

Pilates Mat Exercises for Dancers

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The following exercise sequence represents selected Pilates mat exercises that correspond to specific components of dance technique. It is not the full Pilates mat routine. However, the order of the exercises resembles the classical sequence and should be followed for proper performance of the exercise progression. *Italicized exercises* are those that have been inserted to ensure that participants are adequately warmed up and that the exercise sequence proceeds safely and thoroughly. The information in the “Dance Movement/Concept” column represents the dance movement or concept that corresponds to the Pilates exercise as well as pedagogical cues highlighting the similarities between the Pilates exercise and the dance movement or concept.

References consulted for information about the Pilates mat and apparatus exercises include *The Pilates Method Manual of Exercises* by Romana Kryzanowska and Bob Liekens; *The Pilates Method of Body Conditioning* by Sean Gallagher and Romana Kryzanowska; *The Pilates Body* by Brooke Siler; *Pilates* by Rael Isacowitz; *The Anatomy of Pilates* by Paul Massey; and “What Is This Thing Called Core? Pilates: The Core and More” by Karen Smith.

Exercise	Description	Reps	Primary Muscles	Purpose	Notes/ Cues	Dance Movement/ Concept
Imprinting	Lie on back with knees bent, feet flat on floor, and arms extended by sides. Pull abdominals inward and pelvis floor muscles upward to tuck pelvis and depress lower back to mat, exhaling. Inhale and return pelvis to neutral. (Smith)	5	Transverse abdominis, pelvic floor muscles	Activate abdominals and bring focus to center, find “spine to mat” position, stabilize trunk and spine using Powerhouse/ core muscles	-use abdominals to tuck pelvis, thinking of pulling navel to spine -keep movements small and controlled -use only abdominals and pelvic floor, keep shoulders relaxed	Core stabilization and abdominal support: contracting abdominals, extending hip joint to keep pelvis in neutral, stabilize torso, and prevent anterior pelvic tilt
<i>Hundred</i>	Lie on back with abdominals engaged, lower back on mat, and arms long by the sides. Pull knees into chest. Bring chin to chest, lift head and upper back off mat, and extend the legs straight up to the ceiling with the arms reaching long slightly off the mat. Look at the navel and keep the base of the shoulder blades on the mat. Pump the arms straight up and down above the mat, inhaling for 5 counts and exhaling for 5 counts. End by lowering the head, bending the knees into the chest, and placing the arms long on the mat. (Siler 52)	100-10 sets of 10 pumps	Abdominals, neck flexors (sternocleidomastoid), hip flexors, serratus anterior (Massey 63)	Warm up, stimulate circulation and breathing, bring focus to abdominals (Siler 53)	-lower legs as abdominal strength increases, ideally to eye level, but never let low back arch off mat -keep shoulders down and arms straight -keep spine neutral and abdominals engaged -pump arm vigorously with control, off mat	Find sustained abdominal contraction and inner thigh engagement
Roll Up	Lie on back with legs extended in Pilates stance, arms behind head in line with ears and straight. Bring arms straight up over shoulders, inhale, and lift chin to chest, peeling one vertebra at a time off the mat. Roll up until shoulders are over hips. Exhale and stretch forward over legs, keeping sitz bones on mat. Inhale, tuck tailbone, and roll down one vertebrae at a time back onto the mat. When arms are over shoulders and backs of shoulders touch mat, exhale, place head down and reach arms back in line with ears. (Siler 54)	3-5	Rectus abdominis, obliques, iliopsoas, gluteals, latissimus dorsi (Massey 65)	Articulate the spine (primary purpose), strengthen abdominals, stretch back extensors and hamstrings (Smith, Massey 65)	-keep lower body still -keep shoulders down, do not tense neck and shoulders to roll up -keep chin into chest -pull abdominals back when stretching forward -keep ribs down when arms reach back -keep spine lengthened -roll fluidly -relax hip flexors and tuck pelvis, extending hip joint to initiate rolling back down (Siler 55, Massey 65)	Spinal articulation -correct pelvic alignment -pulling in abdominals initiates the rolling -tucking pelvis initiates return from spinal flexion
