

Ease Pilates Exercise Notes

Do 8-10 reps of each exercise:

Hip Rolls (abs, glutes, spine)

Set-up: Lie on your back with knees bent, feet on the floor, spine in neutral (mouse can run through, glass of water on belly is stable).

Movement pattern: tilt pelvis (splash water towards ribs) and roll through the spine lifting hips until you have a straight line from knees to shoulders. Roll down the spine starting from the top, one vertebra at a time. (If your hamstrings get grumpy, squeeze a ball between your knees, which activates the inner thigh muscles and then “asks” less of the overburdened hamstrings.)

Half roll-backs (abs) – if you have no back issues. Otherwise skip it.

Set-up: Sit up with knees bent and feet on the ground, arms lifted overhead reaching to the sky

Movement pattern:

- 1) Tilt the pelvis and start to roll into your back pockets, then waistband, and all the way to the floor one vertebra at a time. The goal is to not crash-land.
- 2) Lying on the floor with arms overhead (aligned with ears), start to move arms (hinging at shoulders), as soon as at chest height, head nod (double chin) and start to roll up as far up as you can one vertebra at a time. If stuck(!) pause at whatever height you achieve, reach the arms upward towards the sky and start to roll down again.
- 3) Practice rolling up. Hold on to one bent knee. Use the other leg (straight) for momentum to rock yourself up.

One-leg circles (abdominal muscles)

Set up: Lie on your back with 1 leg extended (straight) and the other in table-top, pelvis, ribcage, and shoulders stable, abdominal muscles engaged, head and neck relaxed

Movement pattern: Using the table top leg, cross the knee across the mid-line of your body making small circles (the size of tennis balls) 10 times without letting your pelvis rock or move around. Reverse direction.

Clam Shells – glute medius (side of the hip)

Set up: Lie on your side with your hips stacked on top of each other (top hip often wants to roll backwards) and shoulders stacked (lower shoulder is often too far forward), lower arm can be bent supporting the head, or stretch lower arm out long in line with the body (harder). Knees and hips are bent (fetal position).

Movement patterns (2)

1. Keeping ankles together and down on the floor, lift the top knee (without the hip moving backwards).
2. Lift ankles into space (dangling), lift top knee (without the hip moving backwards)

Heel Squeeze Prone (glutes)

Set up: Lying face down on the mat, rest your forehead on your hand. Turn knees outward slightly and bring heels together so that they are touching. Engage your abs to support your back by imagining an ice cube at your belly button.

Movement pattern: Squeeze heels together and release. Try 10 slowly and then 10 pulses.

Single Leg Extension (glutes)

Set-up: Lying face down on the mat, extend 1 leg out long and bend the other leg at the knee. Both legs are parallel/in line with the body (not turned out). Engage your abs to support your back by imagining an icecube at your belly button.

Movement pattern: Lift the heel (of the bent leg) towards the sky. This is not a huge movement if your abs are engaged. Switch and do the same on the other leg.

The Alphabet– deep stabilizing muscles of the neck

Set-up: Standing, with forehead or back of head holding a light ball against the wall and the rest of your body aligned and in neutral spine (shoulders, ribs stacked over pelvis)

Movement pattern: Trace the alphabet using your forehead

“Miss America shoulders” – stabilizing muscles of the shoulder and upper traps

Set-up: Standing or sitting, wrap a flex band around one shoulder and hold the ends of the “sash” near your opposite hip. Pull on it slightly to give your shoulder some challenge.

Watch that your wrist is long with your forearm.

Movement patterns (1) Make circles with your shoulder, trying to make them as smooth and even (as much forward as backwards. Reverse the direction. (2) Lower and lift the shoulder straight up and down so it is in line with your ear

Foam Roller – abs, core muscles

Set up: Lie on your back (supine) with your head to your tailbone on the roller lengthwise, feet parallel lined up with your knees and hips.

Movement patterns

- 1) Scissor arms – reach 1 arm towards your ear while simultaneously reaching your other hand towards your hips. Switch and repeat for 10x
- 2) Scissors with weighted balls – same movement pattern adding weight
- 3) 1 arm, 1 leg – bring one leg to table top. Place weighted ball in opposite arm and scissor (just 1 arm).
- 4) Horizontally Abduct – with 1 leg in table top, move opposite arm away from the body out wide. Perform 3 and 4 on the other side as well.