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Part 1: How to find Neutral Pelvis

Part 2: Illustrated Exercises for the /Golfers workout

Part 1: Neutral pelvis is the position in which our spines are designed to be the strongest. This position is defined using three bony landmarks in our bodies; our two hipbones and our pubic bone. When those three bones are in the same level plane, we are in a neutral pelvis position.

Place your fingertips on your navel. Draw them out to the sides and down a little bit and you'll feel your hipbones (1a). Your pubic bone is directly below your navel at the top of your legs (1b)



1a

1b

In a neutral pelvis position, you can imagine that a triangular table will balance on these three bones. If a cup of tea were balanced on this imaginary table, it would not spill (2a). In this position there will be a little bit of space between the bones of your lower back and the mat (2b).



2a

2

These two positions show the pelvis when it is not in neutral.

In the first pictures (3a and 3b), the lower back is flattened into the mat and the imaginary teacup would be spilling into the navel. This position weakens and overstretches the lower back muscles. This position must absolutely be avoided if you have osteoporosis or a herniated disc.



3a



3b

In these pictures (4a and 4b), there is too much arch in the lower back. The imaginary teacup would be spilling to the floor between my feet (4a). In this position, the small, deep muscles of the lower back are too tight and shortened.



4a



4b

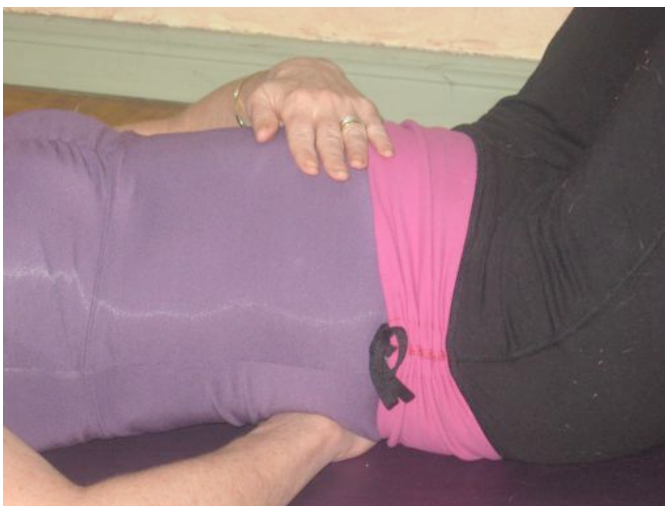
The muscles that support our spines when we are in a neutral pelvis position contract and become stronger only when we exhale. So in order to strengthen these deep muscles, we use breathing in Pilates exercises while maintaining a neutral pelvis position.

The image that I like to use to activate these muscles is that of a magnet on the spine, directly behind the navel.

Lie on your back with your pelvis in a neutral position (5a). If you'd like feedback, place one hand underneath your lower back and feel how the bones of your lower spine will not move while doing the breathing exercise. Take a deep breath in and let your belly expand with air (5b). When you exhale, imagine turning the magnet ON and drawing your navel closer to your spine without flattening your back onto your bottom hand (5c).



5a – pelvis in neutral position



5b



5c

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Part 2: Illustrated Exercises

Exercise 1 – Encourages spinal rotation

Move your feet and knees so that they touch each other. Imagine that they are glued together and they cannot come apart. Sway both knees together to the right just a few inches. Switch sides. After a few repetitions, the knees sway one way and you will look over your opposite shoulder.



Exercise 2 – Mobilizes the hip joints

Lying on your back, fold one knee into your chest. Place your hand on top of our kneecap with your fingers pointing towards your toes (shown). Use your hand to stir your thighbone around in a slow circular motion.



Exercise 3 – Stretches chest, back muscles and shoulders

Lie on your back with knees bent, feet flat. Reach your arms to the sky and interlace your fingers together. Turn your hands so that your palms face the ceiling (3a). Slowly float both arms back (3b). Float them to the ceiling (3a)



3a



3b

Exercise 4 - Mobilizes the shoulder joint

Lie on your side with your knees bent. Reach your arms forward at shoulder height (4a). Imagine your top arm is like the second hand on a clock. Sweep it overhead (4b), behind you (4c), over your hip (4d) and back to your start position.



4a



4b



4c



4d

Exercise 5 – Mobilizes the hip & strengthens the deep hip rotator muscles

Lie on your right side. Your knees are bent and forward. Keep your feet touching each other as you exhale and open your top knee like a clamshell. Release your knee down.



Exercise 6 – Strengthens the hips, rotators and deep abdominals

Straighten your top leg. Your bottom leg will remain bent and forward a bit. Lift your top leg up to the height of your hipbone (6a). Turn it out a bit so that your toes point slightly to the sky. Exhale and lift your top leg up six or eight inches (6b). Lower it to the height of your hip (6a).



6a



6b

Exercise 7 – Strengthens your upper back and stabilizes your lower back

Lie on your tummy with your forehead resting on your towel, arms by your sides. Roll both shoulders away from the mat keeping your forehead down on the towel (7a). Roll both shoulders away from the mat and float your forehead so it hovers over your towel (7b).



7a



7b

Exercise 8 – Ab Curl Variations challenge all four layers of your abdominals

The variations are cued starting from the correct ab curl position. Lie on your back. Interlace your fingers together and place them under your head. Curl up and forward. In a correct ab curl position, your weight will rest on your spine at the bottom of your shoulder blades or the place where your bra strap crosses your back. From this position, there are variations added. *Please note that you will not be doing a full sit-up because that works the hip flexor muscles more than the abdominals.*



Correct position for ab curl and variations

Exercise 9 – Mobilizes your entire spine in a functional, standing position

Stand with your feet hip width apart, knees bent. Place your hands on your thighs for support. Tuck your chin and tailbone allowing your spine to round (9a). Lift your chin and tail up allowing your spine to arch (9b).



9a

9b

Exercise 10 – Gentle spinal rotation while training for balance

Stand with your right foot on top of your left. Hands to opposite shoulders. (10a). Lift your heart and keep your hipbones facing forward as you twist your ribs to the left (10b), back to centre (10a), and to the right (10c).



10a

10b

10c