Single Leg Circles	Lie on back with legs extended in Pilates stance and arms extended down by sides, palms down. Bend right knee into chest and extend right leg to ceiling in Pilates stance (turned out), keeping left leg down on mat. Circle the right leg across to the left shoulder, down, around to the right shoulder, and back up to the center. Perform 5 repetitions and then reverse the circle. Repeat with left leg. Inhale on the first part of the circle and exhale on the second part. Finish by bending left knee into chest and extending it on mat next to right leg. (Siler 58, Kryzanowska M3)	5 each way	Hip adductors, abductors, and flexors; deep outward rotators; hamstrings (Massey 69)	Articulate leg in hip joint, warm up hip joint range of motion; strengthen adductors and abductors, stretch hamstrings; improve trunk and pelvic stability using abdominals; improve ability to move leg freely in hip joint (hip joint circumduction, moving leg in circle) while stabilizing torso and pelvis in proper alignment	-do not move hips or torso as leg circles, keep pelvis and back anchored to mat -accent the cross and “up” of each circle -keep circling leg turned out, do not allow it to turn in or hip to lift -keep circles small, controlled, and within hip joint; enlarge circles as strength increases -cross inner thigh when circling -only open leg to outside shoulder (Kryzanowska M3)	<i>Rond de jambe</i> Move leg in circle while keeping turnout and stabilizing torso and pelvis in proper alignment

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Abdominal Series		5-10	Transverse abdominis, rectus abdominis, obliques, neck flexors (sternocleidomastoid)	Abdominal stabilization: keeping the abdominals engaged to stabilize torso and pelvis as arms and legs move		Torso stabilization through continued abdominal contraction
Single Leg Stretch	Lie on back and bring chin to chest, lifting head and neck off mat. Bend right knee in to chest and place left hand on right knee and right hand on right ankle. Extend left leg off mat in Pilates stance while keeping low back on mat. Change legs and hand position. Inhale for 1 set (right and left) and exhale for 1 set.	5-10	Transverse abdominis, rectus abdominis, neck flexors (sternocleidomastoid), hip flexors (iliopsoas), hip extensors (gluteus maximus, hamstrings), hip adductors, quadratus lumborum (Massey 73)	Improve abdominal stabilization and coordination	-keep low back on mat and abdominals pulling in -start with extended leg up to ceiling and lower it as strength increases, ideally to eye level, while keeping low back on mat -use hand position to keep hip, knee, and ankle aligned -keep elbows lifted out to sides -move legs along midline (Kryzanowska M5)	Torso stabilization through continued abdominal contraction
Double Leg Stretch	Keeping chin to chest, bend both knees into chest and places hands around ankles. Extend legs off mat in Pilates stance and arms behind head. Open arms to sides and circle them around to ankles again as knees bend in. Inhale as arms and legs bend and exhale as they extend.	5-10	Transverse abdominis, rectus abdominis, neck flexors (sternocleidomastoid), hip flexors (iliopsoas), hip extensors (gluteus maximus, hamstrings), hip adductors, pectorals, shoulder extensors (latissimus dorsi), scapula depressors (lower trapezius) (Massey 75)	Improve abdominal stabilization, stretch shoulders, open chest	-keep abdominals pulling in -keep low back and pelvis stable on mat -start with legs extended up to ceiling and lower them as strength increases, ideally to eye level, while keeping low back on mat -keep shoulders down -keep elbows lifted out to sides -keep ribs in when arms extend back (Kryzanowska M5)	Torso stabilization through continued abdominal contraction
Single Straight Leg	Keeping chin to chest, extend both legs up to ceiling in Pilates stance with the heels touching. Place hands around right ankle, lower left leg to eye level, and pulse right leg towards body twice. "Scissor" the legs, switching them while keeping them straight, and repeat with left leg. Inhale for 1 set (right and left) and exhale for 1 set.	5-10	Transverse abdominis, rectus abdominis, neck flexors (sternocleidomastoid), hip flexors (iliopsoas), hamstrings (Massey 77)	Improve abdominal stabilization, stretch hamstrings	-keep abdominals pulling in -keep low back and pelvis stable on mat -keep free leg above eye level if low back arches off mat -keep knees straight -keep chest open and shoulders down (grab lower than ankle if necessary) -keep elbows lifted out to sides (Kryzanowska M8, Massey 77)	Torso stabilization through continued abdominal contraction
