

## Personalizing Pilates / runners

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**Part 1:** How to find Neutral Pelvis

**Part 2:** Illustrated Exercises for /runners 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

2b

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

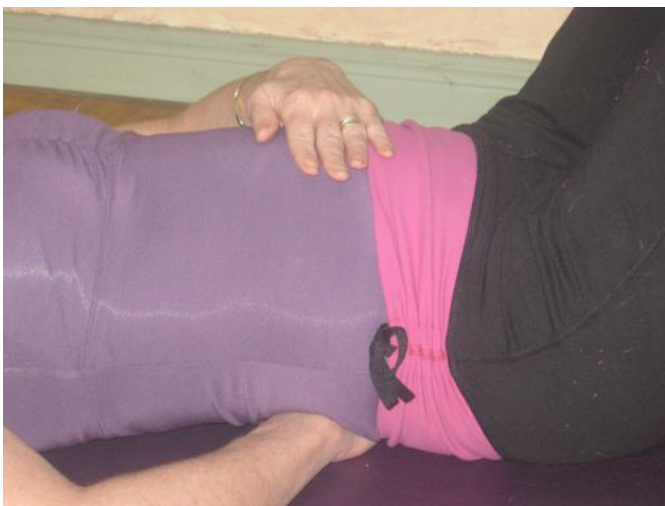
The muscles that support our spines when we are in a neutral pelvis position contract and become stronger only when we exhale. So in order to strengthen these deep muscles, we use breathing in Pilates exercises while maintaining a neutral pelvis position.

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

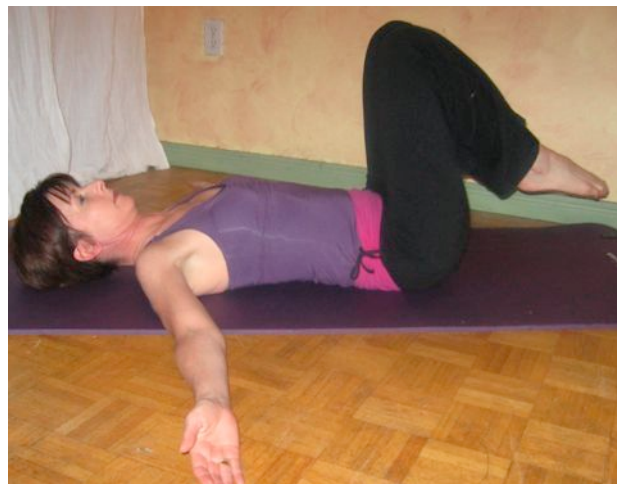


5c

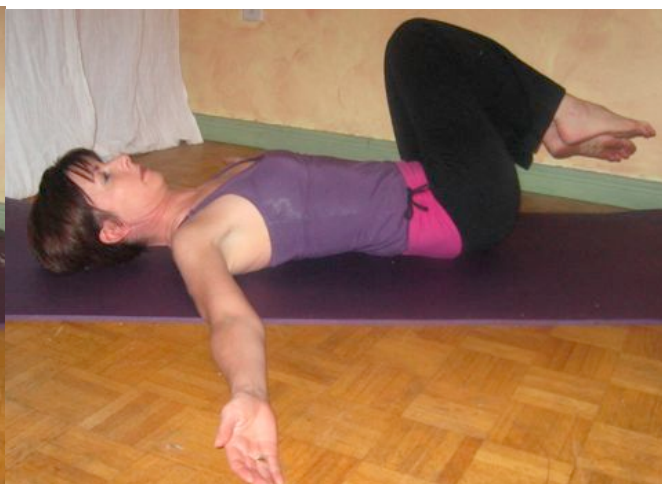
## Part 2: Illustrated Exercises for Personalizing Pilates/runners

### Exercise 1 – Stretches back, hip and abdominal muscles

Lying on your back, fold your knees in so that your feet are off the floor (1a). Start by swaying your knees to the side, keeping shoulders down on the mat (1b). Look over your opposite shoulder (1c).



