

Pilates

The Seal

Relaxes shoulders; repetitive rolling motion relaxes and massages the spine.

Sit and hug both knees into your chest. Flex your spine, bringing your chin toward your chest. Using your abdominals to assist in balancing on your sit bones, inhale and roll backwards. Exhale and return to the starting position. Repeat 5 times.

Single Leg Stretch

Strengthens abdomen and hips.

Begin on your back with navel to spine, exhale and pull your right knee to your chest as you lift your shoulders off the mat. Extend your left leg outward. Maintain your upper-torso position, keeping navel to spine, as you switch sides. Repeat 8-10 times each side.

The Criss cross

Strengthens abdomen and hips.

Lie on your back with both knees bent. Place your hands behind your head, keeping the elbows open. Lift your shoulders off the mat and lower your chin toward your chest. Bend the left knee toward your chest while your right leg extends outward. Use the abdominals to maintain a flat back as you then bring the right shoulder toward the left knee. Switch sides. Repeat 5-10 times on each side.

The Saw

Increases flexibility of torso and rotational muscles; improves posture and alignment.

Sit tall with legs extended slightly wider than hip width apart. Extend your arms open about 45 degrees from the sagittal plane of your body. Keeping the spine lifted, exhale and drop the right arm down over the left leg as if to saw off the left pinky toe with the right pinky finger. Using your abdominals, roll up and return to the starting position. Repeat 4-5 times on each side.

Double Leg Lift

Strengthens hips, quadriceps and abdomen.

Lie on one side, supporting your head with the lower arm. Your upper arm is in front of your body to help maintain alignment. Extend both legs at a small angle in front, and inhale to prepare. Exhale and lift both legs to hip height. Repeat 8-10 times on each side.

Alternating Opposite Arm and Leg Lifts

Strengthens back and shoulders; lengthens spine and hips.

Begin prone with navel to spine. Reach both arms out in front of you. Exhale and extend the left arm and right leg up while maintaining a stable torso and not rocking your hips. Keep shoulder blades together and down. Inhale and lower. Switch sides. Repeat 5 times on each side.