



WHOLE BODY METHOD

PILATES EDUCATION

Pilates Certification Manual

LEVEL 1



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Whole Body Method Pilates Principles

There are 6 classical Pilates principles. They can be used as a lifetime guide to correctly practicing and teaching the art of Pilates. The 7th principle is added at “Whole Body Method.”

CONCENTRATION & AWARENESS

“Study carefully and do the foundation work.” – Joseph Pilates

You have to be aware of what you are doing all the time. The mind connects to the body. The exercises are not performed haphazardly or lazily. Every movement matters.

BREATHING

“Squeeze out the lungs as you would wring a wet towel dry.” – Joseph Pilates

Full and thorough inhalation and exhalation are part of every Pilates exercise. Breathing should be properly coordinated with the movement.

CENTERING

The center is the focal point of the Pilates method. Every movement emanates from the center to drive power through the body. It is the part of your body that forms a band between the bottom of the rib cage and the line across your hip bones. Achieving a stretched, strong and supple center is the result of practicing Pilates.

CONTROL

Control every aspect of every movement. Every Pilates exercise must be performed with the utmost control, particularly within the hip and shoulder joints. It’s not about intensity or multiple repetitions of a movement; it’s more about proper form for safe, effective results.

PRECISION

Precision of motion and body placement goes hand-in-hand with concentration and control. Precision carries over into everyday life as graceful, conscious movements.

FLOW & LENGTHENING

Pilates exercises are performed fluidly and always lengthening out of your center. There are no static, isolated movements because our bodies do not naturally function that way. Smooth, lengthened and even flowing movements are necessary.

CONNECTION

The mind and body are intricately connected. They work in partnership to feel sensations and emotions. Deepening this connection, benefits your workouts immeasurably as you partner with your body to listen and learn from it. As instructors, we are also finding better ways to connect with each other and with our clients.

Level 1 – Mat, Reformer, Cadillac & Wunda Chair

MAT	REPS
The Hundred	100
Roll-Up: Beginner	5x
Single Leg Circles	3x ea.
Rolling Like a Ball	10x
Series of Five:	
Single Leg Stretch	10x total
Double Leg Stretch	5x
Spine Stretch Forward	5x
Saw	3x ea.
Cobra Stretch	5x
Side Kick Series:	
Front/Back	10x
Circles	10x
Point Up/Flex Down (and reverse)	5x ea.
Teaser (prep)	3x 3 pulses

REFORMER	REPS	SPRINGS
Footwork:		
Toes, Arches, Heels, Tendon Stretch	10x ea.	4-3-2s
The Hundred	100	2s
Leg Circles	10x ea.	2s
Frog	10x	2s
Stomach Massage Series:		
Round	10x	4-3s
Hands Back	10x	3-2s
Reaching	5x	2s
Twist	3x ea.	2s
Breast Stroke: Beginner	5x	1s
Short Box Series:		
Round	5x	secure
Flat	5x	secure
Side Stretch	3x ea.	secure
Twist (Only)	3x ea.	secure
Tree (w/ theraband, no extension)	3x ea.	secure
Elephant	10x	2s
Knee Stretch Series:		
Round	10x	2s
Arched	10x	2s
Pelvic Lift	10x	4-3-2s
Running	20x	4-3-2s
Standing Hip Stretch	hold	1s

CADILLAC	REPS
Roll Down	5x
Roll Down w/ One Arm	2x ea.
Footwork:	
Toes, Arches, Heels, Tendon Stretch	5x ea.
Leg Springs Series:	
Circles	10x ea.
Walking	5x ea.
Beats	10x
Frog	5x ea.
Teaser (prep)	3x
Push Through on Stomach (prep)	3x
Arm Series:	
Press Down	5x
Circles	5x ea.
Tricep Press	5x
Traditional Ending Series:	
Breathing	5x
Push Through	4x
Half Hanging	1x

WUNDA CHAIR	REPS	SPRINGS
Footwork: Toes, Arches, Heels, Tendon Stretch	10x ea.	1U, 1D
Pull-Up	3 sets of 4	1U, 1D
Pumping Pedal Standing Behind Chair	3-5x w/ 3 pumps	1M
Spine Stretch	5x	1D or 1M
Kneeling Mermaid	3-5x ea	1D or 1M
Swan Dive	3x w/ 3 presses	1D or 1M

Series of Five: Double Leg Stretch

PURPOSE:

Strengthening abdominals, co-ordination, emptying lungs

SETUP:

Draw both your knees into the chest, and grasp your shins. Then round up by bringing chin toward sternum. Keep elbows soft, knees slightly apart and heels together.

TECHNIQUE:

1. (Inhale), straighten the legs forward while simultaneously reaching the arms over the head. Keep the hips neutral and feet in Pilates V.
2. Make your body long and taut.
3. (Exhale), draw both legs into the chest while circling the arms out to the side and back to the shins.
4. Hug the knees gently into the chest while deepening the exhalation.

