



Pilates Maintenance Programme

Parker Pilates



SPINE CURLS

Lie in the relaxation position, making sure the feet are level, pointing straight forward and in line with hip bones. Draw tummy into spine, breathe into ribcage and as you breathe out, slowly tilt the pelvis, lifting the tailbone off the mat. Continue this movement until you are in a straight line from shoulders to knees (do not arch). Breathe into the ribs without releasing the stomach, and as you breathe out, slowly roll the spine back down using the stomach muscles to help isolate each vertebra. Watch out for tension across the chest and keep the back of the neck long. Once the tailbone is down, repeat. Do at least 6, then pull knees into chest and take some deep breaths.



CHICKEN WINGS

Still in the relaxation position, breathe in as you raise arms above your head until they are resting on the mat with palms facing the ceiling (don't worry if they are not quite on the floor, just make sure your ribs are on the floor). As you breathe out, slide the arms down, leading with the elbows so they are in a 'W' shape. Try to keep palms facing up and the back of the arms on the floor, close the ribcage down and don't let the ribcage pop. At the depth of the movement, feel a stretch from collar bone to ear. Do at least 6.



THE ONE HUNDRED

Start from the relaxation position with shoulders pulled down and an open chest (encouraged by previous exercise). Draw tummy into spine, and breathing out, lift the knees, one at a time, over the chest. Keeping heels and big toes together but knees hip distance apart, hollow tummy, extend legs away. Take a small breath in, keeping chin down and abdominal muscles scooped slowly, lifting head and curling the spine up taking the upper back off the floor. Reach arms forward just above the body surface and either side of your body, lengthening through the finger tips, and beat the arms vigorously up and down 6 inches, breathing in for 3 beats and out for 7. **Do not breathe into the tummy or poke chin forward. If any pain is felt in the back bring the legs closer towards the body or bend them in.** Do at least 50 beats. When completed, stretch arms and legs out along the floor and roll head side to side.

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Remember:

- Always start warm.
- This should not take more than 15 minutes once you know what you are doing.
- Try to do it 3 times a week.



TORPEDO

Lie on right side in a straight line with right arm extended above your head and head resting on arm. Make sure you are in a straight line: shoulder over shoulder, hip over hip, big toe over big toe. Use your left arm for support, hand opposite chest. As you breathe out, draw naval to spine, tighten buttocks and lengthen top hip away from your head. Breathe in, lift both legs off the floor keeping the scoop, and as you breathe out, lift right leg up, lengthening it, bring knees back together breathing in, and then lower with resistance breathing out. **Keep knees pointing forwards and tummy and buttocks tight throughout.** Do 6 on each side.



THE DART

Lie on your front, legs open a little wider than the hips, or parallel, arms by your side with palms facing down. Breathe in to prepare. Start to breathe out, pull tummy up, shoulders down, and lift your chest off the floor. Your focus should be straight down with your head in line with your spine. Exhale all air, closing the rib cage. Lower down as you inhale. **Keep your feet down, shoulders down and tummy in.** Do 7. When you have finished, sit back on your heels with knees open and toes together, arms stretched out in front, and take 3 deep breaths.



THE CAT STRETCH

Come up to 4 point kneeling: hands under shoulders, knees under hips, neutral spine, tummy held in, pushing the mat away from your face. Breathe in to prepare. Exhale, stabilise and curl the tailbone through the legs, hollowing the tummy. Continue curling and pressing the middle of the back to the ceiling, pulling your head towards your crutch, and tucking the pelvis. Feel the stretch in the back and shoulders. Take a deep breath in there, then exhale unravelling the spine and lengthening between the crown of head and tailbone. Do 5.



HAMSTRING STRETCH

Lie in the relaxation position. Take your band or scarf and hook it round your right foot. Straighten your leg and let it hang in the band. Make sure your hips are square and your tailbone is down. Ease your leg towards your body until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh. Keep the foot softly pointed. Hold this for a few seconds and then gently pull your toes towards your face, flexing the foot. Hold again. Repeat with other leg. Repeat the flex and point on each leg about 3 times.



QUADRICEPS STRETCH

Lie on your front. Take hold of the left foot and draw it into the left buttock keeping the pelvis down on the floor and pubic bone down. Take deep breaths in and out. Repeat on right leg. If this is uncomfortable or impossible, try it on your side.