Double Straight Leg	Keeping chin to chest, extend both legs up to ceiling in Pilates stance with the heels touching. Place both hands behind head at base of skull, 1 hand on top of the other, with elbows open. Lower legs for 3 counts only as far as low back can remain on mat. Exhale and lift legs back up to ceiling in 1 count.	5-10	Transverse abdominis, rectus abdominis, neck flexors (sternocleidomastoid), hip flexors (iliopsoas), hip adductors, gluteals (Massey 79)	Improve and challenge abdominal stabilization	-keep abdominals pulling in -keep low back and pelvis stable on mat -accent the "up" as the legs lift -keep shoulders down and elbows open (Kryzanowska M9)	Torso stabilization through continued abdominal contraction
Criss Cross	Keeping chin to chest and hands behind head, bend knees so legs form 90° angle above the mat. Bend right knee into chest and extend left leg in Pilates stance. Twist left elbow towards right knee and look behind right elbow. Pass through center, with legs bent at 90° angle above the mat and both sides of back on mat, and repeat to other side. Inhale when in center and exhale on twist.	5-10 (3-5 sets)	Obliques emphasized in twisting, rectus abdominis, transverse abdominis, neck flexors (sternocleidomastoid), hip flexors (iliopsoas)	Improve abdominal stabilization, strengthen obliques, enhance control of spinal rotation/ twisting with pelvic stability	-keep abdominals pulling in and low back on mat -keep both hips on mat -keep both elbows open -keep shoulders and elbows off mat -form 90° angle above the mat when 1 or both knees are bent -twist waist from front of shoulder, don't lead with elbow (Kryzanowska M10, Massey 81)	Torso stabilization through continued abdominal contraction Keeping pelvis still while spine twists

Exercise	Description	Reps	Primary Muscles	Purpose	Notes/ Cues	Dance Movement/ Concept
Spine Stretch Forward	Sit tall with legs straight, parallel, and slightly wider than shoulder width apart. Flex ankles and extend arms forward shoulder width apart and at shoulder height with palms down. Starting with the head, roll down the spine, articulating the vertebrae and reaching arms forward. Keep both sitz bones on mat. Stretch over legs. Roll back up spine to sit tall. Inhale as you roll down, exhale on the stretch forward, inhale to roll up, and exhale to finish.	3-5	Lower abdominals (rectus abdominis, transverse abdominis), back extensors (erector spinae, semispinalis, deep posterior spinal muscles), hamstrings, hip flexors (iliopsoas) (Massey 83)	Articulate the spine, improve posture, stretch hamstrings and back extensors	-keep both sitz bones on mat, do not stretch so far forward that pelvis lifts off mat -articulate each vertebrae -round the lower back into a C curve -do not collapse arms or torso down -keep abdominals pulling in -do not hunch or lift shoulders	Spinal articulation -keeping abdominals engaged, pelvis aligned, and torso lengthened in proper posture while rolling down and up spine
Neck Roll/ Swan	Neck Roll: Lie on stomach with hands on mat under shoulders and legs extended together in Pilates stance. Lift head, neck, and upper back off mat. Turn head to right, circle it forward, turn it to left, and return to center. Repeat head circle left. Lower upper body down to mat slowly. Inhale on the 1 st part of lifting and lowering upper body, exhale on the 2 nd part. (Kryzanowska M14) Swan: Instead of lowering to mat after 3 rd neck roll, straighten elbows, exhale, release hands in front of you with palms up, and rock forward. Lift legs as you rock forward, keeping them together in Pilates stance. Use momentum and rock upper body back up. Repeat rocking motion. (Kryzanowska M23)	3 sets	Back extensors, especially thoracic (erector spinae, semispinalis), gluteals, hamstrings, pectorals, shoulder external rotators and extensors, scapula depressors	Strengthen back extensors and improve spinal hyperextension; strengthen gluteals and hamstrings; stretch chest, abdominals, and hip flexors	-keep abdominals and ribs pulling in and up off the mat -keep shoulders down and still, do not move shoulders when head turns -keep chest open -arch upper and middle, not lower, back -only perform the Swan if the motion can be controlled with a strong Powerhouse -keep legs together -keep neck long	<i>Cambré derrière</i> Hyperextension of upper spine: arching upper, not lower, back while keeping abdominals supported, pelvis aligned, chest open, and shoulders down
