



Beginners Pilates

Week One

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Neutral Position

In the rest position your muscles are relaxed and your joints are in neutral alignment. You should try to incorporate the key principles during work, rest and play.

- Lie on your back with your knees bent up and your head supported on a small cushion or folded towel (see photo below)
- Relax the weight of your head into the support
- Nod your chin and feel back of neck lengthen
- Sink your shoulder blades into the mat
- Soften the ribcage into the mat
- Place your feet and knees hip distance apart
- Feet relaxed with big toe, little toe and heel in contact with mat
- Imagine your pelvis is a bucket of water. Tip it backwards to spill some water out the back of the bucket and you will feel your back gently flatten onto the mat. Now tip it forwards to spill some water out of the front of the bucket and you will feel your lower back arch slightly. Find your 'neutral spine' position by resting the bucket halfway between these two movements. There should be a small space between your back and the mat. Your lower back should feel relaxed
- Maintain normal breathing, ideally using your diaphragm - your tummy should be rising (breathing in) and falling (breathing out)





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Arm Pulse

Level 1

Starting position: Neutral position.

- Arms by side floating just above the floor
- Pulse arms up and down through a small movement



Level 2

Starting position: Neutral position.

- As above with one leg in table top position
- Maintain this position for a period of up to ten breaths and then change legs



Scissors

Level 1

Starting position: Neutral position.

- Float one leg into table top position, pause, then return the foot softly to the floor
- Alternate



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One Leg Stretch

Level 1

Starting position: Neutral position. Centre engaged.

- Laying on your back, allowing spine to soften into mat
- Breathe normally
- Slowly slide heel away, allowing leg to lengthen, whilst maintaining relaxed position through lower back
- Slowly draw heel back to the start position



Level 2

- Start as above
- Float one leg into table top
- Press heel away, straighten knee in line with opposite thigh
- Bring leg back to table top and lower slowly down



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Hip Twist

Level 1

Starting position: Neutral position.

- Allow one knee to gently float away from your midline
- Allow foot to roll onto outside border
- Maintaining relaxed state through abdominals, whilst keeping pelvis level
- Slowly roll back into start position



Level 2

- Place your arms out to the sides just below shoulder height, palms facing upwards
- Connect your legs together and hold a small block between your knee



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Double Arm Circles

Level 1

Starting position: Neutral position.

- Arms raised above chest
- Float arms backwards, draw semi-circle with fingertips
- Slowly move back to the start



Level 2

- Combine one leg stretch level one with the circling of the arms



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Bridge

Level 1

Starting position: Neutral position.

- Bring feet closer towards your buttocks
- Gently press soles of feet into mat
- Start to allow tail bone to peel away
- Feel activity through glutes
- Begin to peel your back from the tailbone, one piece at a time, from the mat
- Now gently soften back into start position



Level 2

Starting position: As level 1

- When rolled off, pause and lengthen through one leg
- Float leg back down, foot contact on floor
- Now soften back into start position
- Alternate leg



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Clam

Level 1

Starting position: Side Lying

- Lower arm outstretched above or in front of head resting on support
- Hips and knees bent with heels in line with bottom
- Shoulders and hips stacked. Top hand resting on hip or floor
- Tuck tail bone under slightly and maintain neutral position
- Keeping feet together, float top knee away from bottom knee focusing on the hip rotating in socket



Level 2

Starting position: As level 1 with both feet raised slightly (below hip height)

- Action as level 1 you should now feel activity in your bottom hip



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Side Kick

Level 1

- Hips, knees and shoulders stacked
- Head adequately supported
- Gently rest fingertips on the floor to assist with balance
- Elevate your top leg to hip height
- Slowly glide leg forwards, moving from the hip, then return to the start position and lower



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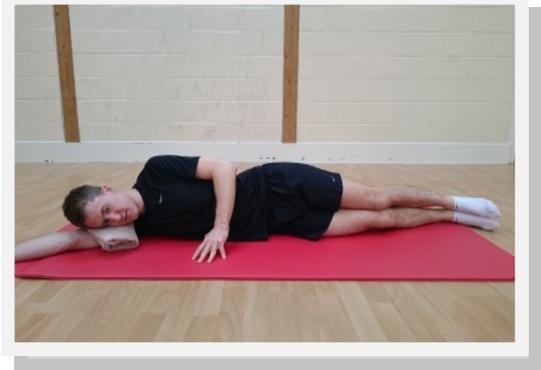
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Week One

Side leg lifts

Starting position: Side lying

- Underneath arm outstretched in alignment with the trunk
- Rest your head on your arm
- Hips slightly bent with legs out long in alignment with the trunk
- Shoulders and hips stacked. Top hand on hip or the floor for support
- Draw your top hip downwards away from your top shoulder to create a small space between your waist and the mat



Action

- INHALE to prepare
- EXHALE, reach your top leg up to hip height
- INHALE and hold this position
- EXHALE, reach the underneath leg to meet the top leg
- INHALE and balance
- EXHALE and lower both legs to the mat
- Sets: 2 Reps: 10



Tips

- Imagine two sheets of glass encasing the body, one along the front and one along the back to avoid rolling your body
- Reach your feet towards the wall at the foot end of the body to lengthen the legs
- Imagine a ribbon threaded in the space between your waist and the mat to prevent sinking your weight to the mat

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Swimming

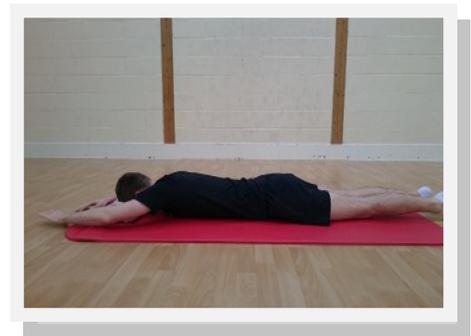
Level 1

- Lying on your front, soften the lower back.
- Lengthen the leg, drawing the foot away from you and allow the whole leg to hover gently away from the floor, using the hip



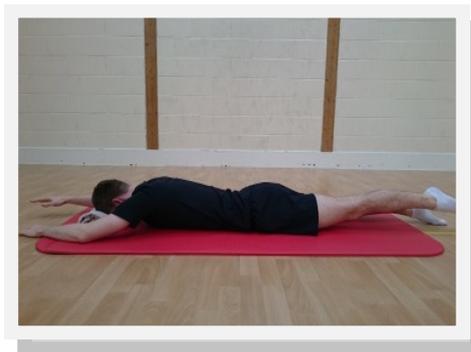
Level 2

- Keeping the legs and body relaxed & still, float and lengthen one arm away from the floor.
- Alternate.



Level 3

- Combine level 1 & 2.
- Take the weight of one arm and the opposite leg. Think of lengthening the limbs away from each other as they float off the floor.
- Allow the spine to remain in a lengthened position retaining a gap between the headlights and the mat.
- Alternate.



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