

PRINCIPLES OF PILATES for a fun, effective and safe workout.

Breathing

Lateral or 2 Part Breathing: always breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Place your hands on your ribs, inhale and feel your ribs expand out to your sides. Exhale through your mouth; draw your navel to spine and abdominals in and up while maintaining a neutral position. Neutral position is activated by lengthening your spine and isolating your abdominal scoop without shifting your pelvis up or down.

A general rule: inhale to prepare for a movement and exhale to execute.

LATERAL BREATHING is an effective tool to enhance and ease your movements by keeping your upper body relaxed and your abdominals scooped. This correct breathing also oxygenates your blood and increases circulation.

CORE/CENTRE: all movement is initiated from your core/centre which is your powerhouse, your centre of strength and control. Your core is the collective muscles of abdominals, hips, pelvic floor, low back, inner thighs and buttocks. Every exercise in Pilates focuses on strengthening this centre to promote good posture, easy movement and reduced risk of injury.

CONCENTRATION: All movements are mindful in Pilates. Focus your mind fully on yourself and the details and your muscles will respond more quickly.

CONTROL: Your torso creates a box (square) from shoulder to shoulder and hip to hip that serves as a reference for the rest of your body. Moving this Pilates Box or Square with control not momentum is your key to proper alignment, which will ensure the body is training symmetrically and safely.

PRECISION: The action of “scooping abdominals in and up” or “navel to spine” or “engage your core” stabilizes your spine in a neutral position and is maintained gently throughout your workout. Neutral position is activated by lengthening your spine and isolating your abdominal scoop without shifting your pelvis up or down. Attention to the details of movement and breath increases the benefits of each exercise.

FLOW: Never rush, move with awareness. The transition from one exercise to the next distinguishes Pilates from other forms of fitness. Movement by nature is continuous with each movement connecting to the next. Flow will improve your balance, control and coordination. Be patient with yourself and flow will come with practice.....

MODIFICATIONS for Beginners: (...so anybody can do it!)

- To exercise safely and effectively modify and make the movements smaller
- Keep your head on the mat if your neck gets tired
- To support your back, use your hands and or forearms when rolling up or down
- When sitting roll up the edge of your mat or use a towel under the sitz bones to support your back
- Instead of legs in Pilates stance or straight, put feet on the mat or soften knees or create a 90 degree angle with hips, knees and ankles
- Listen to your body and make movements smaller!