



Summer 2015 Pilates Challenge

July 1-31, 2015

About the Summer 2015 Pilates Challenge

Last July my clients and I embarked an exciting adventure in Pilates together: The Basic 10 Challenge. In the month of July each day we did a routine of 10 key Pilates exercises. Together, these exercises made up a complete, varied ensemble that's perfect for a quick, yet fulfilling, daily practice of approximately 10 minutes.

Encore! Encore! Everyone has said, so this year I have developed a new routine that includes more spinal twisting, extension and arm work. The 2015 Summer Pilates Challenge is even more challenging. The goal is to do the series everyday in July and then take it on vacation wherever you go this summer!

How does it work?

To facilitate your participation, I have put together descriptions of each of the exercises accompanied by photos that show how to do the movements properly. I developed this project for those who already are practicing Pilates and familiar with the exercises rather than those who want to get started. Feel free, also to use last year's Basic Ten guide (available on my website) for a more beginner/intermediate repertoire. After the descriptions and photos, you will find a Log to note where and when you did your Challenge routine each day, followed by a space for comments about your workout. I especially want to invite you to write down your goals for participating and share them, with me, your Pilates instructor, or with the whole community participating via my Facebook page. The day you attend a Pilates class with your teacher counts as your workout that day and you don't have to do your Challenge routine... but you can!

Enjoy the Challenge, have a fun and healthy summer full of movement!

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Shoulder Bridge

Repetitions: 5

Breathing and Instructions:

Start supine (lying on your back) with knees bent and feet placed hip width apart. Arms are straight and to the side. Inhale to pick up the pelvis and then peel the rest of the spine off the mat vertebrae by vertebrae. Exhale to melt the spine back down on the mat vertebrae by vertebrae.



The Hundred



Repetitions: 10

Breathing and Instructions:

Start supine. Exhale to pick up your head and upper back. Exhale to pick up your legs. Arms are straight and to the side. Move arms up and down quickly without stopping for the duration of the exercise. Inhale for 5 seconds, exhale for 5 seconds.

Beginners: Keep your knees bent.

Intermediates: Keep your legs straight and high.

Advanced: When beginning lift upper body and legs simultaneously. Keep legs straight and as low as possible.



Roll-Up

Repetitions: 3-5

Breathing and Instructions:

Start supine with arms reaching up to the ceiling. Inhale to pick up your head. Exhale to continue to lift your body off the mat stretching your spine forward. Inhale to begin rolling the spine back to the mat, exhale to finish.

Beginners: Bend your knees if needed and put your hands on the sides of your legs and walk them up your legs as you go.



Single Leg Circle



Repetitions: 5 each direction, a total of 10 for each leg

Breathing and Instructions:

Start supine, arms to the side on the mat. Stretch one leg towards the ceiling with foot pointed. The other leg stays straight on the ground with foot flexed. Draw a circle with the leg. Start by crossing the leg over your body. Then change directions. Inhale for the first half of the circle, exhale for the second half. Repeat with the other leg.

Beginners: Draw small circles

Intermediate/Advanced: Make the circles progressively bigger.



Single Leg Stretch

Repetitions: 5 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

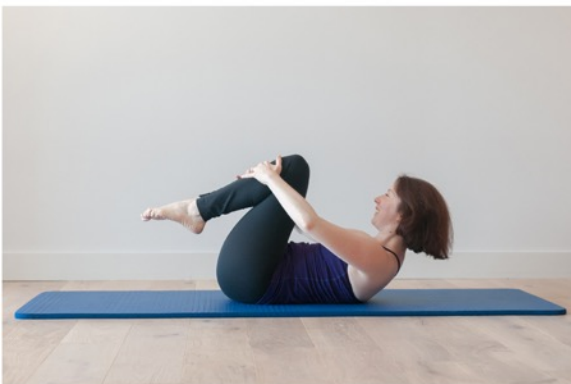
After the previous exercise bend the left leg, put the left hand on the left ankle, the right hand on the left knee, straighten the right leg curl the head and upper body into an abdominal curl to the tips of the shoulder blades. Inhale to bring one leg close to you and straighten the other. Then switch and exhale.

Beginners: Keep the straight leg high.

Intermediate/Advanced: Bring the straight leg progressively lower.



Double Leg Stretch



Repetitions: 5

Breathing and Instructions:

After the previous exercise bend both legs placing one hand on each knee. Inhale to stretch arms and legs upward at the same time, make a circle with the arms, exhale bending the legs and putting the hands back on the knees to return to the start position.

Beginners: Keep arms and legs high.

Intermediate/Advanced: Bring the arms and legs progressively lower.



Scissors

Repetitions: 5 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

After the previous exercise reach one leg up to the ceiling and grab a hold of the calf with both hands, gently pull the leg towards you for two counts then switch legs. Inhale for one leg and exhale for the other.

Beginners: Keep legs relatively high. Grab a hold of the back of the thigh instead of the calf.

