

## The Language of Pilates

Articulate your Spine or curl your spine vertebrae by vertebrae: to convey mobility of the spine. Concentrate on actively configuring your spine into a “C” shape by bringing navel to spine and chin towards your chest looking towards your navel to increase mobility and strength. You may feel sections that resist mobility, pause and breathe to increase the opening and mobility of the area.

Chin towards your Chest is the position assumed when you are rolling up or down. The weight of your head is drawn towards your sternum with space under your chin. Your eyes focus on your navel to reduce neck tension.

Lateral or 2 part Breathing is meant to enhance and ease your movements. 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 feel your ribs contract inward.

Lengthening: Focus on creating distance between your hipbones and your ribcage, which will have the effect of elongating your waist. Anatomically this motion lengthens your spine, decompresses your vertebrae and improves your posture.

Navel to Spine or Scoop your abdominals in and up or engage your core, decreases the distance from navel to spine, with spine in neutral. This position engages deep postural muscles creating support, strength and stabilizing of your spine. It is gently maintained throughout your workout. Compare the sensation to the pulling in required to zip up a pair of tight pants.

Neutral Spine or position is activated by lengthening your spine, scooping your abdominals in and up without shifting your pelvis up/down or hunching the shoulders. The scoop is purely muscular and your skeleton does not move.

Pilates box or square, your torso creates a box or square from shoulder to shoulder and hip to hip. During each exercise ask yourself, “Am I square?” This ensures you are moving safely and symmetrically. It is not uncommon to favor one side of your body.

Pilates Stance is described as a tripod foot position with heels together and toes slightly open. \*\*The position is established by engaging your core/ first by drawing navel to spine and then wrapping your buttocks and backs of legs towards each other. “Work from the knee up”: your lower leg and feet are long and relaxed. While your abs are scooped, inner thighs and buttocks are all engaged.

Powerhouse is simply the collective muscles of your abdominals, lower back, pelvic floor, inner thighs and buttocks. It is your centre of strength and control for your whole body. All movement is initiated from your powerhouse or core/centre.

Threshold: The level of work where you are only just able to complete the activity. Working below threshold will greatly reduce the benefit to your muscles.

Wings Down: The act of sliding your shoulder blades down your back and away from your neck and head. This motion will lengthen your neck, strengthen your back and eliminate neck and shoulder tension. Imagine gently pinning the front of your shoulders to the mat and relaxing your tongue also helps relax the neck.