Double Leg Kicks	Lie on stomach with legs extended together in Pilates stance and right cheek on mat. Put 1 hand on top of the other and place hands on back between shoulder blades, elbows reaching down to mat. Kick heels towards bottom 3 times with knees bent and legs together in parallel. Extend legs in Pilates stance, bring head to center, and lift upper back off mat while exhaling and extending arms along back. Lower upper body with left cheek on mat, bend arms, and place hands between shoulder blades. (Kryzanowska M25)	2 sets (4 reps)	Back extensors, especially thoracic (erector spinae, semispinalis), gluteals, hamstrings, pectorals, shoulder external rotators and extensors, scapula depressors (Massey 95)	Strengthen back extensors and improve spinal hyperextension; strengthen gluteals and hamstrings; stretch and open chest and shoulders	-keep pelvis still and both hips on mat when kicking heels towards bottom -keep knees together and legs parallel during kicks -keep abdominals and ribs pulling in and pelvis on mat -emphasize lengthening spine and arching through upper back, not lower back -open chest and front of shoulders, keep shoulders down -keep neck long (Massey 95)	<i>Cambré derrière</i> Hyperextension of upper spine: arching upper, not lower, back while keeping abdominals supported, pelvis aligned, chest open, and shoulders down
Shoulder Bridge	Lie on back with knees bent, feet flat on mat, and arms extended down by sides. Tuck pelvis and roll spine up off mat 1 vertebrae at a time, starting at the base of the spine, until shoulders, hips, and knees are in a diagonal line. Keeping hips lifted, extend right leg forward, lift it to ceiling, and bring it down in line with left knee. Perform 3 kicks with right leg, place right foot down on mat with pelvis still up, and repeat kicks with left leg. Place left foot on mat and roll spine down to mat 1 vertebrae at a time. Inhale when lifting spine or leg up, exhale when lowering. (Kryzanowska M26)	3 kicks each leg or 3 sets with bridge held	Gluteals, hamstrings, adductors, vastus medialis, abdominals (Massey 103)	Strengthen gluteals, hamstrings, and adductors; promote correct alignment of knees over center toes on 1 and both legs; maintain trunk extension (Massey 103)	-roll up and down spine 1 vertebrae at a time -keep legs parallel; engage adductors to bring inner thighs towards each other and prevent thighs from rolling outward (abducting) -keep shoulders, hips, and knees in 1 diagonal line -keep pelvis tucked and abdominals pulling in -do not arch low back -keep both hips lifted at same height	Proper knee joint tracking (knees align over centers of feet), correcting patellofemoral pain by strengthening vastus medialis
Spine Twist	Sit tall on sitz bones with legs extended together in front of you and feet flexed. Extended arms out to sides with palms down. Inhale and twist torso to right, looking over back arm. Exhale and return to center. Repeat, twisting left.	3 sets	Obliques, back extensors; pectorals to keep chest open; shoulder abductors and external rotators; latissimus dorsi to keep elbows lifted and pointing back	Strengthen obliques, open chest, improve posture, enhance spinal range of motion in twisting (rotation) (Massey 105)	-twist from the waist, not the arms; carry arms with spine -keep arms in straight line -keep shoulders down and level -stabilize pelvis, keep both sitz bones on mat and hips square -keep spine long in lifted posture -keep elbows lifted and pointing back	Maintaining proper posture -spine long and lengthened, pelvis aligned in neutral, abdominals engaged, chest open, shoulders down Spinal rotation in arabesque

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Side Leg Kicks	Lie on 1 side with body along back edge of mat. Bend bottom arm and place hand behind head, place other hand on mat in front of torso. Keeping hips stacked on top of each other, bring both legs forward at an angle to front corner of mat. Keep legs in Pilates stance. After Beats on Stomach, perform entire Side Leg Kicks series on other side, using other leg.		Hip adductors, abductors, flexors, extensors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen inner and outer thighs, increase strength and mobility in hip joint, enhance leg range of motion and control with torso stabilized	-keep entire torso (elbow to tailbone) stable, lengthened, and aligned along back edge of mat -keep legs externally rotated in Pilates stance, with toes upward and heels downward -keep hips stacked on top of each other	<i>Battements</i> front, side, and back; beats