1a



1b



1c

## **Exercise 2 – Strengthens all four layers of your abdominals**

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 (2a). Please note that you will not be doing a full sit-up because that works the hip muscles more than the abdominals. From this position, twist your armpit to your opposite hip bone (2b and 2c).



2a - Correct position for ab curl starting position



2b



2c

### **Exercise 3 – Strengthens core abdominals while hip is in motion**

Start lying on your side with your bottom knee bent and forward. Your top leg is long and lifted to the height of your hip (3a). Slowly swing your top leg forward (3b), return to your start position (3a) and slowly lift your top leg up six to eight inches (3c).



3a



3b



3c

## **Exercise 4 – Strengthens your abdominals while the leg is in motion**

Start in the ab curl position (4a). Fold your right leg in. As you twist your left armpit towards your right hip, straighten your right leg away from you at about 45 degrees (4b).



4a



4b

## **Exercise 5 – Strengthens your hamstrings, buttocks and abdominals**

Start with both feet flat on the floor. Arms rest by your sides. Starting at your tailbone, start to curl your spine up off the mat one vertebra at a time until your hips are floating in the air (5a). Lift your right foot off the mat (5b). Place your foot back down. If you are unable to lift the foot and keep your hips level, try lifting just your heel and leave your toes down.



5a



5b



## **Exercise 6 – Strengthens your hamstrings, glutes, lower back and abs**

Lie on your tummy with your hands under your hips. Start by lifting one leg just a few inches over the mat while keeping your hips level (6a). Switch sides (not shown). Lift both legs off the mat and keep your hips level. Open your legs to a V shape (6b) and close.



6a



6b

## Exercise 7 – Stretches the hamstrings & strengthens your upper body

Start in a hands and knees position with your toes tucked under (not shown). Lift your hips up and back and let your head hang heavy (7a). Lift one leg up and back just a few inches (7b). Release and switch.



7a



7b

## **Exercise 8 – Mobilizes and stretches your obliques in upright position**

In a tall kneeling position, take your hands to your opposite shoulders (8a). Keeping your hips forward, twist your ribs to the left (8b), return to centre (8a) and twist your ribs to the right (8c).



8a

8b

8c

## **Exercise 9 – Mobilizes & strengthens IT band and encourages balance**

Stand with your weight on the four corners of your right foot. Place your left heel on top of your right foot. Hips stay facing forward (9a). Slide your right hip out to the right side (9b). Slide it back underneath you (9a).



9a

9b

## **Exercise 10 – Strengthens quads, hamstrings, glutes and abs and helps you run uphill**

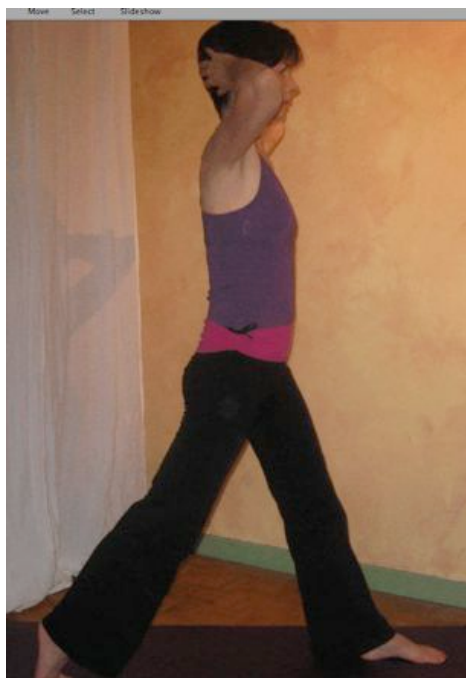
Start in a standing wide stance with your arms out to the sides (10a) or an advanced option is to place your hands behind your head (10c). Keeping your body upright, bend both knees slowly (10b/10d) so that your front knee points to the space between your first and second toes. Try not to lean forward as you bend and stretch.



10a



10b



10c



10d