

# PILATES OF OLD TOWN



## “Your Daily Dose of Pilates”

[www.pilatesofoldtown.com](http://www.pilatesofoldtown.com)

The following series of Pilates based exercises are to be performed daily, and in this sequence. These exercises can be used as a Wake-Up first thing in the morning, a Warm-Up before your regular Pilates session or sport, or a Wind-Down in the evening. This series will stretch most major muscles groups, keep your spine flexible, and will mobilize most of the major joints in the body. Do not push to the point of pain; relax into the stretches, and be sure to hold them for several seconds.

These exercises should be performed using Pilates breath work and centering as follows: Inhaling by widening the ribcage and expanding the back, and exhaling as you send shoulder blades toward your tailbone, softening the ribcage, lifting the pelvic floor, and lifting the abdominals toward the spine to stabilize the core.

- ❖ **Shell Stretch:** Kneel on floor with buttocks on heels. Legs are hip width apart. Bend over and reach forward as far as you can, palms flat and fingers spread apart. Breathe deeply into the back, and exhale pulling navel toward the spine. Hold this position for 30 seconds.
- ❖ **The Cat:** Assume the cat position on all fours, and begin by curling the tailbone under and articulating through each vertebra in the spine to curl, reverse the movement by extending the tailbone out to carefully extend the back, articulating vertebrae by vertebrae. Do each movement 5 times slowly.
- ❖ **Swan:** Begin by lying prone (on your tummy) with palms 2”-4” in front of torso and legs apart. Inhale to prepare, exhale and center as you extend arms in front of you carefully bringing the spine into extension. Inhale once again, and exhale, roll down. Repeat movement 4 times.
- ❖ **Quad Stretch:** Reach back for your right foot (knee bent). Make sure pelvis is pressed into the floor and your abdominals are lifted to support the low back. Make sure to keep the inner thighs pressing together. Press the top of your foot into your palm and release. Do this 5 times on each leg. Roll over onto your back ready for
- ❖ **Knee Drops:** Lying supine (on your back) with knees bent and feet on the floor, inhale and drop both knees to the right. On your exhale, center and use your abdominals to bring your knees back to center. Repeat by dropping the knees to the left and repeat several times on each side.

- ❖ **Bridges:** Lying supine (on your back), knees bent and feet on the floor, arms at your sides, inhale to prepare. On the exhale begin to curl your tailbone up off the floor as your spine lengthens away towards your knees. Keep curling up off the floor until your buttocks are lifted and in a straight line with your knees and shoulders (back is not arched). Inhale again, on the exhale, begin to soften the chest down and allow the ribs, the low back and finally the pelvis to sequentially roll down one bone at a time until you reach your starting neutral spine position. Repeat 5 times.
- ❖ **Piriformis Stretch:** Lying supine (on your back) with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, cross your right ankle over your left knee and lift your left foot off the floor. Your legs should form the figure 4. Pull the legs close to your chest. Make sure to breathe, and hold for 30 seconds. Repeat on the other leg. Come up to a seated position.
- ❖ **Seated Hip Mobilization:** Sit on the floor, leaning back with a straight spine, and hands on the floor on either side of your body. Extend legs out in front of you with knees straight, feet hip distance apart, heels touching the floor. Roll the hips inward, and outward 15 times each.
- ❖ **Shoulder Stretch:** Seated in a cross legged position, neutral spine, shoulder blades sliding toward tailbone, interlace fingers and reach arms up over the head, palms facing upward, and stretch. Hold for 30 seconds.
- ❖ **Mermaid:** Seated position, side bend, by lifting one arm overhead. Make sure to inhale opening the ribcage while in the position and exhale to return to starting position. Repeat 4 times on each side.
- ❖ **Backline Stretch:** Seated on floor with legs extended in front of you, flex toes back and reach out as far as you can without straining and hold onto legs (toes, ankles). Breathing deeply, drop forehead toward knees to hold the stretch and return to starting position. Hold for 30 seconds. Come up to standing.
- ❖ **Arm Circles:** Standing, circles arms in each direction, 15 times each to lubricate the joints.
- ❖ **Squat:** Begin with feet shoulder width apart, squat all the way down and keep heels flat on the floor. Do not squat any further than you can keep your heels from lifting. Wrap arms around knees or extend straight out in front. Do not hold on to anything. Breathe and hold for 30 seconds.
- ❖ **Standing Splits:** Standing, spread feet apart as far as you can, keeping feet in parallel. Hold for 15 seconds. Bend over from the waist, dropping arms toward the floor, hold for 15 seconds.
- ❖ **Standing Roll Down:** Inhale to prepare, exhale, center and roll down one vertebra at a time. Inhale deeply into the back, exhale, center drawing the abdominals to the spine, as you begin to articulate through the spine to return to standing. Repeat 2 times.

Please be sure to consult your doctor before starting this or any other exercise program.

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