Front/Back	Lift top leg hip height, inhale, and swing it forward, pulsing twice. Exhale and swing leg backward, passing through Pilates stance. Repeat, swinging front and back. End with legs together in Pilates stance. (Kryzanowska M18)	5-10	Hip flexors, extensors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen hip flexors and extensors while keeping torso stable and aligned; improve leg extensions to front and back	-keep external rotation, do not lift hip and turn in leg when kicking front -keep knee straight, abdominals supported, and ribs in when kicking back -keep leg at hip height -stabilize torso	<i>Battements</i> front and back -stabilizing torso and pelvis in neutral alignment through hip flexion and extension -maintaining hip external rotation
Up/Down	Kick top leg straight up to the side with foot pointed while inhaling. Exhale, flex foot, and lower leg back down with resistance. Start and end with legs together in Pilates stance. (Kryzanowska M19)	3-5	Hip flexors, extensors, adductors, abductors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen hip abductors, adductors, and flexors while keeping torso stable and aligned; improve leg extensions to side	-do not roll hip forward/backward or disrupt pelvis as leg moves up and down -keep leg turned out	<i>Battements</i> side -stabilizing torso and pelvis I neutral alignment through leg extensions to side (hip abduction, adduction, and flexion) -maintaining hip external rotation
Hot Potato	Lift top leg up to side. Tap heel twice in front of bottom foot. Kick top leg up to side. Tap heel twice behind bottom foot. Kick top leg up and repeat taps front and back. (Kryzanowska M31)	3-5	Hip flexors, adductors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen adductors, improve control and stability in pelvis and torso as leg moves	-cross top of inner thighs when foot taps -keep external rotation and pelvis stable -accent up on taps	Beats (<i>battu</i>) -using hip adductors to cross and beat the inner thighs -maintaining hip external rotation as the leg crosses in front and behind, as in 5 th position
Beats	Lift both legs off mat, keeping heels together in Pilates stance. Perform small beats from the inner thighs, opening the legs slightly and then bringing the inner thighs together vigorously. Lower both legs with control. (Kryzanowska M30)	At least 8 counts of beats	Hip adductors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen adductors	-beat inner thighs -keep pelvis stable and hips stacked and turned out	Beats (<i>battu</i>) -using hip adductors to beat the inner thighs, as in jumps
Grand Rond de Jambe	Lift top leg hip height and extend it forward. Rotating in hip, lift leg up to ceiling. Bring the leg to the back at hip level. Bring the heels together in Pilates stance and repeat the circle. Reverse after 3 repetitions, starting to the back. (Kryzanowska M32)	3 each way (3 start front, 3 start back)	Hip flexors, extensors, abductors, adductors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen hip flexors, extensors, abductors, adductors, and deep outward rotators; improve hip joint range of motion and control, circumducting the hip joint (moving the leg in a circle) while stabilizing the torso and pelvis in alignment	-keep external rotation -keep hips stacked on top of each other; do not let hips "roll" or distort pelvis, especially to back -circle leg fluidly	<i>Rond de jambe</i> , especially <i>grand rond de jambe</i> Move leg in circle while keeping turnout and stabilizing torso and pelvis in proper alignment
Beats on Stomach	Lie on stomach with legs extended together in Pilates stance. Place 1 hand on top of the other and places back of hands on forehead, palms and elbows on mat. Lift legs straight up from hips and beat. Roll onto other side for Side Leg Kicks series with other leg.	16-20 beats	Hip extensors, adductors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen hip extensors and adductors	-keep knees straight and legs turned out -keep abdominals pulling in and pelvis aligned -keep both hips on mat -beat inner thighs	Arabesque and <i>battements</i> derriere -extending hip joint (moving leg back) while keeping leg turned out and straight -sustaining proper pelvic alignment and abdominal support when leg moves to back

