

My Beginner Pilates (pee-la-tees) Program

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Important, please read

In order for you to get maximum benefit from these exercises please read and understand the important principles behind the Pilates method by going here first.

<http://www.golfswingfeeling.com/pilates-for-golf.html>

Here are a few of the many exercises I started with. They are all still incorporated into my routine today plus many other advanced exercises.

These exercises may seem rather elementary to you but they become more difficult the fitter you get.

They are the safest exercises to do and extremely effective.

First you need to start in your resting position.



Find your **neutral spine position**

Take 1 or 2 deep breathes in and out the pilates way to allow yourself to stabilize the pelvis and relax before starting the exercise.

Feet are parallel to each other and flat on the mat with knees in line together.

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Now you are relaxed and ready to begin in the starting position.

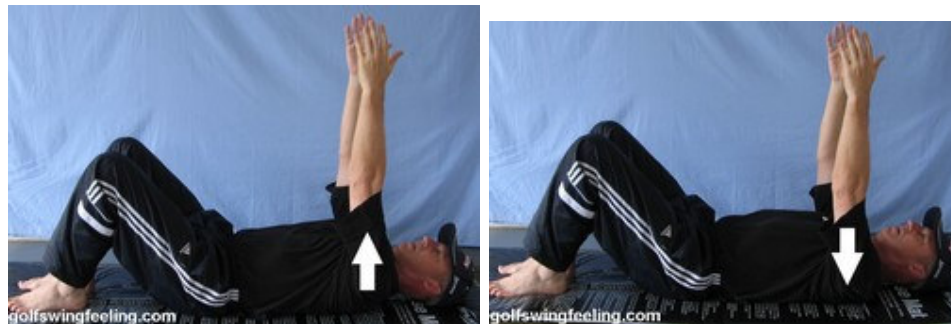
I call first exercise the Shoulder Lifts.

It is called other names like the Shoulder Drop.

Lift the arms with the palms facing each other and **breath in deep** and wide. **Breathe out**

Shoulders are still on the mat.

Breathe in and stretch your arms up to the ceiling while lifting the shoulder blades off the mat.



As you **breathe out** drop your shoulders back onto the mat.

Keep the body still as possible.

Repeat this 10 times.

This exercise helps to relax your shoulder muscles and engages the stabilizing muscles of the shoulders.

A great exercise to do after a stressful day in the office.

It specifically benefits those that do a lot of sitting during the day.

The Shoulder Shrugs

Same starting position as before

Neutral spine position

Breathe in and bring the shoulders up to your ears contracting your upper trapezius muscles.(the muscles on the side of your neck.)

Breathe out - Relax and release the shoulders letting them drop way from your ears. Stretch the hands as far as possible.

Repeat 8 times



The Arm Circles

This exercise serves two functions, namely stretching out the chest and back muscles and teaches you body stability

Start Position as before

Neutral spine position.

This exercise resembles the action of breath stroke in swimming while you lie on your back.

You need to **use your upper abdominals** and prevent your back arching.



1



2



3



4

Please remember these **exercises are done slowly and deliberately.**

Once in position in picture 2, **breathe in** and reach the arms back behind your head.

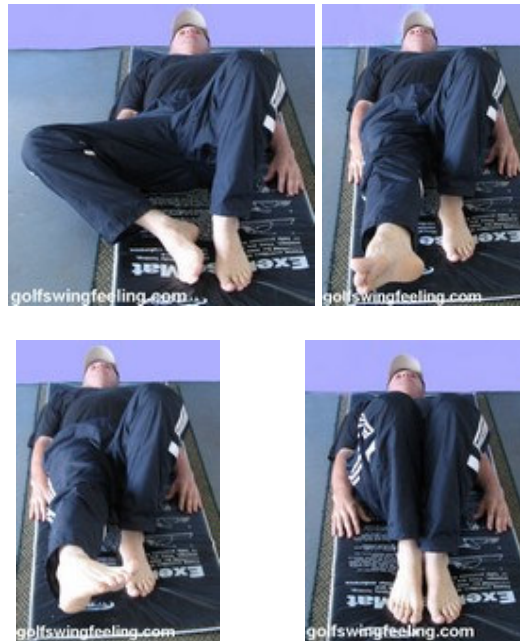
Breathe out while circling your arms parallel with your shoulders and then finish with your arms by your side.

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The Hip Releaser

This exercise engages the transverse Abdominal muscles.

It is important to keep your hip bones at one level and feel that the movement starts from the hip joint.



You may feel and hear some click noises coming from your back when you turn the foot to bring it back. I find this a very comfortable exercise to perform but it can get tiring in the beginning.

Firstly find the **neutral spine** position.

Ok now, **Breathe in** while you open your knee sideways and stretch down.

Breathe out and turn your leg in a straight line. Bend the knee to pull the leg back to your classic start position.

Alternate your leg movements

and repeat 8 times.

