



Keep up your Pilates Practice from Home

HERE ARE A FEW MODIFIED VERSIONS OF THE BASIC FIVE EXERCISES THAT CAN BE DONE ON A MAT IN THE SAFE CONFINES OF YOUR HOME, BALCONY OR YOUR GARDEN

Pilates is a low intensity exercise regime that can be very well practiced in the safety and comfort of one's homes. Mat Pilates requires one to use their own body weight which can be challenging as well as extremely invigorating. In the current times, when one has no access to a Pilates Studio or Pilates Equipment's, home workouts not only help to build strength and flexibility but it also supports one's mental wellbeing.

Let us look at the breathing technique and choreography along with the supporting cues and sequence of pictures that best depict the modified version of Basic Five Exercises on the Mat.

Exercises to be practiced using Pilates Breathing:

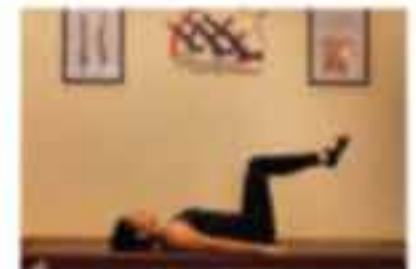
Inhale through the nostril to expand the ribs sideways or laterally and Exhale through the mouth to contract the ribs and pull the abdominals in. Ensure not to pop the belly out both during Inhalation and Exhalation. Initiate the exercise with an Inhale and finish the exercise with an Exhale.

1. The Hundred – aids circulation and improves the lung capacity

• Lie on your back on the mat with knees bent and legs squeezed together. Arms lengthened and firmly anchored close to the body. (pic 1)



• Inhale to lift legs up into a table top position still squeezing legs together. (pic 2)



• Exhale through the mouth and pull the abdominals in to curl the head & upper spine forward and off the floor simultaneously floating the arms up. (pic 3)

• Keep the shoulders relaxed and gaze towards the scoop of the abdominal muscles. (pic-3).

• Hold this position and keep the spine, hips and pelvis stable. Inhale and Exhale for 5 counts while pumping the arms up and down 8-10 inches of the Mat dynamically in unison with your breath. Do a cycle of 10 full breaths (10 Inhales & 10 Exhales)



• For added challenge, extend the legs straight out to 60-degrees while pumping the arms up & down (pic-4).

• To finish, lower legs and spine down to relax (pic-1).

Modifications:

Head and Neck can stay down while arms continue to pump up & down during the exercise.



Roll-up – aids spinal flexion and strengthens the abdominals .2



• Lie on your back on the Mat with knees bent and legs squeezed together. Arms lengthened and straight up behind the head. (pic-1)



• Inhale to lift the head and spine off the Mat, shoulders to stay relaxed while arms lift and moves forward with the spine. (pic-2)



• Exhale to pull the abdominals in and continue in one smooth motion to roll and curl the spine forward, arms staying long and shoulder width apart (pic-3)



• Continue to Exhale, keep the head down looking towards the tummy, bend the spine forward to bring the head towards the knees (pic-4)

Inhale to reach your tail bone under and Exhale to roll the spine back down sequentially vertebrae by vertebrae down to the Mat to finish (pic-3,2,1)

Repeat the sequence 5-8 times

Modifications:

Place hands on the hamstrings (behind knees) while lifting and lowering the spine onto the Mat. Use a cushion or yoga block in between the inner thighs for added support.

4. Rolling like a Ball – aids spinal decompression



• Sit up on the Mat and place your hands over your shins just above the ankle. Knees shoulder-width apart, feet together and off the Mat, shoulders relax, pull the abdominals in (pic-1).



• Inhale to pull the abdominals in deeper and start to roll back on your spine. (pic-2)



• Continue to Inhale and roll back onto your shoulder blades (pic-3)



• Lift the bottoms off the Mat keeping the head tucked in as to ensure not to roll onto the neck. (pic-4)

Exhale forcefully to roll forward and return to sitting upright (pic-3,2,1)

Repeat 6-8 times without stopping to create a dynamic flow with your movement, Inhaling to roll back and Exhaling to roll forward and up.

Modifications:

Place hands on the hamstrings (behind knees) Use a cushion or yoga block in between the inner thighs for added support.

3. Single Leg Circle – aids spinal rotation and activates the hamstrings



• Lie on your back with the right leg extended up towards the ceiling and left leg stretched straight out on the Mat. Right knee can stay slightly bent. Arms lengthened and firmly anchored close to the body. (pic-1)



• Inhale to lift the right hip to take the right leg across to the left side of the body, keep the right arm firmly grounded on the Mat (pic-2)



• Continue to Inhale by crossing and lowering the right leg down over the left leg (pic-3)



• Exhale to pull the abdominals in and sweep the right leg around in a circle to come back to center and finish (pic-4)

Repeat the circles 3 times in each direction working the Right & Left leg individually

Modifications:

Bend the knee and keep the range of the circle small to ensure that the body is stable on the Mat.

Spine Stretch – aids spinal extension & flexion and strengthens the abdominals .5



• Sit up tall on your sit bones with legs extended in front of you Mat width apart, feet flexed and arms above the head, shoulders relaxed. (pic-1).



• Inhale to grow tall reaching your arms up and bend the Spine forward keeping arms by the ears. (pic-2)



• Exhale to pull the abdominals in to bend the spine further keeping the feet constantly flexed. (pic-3)



• Deepen the flexion until you feel your hamstrings active. (pic-4)

Inhale to lift and roll up through the Spine using the abdominals to sit up tall to finish. (pic-3,2,1)

Repeat 5-8 times

Modifications:

Keep the knees slightly bent to sit up tall or sit on an elevated surface (a yoga block or couple of cushions) to keep the legs extended forward. This is to aid sitting up tall.

Pilates is a highly instruction driven movement practice and those recovering from injuries or surgeries or combating any chronic issues will need to consult their Medical Practitioner before attempting any of the above exercises.

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