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<i>Teaser 1</i>	Lie on back with arms down by sides. Bend knees into chest. Extend arms behind head in line with ears and legs out a 45° angle with heels together in Pilates stance, keeping lower back flat on mat. Bring arms straight over shoulders and roll up 1 vertebra at a time to a V position with arms parallel to legs. Lift arms straight up in line with ears and roll back down to mat 1 vertebra at a time. Inhale rolling up and exhale rolling down. (Kryzanowska M20)	3	Abdominals (especially rectus abdominis), hip flexors, adductors, deep outward rotators	Strengthen hip flexors, abdominals, and deep outward rotators; improve balance and control (Massey 115)	-keep legs stable, do not let them lower and lift -keep ribs in when arms extend up and behind head -keep low back on mat and abdominals engaged when legs and arms extend -roll up to balance on coccyx, behind sitz bones, -keep abdominals pulling in and pelvis tucked -articulate spine, rolling 1 vertebrae at a time -keep lower back curved and upper back lengthened in Teaser position -use deep outward rotators and adductors to engage inner thighs and keep legs together	(Balance, control, rolling up and down spine, maintaining abdominal support and engagement of deep outward rotators)
Swimming	Lie on stomach with legs extended together in Pilates stance and arms extended in front of head shoulder width apart. Lift upper back, right arm, and left leg, keeping arm and leg straight. Alternate lifting arms and legs, always lifting the opposite arm and leg together, while keeping upper back lifted off mat. Inhale for 5 counts and exhale for 5 counts. (Kryzanowska M36)	2 sets of inhaling for 5 counts and exhaling for 5 counts while switching arms and legs	Hip extensors and deep outward rotators, upper back extensors, anterior chest muscles	Strengthen upper back extensors and hip extensors; improve trunk stability, coordination, and control (Massey 119)	-keep arms and legs straight -keep neck long -keep shoulders down and chest open -keep abdominals pulling in -stabilize and lengthen torso -keep movement controlled	Arabesque and <i>battements derrière</i> -extending hip joint (moving leg back) while keeping leg turned out and straight -sustaining proper pelvic alignment and abdominal support when leg moves to back -stabilizing torso while arms and legs move, especially not twisting torso or leaning when leg is extended back -keeping upper spine extended when leg is in arabesque -feeling connection between opposite arm and leg (opposite arm extends forward as leg extends back) to promote squareness through torso
<i>Seal</i>	Sit up on sitz bones. Open knees shoulder width, place arms inside legs, and reach hands around to hold ankles. Lift feet off mat by pulling in abdominals and tucking pelvis to balance on coccyx. Clap legs (open and close soles of feet) 3 times. Roll back to shoulder blades. Clap legs 3 times while on shoulder blades. Roll up to balance on coccyx with feet off mat. Repeat. Inhale to roll back and exhale to roll up. (Kryzanowska M21)	6	Abdominals, hip flexors	Cool down, stretch hip flexors, massage spine, improve balance and coordination (Massey 131)	-initiate rolling back by pulling in abdominals -roll back onto shoulder blades not neck -think of clapping legs, not just feet, to work legs from hip flexors -roll evenly on both sides of spine -keep pelvis tucked, lower back round, and abdominals in	(relaxing hip flexors, continued abdominal support, symmetry on both sides of spine)
Push Ups	Stand tall at back of mat with legs in Pilates stance and arms extended straight over head, shoulder width apart and palms forward. Roll down 1 vertebrae at a time until palms touch mat. Walk out to plank position, moving hands forward 4 times and allowing heels to lift until hands are directly under shoulders and torso is in a straight horizontal line. Bend and straighten elbows 3 times, keeping elbows in next to ribs not out. Lift hips into an inverted V shape and walk hands back 4 times to in front of feet. Roll up 1 vertebra at a time to stand tall with arms overhead. (Kryzanowska M42)	3 sets of 3 push-ups	Abdominals, triceps, serratus anterior, trapezius, rhomboids, latissimus dorsi, back extensors, gluteals	Strengthen abdominals, triceps, and shoulder/chest muscles; improve torso and shoulder stability; enhance trunk alignment (Massey 137)	-keep body