Hundreds Exercise

The name comes from holding the position for 100 beats.

This exercise helps to increase your upper body stability and abdominal strength.

Engage the **neutral spine** position.

Firstly, in your start position. **Breathe in** and lift one leg first then the other one till both legs form a "table top" position as in the picture.



Please note, hips are at a 90 deg angle your upper legs.

Lift your head and feel like you could place a tennis ball under your chin. My head is a little too far up here.

Then lift your shoulders and arms slightly off the mat.

We are now going to **pulse the arms and hands up and down** continuously in small movements.

No moving of the body, keep as still as possible.

Now, **breathe in** deeply using lateral chest breathing for 5 beats keeping the rhythm with your arms.

Breathe out with the movements of your arms moving up and down for 5 beats.

Repeat the 10 beats 6 times.

Once you get stronger you will be able to do hundreds with your legs straight.

The Bridge Exercise – Pelvic Tilt



Here we need to start in the imprint spine position.

Pull your belly in all the way till it feel like it is pushing your vertebrae into the mat.

While breathing in roll your tailbone up off the mat by tilting your pelvis.

Feel how you are engaging the abdominals to do this. It is not easy but practice will help.

Breathe out rolling up one vertebrae at a time till you reach the bridge position.

Check the straight line from my chest to my knees.

Breathe in holding the bridge position.

Breathe out rolling down one vertebrae at a time from your shoulders to the lower back. SLOWLY.

Repeat 8 times.

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Single Leg Stretch Exercise

A very basic upper body stability exercise. We stretch one leg without arching the back and keep the upper body stable.



Alternate stretching each leg while bringing the other knee up like I have shown.

Repeat 10 times with each leg stretch. **Breathe in** with one movement and **out** with the next leg change.

Hip Roll Exercise

Our aim here is to rotate and stretch the spine.

Imprinted Spine Position.

Keep your knees and feet together. During the movements the knees and ankles should stay together as possible.

Arms opened to the sides with palms facing the ceiling helps to open the chest.

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Breathe out keeping legs together and move them over to the right side while your head turn to the left.

Caution do not let your shoulders lift from the mat, keep them on the mat.

Breathe in and hold the position.

Breathe out and pull the ribs and upper vertebrae down into the mat.

Repeat 8 times to each side.

Side Stretches

Lie on your side with your knees up to 90 degrees with both arms stretched out in front of you.



This exercise strengthens the side muscles namely the external and internal oblique muscles and stretches the pectoral or chest muscles.

Breathe out to engage the stomach muscles, this helps you to lift your ribcage off the mat. **This is important.**

Breathe in and stretch your arm to the ceiling.

Breathe out to stretch your arm behind your body and let your head follow.

Breathe in lifting your arm to the ceiling.

Then **Breathe out** lowering the arm.

Repeat 8 times on each side

Side Kick Exercises

There are numerous exercises to do in this series. When you work them you will feel a burning sensation in your glute muscles.

They strengthen your buttocks and outer thigh muscles.

Lie on your side with your arm underneath your head, feet one on top of the other.



Bring your legs slightly forwards otherwise you could fall over.

Stabilize your body and lift the your rib cage off the mat.

Ready, lets go.



Breathe in lift your leg with your foot flexed towards your shin and **keep your ribcage off the mat.**



Breathe out and point your foot away from your shin dropping the leg back to the other.

Important

Work against your body resistance, keeping it square, shoulder over shoulder and hip over hip.

Repeat 10 times.

Side Kicks Exercise

Start the same as for previous exercise.

Breathe in flex foot, kick your top leg out in front of you keeping it parallel to the floor.



Pulse it once – this will challenge your stability.

Breathe out and kick your leg back behind you to your starting position squeezing your butt and pulling your belly to your spine.

Repeat 10 times

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Four on the Floor Exercise

An excellent back rehabilitation exercise.

It builds core stabilization and strengthens your butt, back and shoulder muscles.

You need to be on all fours, and focus your eyes on the mat in front of you.



Breathe in to prepare.

Breathe out

Lift your **left** arm and **right leg** reaching them away from each other.



You need to maintain absolute stability in your body, hips still square.

Breathe in and hold the position.

Breathe out and move back to all four position.

Alternate and lift the right arm and left leg.

Do 10 repetitions with both sides.

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Cat Curl Exercise

A very easy way to stretch your back after doing your pilates session. It feels so good doing this exercise.

Same starting position as the previous exercise.



Breathe in and curl back with your head dropping on the way.

This is the perfect C curve position.

Breathe out straightening your back and pushing your tailbone away and lift your head into a straight line with your back.

Repeat 4 times.

These are just a few of the basic beginner pilates exercises that I started with.

They still form part of my weekly routine combined with the many other advanced exercises that I do.

A strong word of advice is to start with a qualified pilates instructor.

Let him or her take you through the paces and develop a personalized program for you.

Happy exercising.

Louis.