Advanced: Make breath longer inhaling for 2 legs and exhaling for 2 legs.



Double Leg Lower Lift



Repetitions: 5

Breathing and Instructions:

After the previous exercise place hands, fingers crossed, at the base of the skull, maintain the upper abdominal curl, reach legs up to ceiling. Inhale to lower legs away from body and exhale to bring them back up

Beginners: Keep legs high, making a smaller movement.

Intermediate/Advanced: Bring the legs progressively lower.



Criss-Cross

Repetitions: 5 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

After the previous exercise keep hands exactly where they are and maintain the upper abdominal curl. Exhale to twist under arm towards opposite bent knee maintaining the other leg straight. Inhale back to center and exhale switch sides.

Beginners: Keep legs high.

Advanced: Bring legs progressively lower.



Spine Stretch



Repetitions: 5

Breathing and Instructions:

Start seated on sits bones with straight legs open just slightly wider than the hips. Feet are flexed, arms are straight and reaching toward the ceiling, palms of the hand facing each other. Exhale to stretch the spine forward. Inhale to stack the spine back up.



Beginners: Arms reach forward, knees slightly bent.



Spine Twist

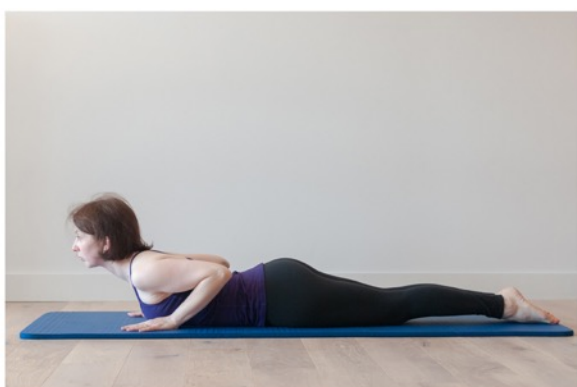
Repetitions: 3-5 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

Remain in the same seated position as the previous exercise but now with arms reaching out to the side level with shoulders, palms facing down. Squeeze legs together, flex feet. Exhale to twist the spine to one side and pulse twice. Inhale back to center keeping spine straight and erect. Exhale twist to the other side and pulse twice.



Swan



Repetitions: 5

Breathing and Instructions:

Begin lying prone (on stomach), forehead down, with hands placed palms down, just below shoulders on the mat. Inhale to pick up eyes, then nose, then chin, then chest and continue lifting rib cage respecting your personal range of motion. Exhale to lower down vertebrae by vertebrae, eyes go down to the mat last.

Beginners: Keep legs hip width.

Intermediate/Advanced: Keep legs close together.



Side bend

Repetitions: 3 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

Begin on hands and knees then transition to a plank position. Readjust right hand to place it just below right shoulder simultaneously picking up the left hand and reaching it up to the ceiling.

Beginners: Hold the position for 3 full breaths.

Advanced: Inhale to lower the spine and pelvis, hip barely touches the mat then rises on an exhale, repeat 3 times.

Transition to other side by placing left hand on mat below shoulder and shift on to left hand and arm reaching right hand to ceiling. Return to plank after completing the second side.

Beginners/people with wrist problems: do the whole series on forearm, elbow under shoulder, hand reaching forward.



Push-ups



Repetitions: 3

Breathing and Instructions:

After completing the side bends from the plank position bend elbows and inhale to lower, exhale straighten to rise up.

Beginners: Hold plank and breathe for 3 counts. Can be on forearms instead of hands.

Intermediate: Bend elbows wide to lower and lift.

Advanced: Bend elbows narrow close to body to lower and lift



Seal

Repetitions: 5-8

Breathing and Instructions:

Start sitting slightly behind the sits bones, hands go inside the legs to grab the outside of the ankles. Clap your feet together like you clap your hands 3 times. Inhale to roll back, clap the feet 3 times while suspended back without putting the head down. Exhale to return to starting position.

Beginners: First do not clap feet at all when you go back then progressively add one, then two then all 3 claps.



Goals

Before you begin: What are your goals, what do you expect from this challenge and/or what do you hope to accomplish?

Excercise Log

Day	Time	Place	Comments
Wednesday 1			
Thursday 2			
Friday 3			
Saturday 4			
Sunday 5			
Monday 6			
Tuesday 7			
Wednesday 8			
Thursday 9			
Friday 10			
Saturday 11			
Sunday 12			
Monday 13			
Tuesday 14			
Wednesday 15			
Thursday 16			
Friday 17			
Saturday 18			
Sunday 19			
Monday 20			
Tuesday 21			
Wednesday 22			
Thursday 23			
Friday 24			
Saturday 25			
Sunday 26			
Monday 27			
Tuesday 28			
Wednesday 29			
Thursday 30			
Friday 31			

31 Days Later...: How do you feel? Did you meet your objectives? What did you learn? Would you do the same challenge again?