in 1 straight line in push-up (plank) position: keep abdominals in, pelvis neutral, torso in a straight horizontal line -do not arch lower back or let torso "sag" -keep elbows in next to ribs when bending and straightening -do not left pelvis shift sideways when hands move forward and back -keep hands directly under shoulders (shoulders over wrists) in plank position -do not lock elbows when they straighten -keep scapulae still: stabilize scapulae down on the back -keep head in line with spine, don't drop neck in push-up position -keep ribs in when arms over head (Massey 137)	Stabilizing torso in correct alignment: the plank position is correct standing alignment transposed to the horizontal plane -continued abdominal contraction -hip extension; engaging abdominals, gluteals to prevent anterior pelvic tilt -engaging back extensors to keep spine long -using pectorals to keep chest open -scapula stabilization: keeping shoulders engaged down the back, not moving scapula when arms move -head in line with spine Proper standing alignment/posture -abdominals engaged, ribs in, shoulders down, pelvis under when arms over head Spinal articulation: rolling down and up spine

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Chest Expansion	Stand tall in Pilates stance with arms straight down by sides. Inhale and press arms back, keeping arms straight and palms facing back. Open shoulders and chest as much as possible. Turn head to right, then left, then back to center while holding breath. Exhale and bring arms forward to starting position. Repeat, alternating the initial direction the head turns. (Siler 161)	4 sets	Pectorals, shoulder external rotators and extensors, scapula depressors and adductors, triceps	Open chest, externally rotate shoulders, improve posture and torso stabilization (upper body control), stretch neck, strengthen triceps	-open chest and shoulders as much as possible -do not thrust ribs forward or arch lower back; maintain abdominal support and correct spinal-pelvic alignment	Opening the chest and keeping shoulders down (externally rotating and extending shoulders while adducting, depressing, and stabilizing scapulae) while keeping rest of torso aligned

Source for mat exercises: Exercise descriptions, repetitions, and notes/cues were obtained primarily from Romana Kryzanowska's *The Pilates Method Manual of Exercises* and Brooke Siler's *The Pilates Body*. Primary muscles were obtained mainly from Paul Massey's *The Anatomy of Pilates* and exercise purposes were obtained from *The Pilates Method Manual of Exercises* and *The Anatomy of Pilates*. The Imprinting exercise was obtained from Karen Smith's "What Is This Thing Called Core."

Pilates mat exercises are an effective way to challenge your muscles and boost overall fitness quickly. Try Adding Pilates Mat Exercises. When it comes to fitness I'm always willing to try something new!not only do I think new workouts help keep fitness exciting and keep you out of a rut but I know that constantly challenging your muscles with new exercises is one of the very best ways to stay in shape without having to spend hours and hours working out. How's this? Because if you do the same exercise over and over and over again your body becomes very efficient at doing that particular exercise and pretty soon you aren't even challenging yourself. Read about Pilates' health benefits (flexibility, core strength training), techniques, mat exercises, safety during pregnancy and Joseph H. Pilates' fitness method. Pilates is a popular method of exercise in the United States, with more than 5 million individuals participating. What is Pilates, and should you be doing it? I'll answer those questions and more in this article. Dance Spirit turned to Youn Kyung Lee, owner of 21 Pilates in NYC, for four mat-based exercises that'll serve your dancer bod best. Fitness fads come and go, but one has stood the test of time: Pilates. Dancers swear by this full-body workout as an effective cross-training regimen. The low-impact moves are easy on any nagging injuries and help keep you lean, toned, centered, and flexible. Dance Spirit turned to Youn Kyung Lee, owner of 21 Pilates in NYC, for four mat-based exercises that'll serve your dancer bod best. Photos by Jayme Thornton. Modeled by Alicia McGinty. Your browser does not support the video tag. The Pilates Hundred. This essential Pilates move regulates your breathing, conditions your abs, and helps your alignment.