



Back to basics

Dawnna Wayburne, Director of Education

When your clients come back to their Pilates workout after the summer break, it may mean taking time to renew their understanding of the basics of this amazing work. The following exercises are simple, yet powerful in their results and can be done as homework in between their sessions. Emphasis is on breath and flow of movement. The pace is slow to give full benefit of neuro-muscular activity. In this way, they can make each repetition meaningful such that quality is valued over quantity. Our aim is to have them replace haphazard exercise with relevant sequence and precision. Focus is key to good execution - remind them to let go of the outcome of their movements and concentrate rather on the process.

In this way, they will develop the strength and flexibility that will enable you as their instructor to introduce more advanced repertoire. Remind your client that attention to the optimal mechanics required for each exercise and the impact on their activities of daily life (especially at the office), makes these simple exercises invaluable.

SEATED DEEP ABDOMINAL EXERCISE (STRAW EXERCISE)

This exercise will help you to maintain abdominal support and avoid the “at-the-desk” slump we all fall prey to when working at our computers. Sit at edge of your chair and trying to balance your head right over your pelvis lengthen your spine as much as possible to create space between your vertebrae and activity in the muscles that stabilize your spine .



Place one hand (palm) onto your lower abdominals and the other hand (palm) at the back of your pelvis

On an exhale draw away equally from both hands and on your inhale release back into the hands without losing length in your spine. Image your insides being sucked through a straw.

Try the same thing with your hands on your thighs and see if you can achieve the same sensation of deep abdominal activity without too much effort



Repeat with your hands at the sides of your hips and play a little with the breath to see whether it's easier or not to pull away with an inhale rather than an exhale

Bring the hands back onto your thighs and, sitting tall in your chair, repeat the exercise.

To finish off let's have you imagine that you have a weight on your head, and think of drawing in equally from all four sides as you push up against your imaginary weight.

SIDE TO SIDE

Do this exercise first thing in the morning or before going to bed to massage the spine, release the hip joints and maintain functional abdominal tone.



Lying on your back with a small rolled towel under your head, bring both legs to a table top position and hold onto your knees for increased lumbar support. Make sure to lower your feet slightly in the direction of your sitting bones if you feel yourself arching away from the floor.



Take the left knee out to the left and chase it with your right knee as you begin to roll onto your left side
Let the head lag behind slightly and then have it catch up as you end up side-lying to your L.

Initiate movement from here with your R leg and, rolling gently through the centre, move on over to the other side.

Open the L leg, the L shoulder and return to supine. Continue turning to the L to revisit the side-lying position. Move a little faster now but still with the same attention to the details and sequence of the movement