DYNAMICS:

Breathe in as you lengthen and exhale as you bring arms and legs in

TEACHING POINTS:

- Draw navel to spine on exhale
- Softly pointed toes
- Keep the shoulders relaxed
- Work the breath into the posterior ribs

HANDS-ON CUES/VISUAL IMAGERY:

- Stand at clients feet and “mirror image” arm circle

EXERCISE MODIFICATIONS:

- **Beginner:** keep you legs higher
- **Beginner:** can take out arm circle if difficult to co-ordinate
- **Advanced:** heels are 2 inches off mat when legs are extended
- Use neck pillow for clients with weak cervical flexors

COMMON EXERCISE MISTAKES:

- Dropping or moving the head
- Not reaching long
- Arching the lower back

Repetitions: 5x



PURPOSE:

Stabilizing hips, working in a neutral spine, control of abdominals, hip joint flexibility and health

SETUP:

Exchange handles for foot straps.

Place one foot on foot-bar, press carriage back and extend other leg to ceiling. Take one leg strap in your hand and place around arch of foot that is extended upward. Repeat other side.

Bring knees into chest. Knees aligned with shoulders, feet in Pilates V. Sacrum is lengthened down the mat and fingertips reaching long.

Extend legs out 45 degrees and then adjust so that ankles are slightly forward of hip joint.

TECHNIQUE:

1. (Inhale), begin abducting the legs in an outward circular motion, never going above 90 degrees. Keep hips in neutral position and stable throughout movement.
2. Draw the legs downward.
3. (Exhale), when you bring the legs together, engage the inner thighs, gluteals, and pelvic floor.
4. Reverse the direction and breath. 10x.

DYNAMICS:

Smooth and controlled

TEACHING POINTS:

- Help client find and maintain neutral alignment
- Draw navel to spine on exhale
- Reach hands long down carriage
- Breathe into sides and back of ribs
- Soften the ribs
- Keep hips stable

HANDS-ON CUES/VISUAL IMAGERY:

- Standing in front of Reformer, guide movement with hands on client's feet

EXERCISE MODIFICATIONS:

- Make circles smaller for loose hips
- Make circles bigger for tight hips
- For overweight or very inflexible clients, take them to the Cadillac for this exercise

COMMON EXERCISE MISTAKES:

- Sinking into lower back
- Making circles too wide

Foot-bar down
Springs: 2
Reps: 10x each way



Traditional Ending Series: Breathing

PURPOSE:

Strengthening back and hip extensors, arms, shoulders, pelvic floor

SETUP:

Place feet in strap of trapeze bar, turned out in Pilates V. Place the hands on the roll down bar extending the wrist and fingers. (Go straight to step #5 if not a beginner).

TECHNIQUE:

1. (Inhale), roll the hips off the mat into a long plank position.
2. (Exhale), return to start position.
3. (Inhale), press the arms down toward the hips.
4. (Exhale), return to start position.
5. (Inhale), simultaneously, pressing the arms down toward the thighs while rolling the hips up into a strong plank. Make the lift dynamic.
6. (Exhale), simultaneously roll the spine down and return the bar to above the shoulders. Repeat 5x.
7. On the last repetition hold the lift for a count of 8.

DYNAMICS:

With the breath, steady

TEACHING POINTS:

- Keep hips even and neutral
- Work pelvic floor and latissimus in plank position
- Reach hands toward thighs
- Keep body long

HANDS-ON CUES/VISUAL IMAGERY:

- Modify placement of ribs and hips
- Use hand under lower back to set placement

EXERCISE MODIFICATIONS:

- **Beginner:** start with steps 1-4 in technique
- **Intermediate/advanced:** go straight to step 5 in technique

COMMON EXERCISE MISTAKES:

- Ribs lifting out of alignment
- Not reaching long toward thighs

Reps: 5x



PURPOSE:

Stretching the Achilles tendon

SETUP:

Facing the chair, place the hands on the front edge and step onto the pedal one foot at a time. Place the shoulders over the wrists and feet in parallel.

TECHNIQUE:

1. (Inhale), prepare (Exhale), lower heels.
2. (Inhale), without shifting the body weight, lift the heels.
3. (Exhale), lower the heels.
4. Repeat 10x.

DYNAMICS:

Accent is on the up, down is slow and controlled

TEACHING POINTS:

- Keep the weight forward and body aligned
- Deeply stretch the Achilles tendons

HANDS-ON CUES/VISUAL IMAGERY:

- Work to keep the shoulders stable

EXERCISE MODIFICATIONS:

- Variation 1: Work one leg at a time
- Variation 2: Alternate legs in a running motion

COMMON EXERCISE MISTAKES:

- Shifting body
- Not deepening the stretch

Springs: 1U, 1D
Reps: 10x

