exercises:

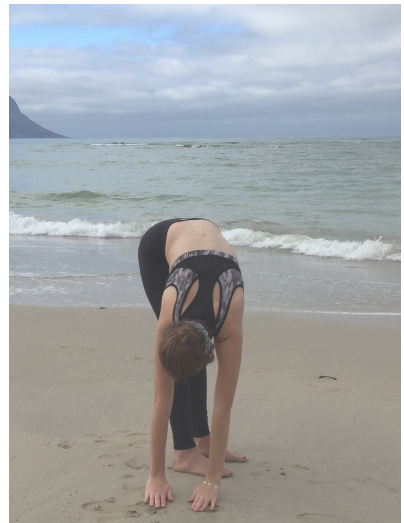
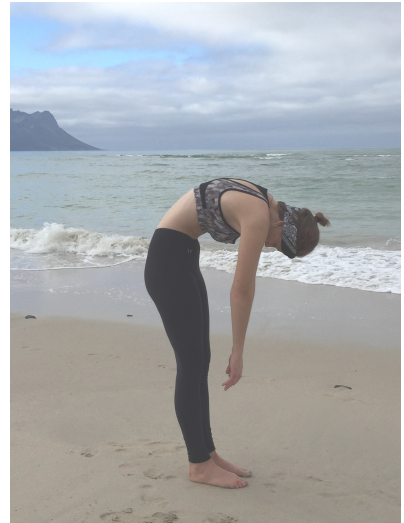
Inhale in resting position, exhale when the most work is done (contracting the muscles). Important Note

Important Note

If you have any history of medical conditions or injuries, please consult your doctor before proceeding with the Pilates Program. It is not advisable to return to exercise until at the least six weeks after giving birth and ten weeks or longer if you have had a Caesarean section or traumatic labor.

EXERCISES

Roll Down (beginner)



Focus: Hamstring stretch, articulation of the spine.

Starting position:

Standing upright with arms on sides and feet parallel and hip width.

Roll down (continued)

Description:

Inhale - prepare.

Exhale - roll chin onto chest.

Round shoulders and roll down with c-curved back, one vertebrae at a time.

Place fingertips or palms on floor.

Keeping legs straight (may bend legs if hamstrings are too tight).

Inhale

Exhale - roll up with round back to starting position.

Variations:

1. Cross legs to feel stretch more when placing hands on floor.
2. Bend legs or place ball or brick under hands if hamstrings are too tight.
3. Twist: Open legs into second, place right hand next to left foot and twist while lifting the other arm to the ceiling.
4. Twist: Walk hands from side to side.

Cat/Cow (Beginner)



Focus: Articulation of the spine.

Starting position:

All four position (push earth away to engage shoulder stabilisers).

Description:

Inhale - prepare (neutral spine).

Exhale to curve back (head lowers).

Inhale

Exhale to arch back (head lifts).

Cat Cow Variations:



Hip side to side:

Inhale to curve, lean back (head lowers).

Exhale to arch and push hip out to one side and look towards the same side (up and over the shoulder).

Inhale - back to centre. Repeat on other side.

Watch points:

- Neck stay in line with spine (curved spine- head lowers, arched spine- head lifts slightly).

Superman series (beginner/intermediate)



Superman Series (continued)

Focus:

Cross stabilisation muscles - obliques, inner core, shoulder stabilisers

Start position:

All fours position, neutral spine

Description:

Inhale - prepare neutral spine (sitting bones wide, natural curve in back).

Extend arm and opposite leg on mat (engage core pulling navel towards the spine to find balance).

Exhale to lift arm and leg while in balanced position (straight leg, pointed foot).

Arm in line with ear, neck in line with rest of spine (gaze is down).

Keep hips square ('headlights' forward).

Variations:

1. From Superman position (both hands on floor): Bicycle kick to the side and return leg to the back - bend knee and return it to the side (keeping hips square).
2. Cross leg over and tilt into side tilt with arm reaching to ceiling (lower obliques pushing you in upward direction).
3. Place opposite hand on knee and extend and lift leg and arm into Superman position. Add lower and lift with arm and leg.

Watch points:

- Engage core to avoid arching.
- Hips stay square (keep leg in parallel position and not rotated outward).
- Avoid looking up, keep neck long and in line with spine.

| Exercises for Beginners | Page | Repetitions/comments |
|---------------------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| Warm-up | | |
| Roll down and up | 9 | 2 x each variation |
| On All Fours | | |
| Cat/Cow Series | 11 | 2 x each variation |
| Superman Series | 13 | 2x each variation |
| On back | | |
| Pelvic Rock | 16 | 2x |
| Bridge Series | 17 | 4x each leg (2 beginner variations) |
| Single Toe Tap | 20 | 4x each leg |
| Single Leg Circles | 22 | 4x each leg |
| Spine Twist | 24 | 4x each side (keep feet on floor) |
| Chest Lift | 27 | 4 x (hold 4 seconds, feet on floor) |
| Single Leg Stretch | 30 | 8 repetitions |
| Side Work Series | | |
| Leg lift | 53 | 8x (both sides) |
| Single leg pull | 53 | 8x (both sides) |
| Double leg lift | 53 | 8x (both sides) |
| Swimming | 53 | 8x, rest, 8x |
| Back Extension Exercises | | |
| Breast stroke/low swan | 58 | 4x |
| Swimming | 57 | 8x |
| Single leg kicks | 60 | 4x each leg |
| Stretches | 62- | Choose selection |
| | | |

| Exercises for Intermediates | Page | Repetitions/comments |
|-----------------------------|------|---|
| Warm up | | |
| Roll down and variations | 9 | 2x each variation |
| All Fours | | |
| Cat/Cow Series | 11 | 3x |
| Superman series | 13 | 3-4x each leg |
| On Side | | |
| Side Tilt Series | 51 | 3 x each side |
| Side Plank Series | 45 | 2x each side |
| On Back | | |
| Bridge Series | 17 | Varies (leg lifts no more than 4x each leg) |
| Spine Twist | 24 | 3x each side |
| Heel Tap | 21 | 4x each leg |
| Double leg kick | 31 | 6x |
| Roll over | 39 | 3x |
| Teaser | 37 | 3x |
| On All fours | | |
| Push ups | 48 | 3 - 4x |
| Plank Series | 43 | 3-4x (hold plank position for 8-10 counts) |
| On Side | | |
| Clam Series | 49 | 8x (each variation both sides) |
| Back Extension | | |
| Swan | 58 | 3x |
| Double leg kick | 61 | 4x |
| | 62- | |

