

Pilates Set-Up

Name: _____

Please complete this programme _____ per day

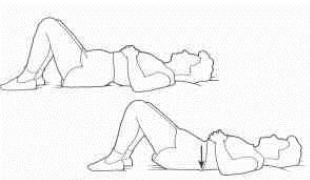
The pilates rest position forms the basis of all pilates exercises – promoting a neutral spine and a strong 'centre'. You can use the principles in a lying position, when you are sitting and standing and doing your usual daily activities.

Pilates Rest Position



- Lie on your back with your knees bent up and your head supported on a small cushion or folded towel and relax your head into this.
- **Lengthen the back of the neck** by reaching the crown of the head towards the wall behind you, imagine you have a ripe peach under your chin, don't let it roll away and don't squash it.
- **Gently draw your shoulder blades down** towards your waist to relax the neck and shoulders
- **Soften the ribcage** into the mat to connect the back of the ribcage on the mat
- Place your feet and knees hip distance apart
- Make sure that your weight rests on the six key points of the feet: the base of each big toe, each little toe and the centre of the heel on each foot
- Imagine your pelvis is a bucket of water. Tip it backwards to spill some water out the back of the bucket and you will feel your back gently flatten onto the mat. Now tip it forwards to spill some water out of the front of the bucket and you will feel your lower back arch slightly. Find your '**neutral spine**' position by resting the bucket halfway between these two movements. There should be a small space between your back and the mat, and your pubic and hip bones should form a small flat triangle
- Maintaining the neutral spine position, INHALE wide into the sides and back of the ribcage and then EXHALE. At the end of your exhale, slowly draw up through the pelvic floor muscles to engage these and your deep abdominal muscles. Hold this gentle contraction and keep breathing for up to ten breaths. This is called **engaging your centre**.

Imprinting



- Lie on your back in your neutral spine position (see above)
- Relax your shoulders and let them drop to the floor.
- Breathe deeply. Relax your ribcage, neck, and jaw with every breath.
- Continue moving your awareness down your body. Let your back ribs press into the floor.
- Let your tummy muscles drop toward your spine. As you do this, relax your spine, imagining it is melting into the floor.
- Let your hips and legs relax.
- As your spine sinks into the mat, visualise its imprint on the floor beneath you. Do not press firmly, relax and concentrate on your breathing.
- Stay in the imprinted position for 5-10 breaths
- Repetitions

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