

The Sequence of Pilates Original 34 Mat Exercises

#1 The Hundred is done in a hundred beats, thus the name. The Hundred is a great warm up as it gets the breath going, and the blood pumping. The Hundred is an excellent exercise for abdominal strength and increasing torso stability.

To Begin:



1. Lie on your back with a neutral pelvis, neutral spine and legs are in a table top position.
2. Lift your lengthened neck, remembering to lift from your core using the abdominal scoop, folding forward from your upper back not your neck. Hold that position throughout the exercise.
3. Slide your shoulders down as you stretch your arms straight along your side. Palms are facing down. Arms are tight and lifted 2-4 inches from the mat.
4. Beginners will keep their legs in a table top position. Intermediate will extend straight legs with Pilates Feet toward the ceiling. Advanced will lower their straight legs towards the ground to a 45 degree angle, or to the point just before their spine begins to arch off the mat.
5. Maintain this position and begin pulsing your straight arms up and down in quick little movements. Imagine slapping at a pool of water.
6. Using percussive breathing, inhale deeply for five counts and exhale fully for five counts while keeping in rhythm with your arms. Five counts of each is one set.
7. Maintain this position, pulse your arms and breath for 10 breaths. (5 inhales and 5 exhales) 10 sets will equal 100 breaths or 100 beats.)

Special Notes: Keep your shoulders down and torso, legs and arms straight and tight. Use your abdominals to incorporate your percussive breaths.

#2 The Roll-Up works the powerhouse muscles. It also increases abdominal strength and articulation of the spine.

To Begin:



1. Lie on your back completely stretched with legs straight in Pilates foot position. (Beginners will position your knees together and bent, the soles of your feet will be planted firmly on your mat.) Arms are extended straight up by your ears and rested on the mat.
2. Lengthen your body stretching as long as you can from each end while inhaling deeply

3. Exhale and lift your arms straight up toward the ceiling, palms forward. (Beginners now straighten legs.)
4. Squeeze your buttocks and inner thighs together and scoop your abdominals to initiate the roll up. Peel each vertebrae one at a time off the mat.
5. Keep your navel pulled into your spine as you articulate your spine and stretch forward extending your arms towards your feet. Maintain stability throughout your lower body. Do not allow your feet to lift off the mat.
6. Begin rolling back down by first squeezing your buttocks and inner thighs together. (Beginners tuck your tailbone underneath you as you bend your knees.) Pull your navel deep into your spine as you reverse the sequence of the exercise and lower back to your mat one vertebrae at a time. Rolling slowly all the way down until you are once again lying on your back with the arms reaching up by your ears. Begin again for 5 more repetitions.
7. The breathing technique for the Roll Up is as follows: Inhale as you reach and stretch and begin your roll up. Exhale at the top as you lift your arms and continue your roll forward. Inhale as you stretch out over your legs and exhale as you roll down again.

#3 The Rollover is an advanced move requiring a great amount of core strength. If you have lower back or neck limitations this exercise should be avoided. The Rollover is a great stretch for the back and teaches spinal articulation.

To Begin:

1. Lie flat on your back with your arms extended straight by your sides, palms face down on the mat for stability. Your legs are straight with the Pilates foot position. Inhale.
2. Exhale and lift your legs up straight off the mat and over your head. As you initiate the lift, tighten your buttocks and your abdominal wall. Your legs stop when they are parallel with the floor. Balance on your shoulders; be cautious of **not** rolling onto your neck.
3. Inhale, open your straight legs hip width apart, flex your feet and begin to slowly roll back down your spine one vertebrae at a time as you exhale. Use your arms and powerhouse for stability. Extend your legs to the point just before your back begins to arch. Be certain to stop lowering your legs before your back arches. Squeeze your legs together and repeat the sequence for 3 – 5 repetitions.



Special Notes: For beginners, you may have them put a towel or small pillow under the lumbar region (lower back) to assist in the lift. Keep the movement fluid, be cautious to not use momentum for this exercise. Keep the neck elongated and never roll onto the neck. Use your abdominals to control that leg movement, do not rely on your arms to help with your levitation.