

Lose Weight With Pilates

Simple, beginner Pilates equipment-based exercises for a toned, lean and strong body. By Nawaz Modi Singhania



Figure 1



Figure 2

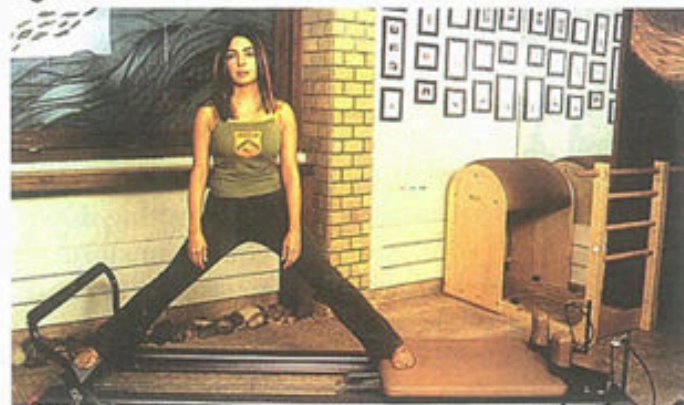


Figure 3

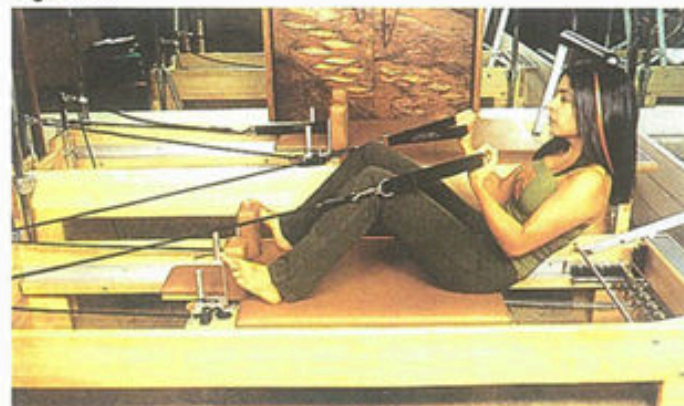


Figure 4

Equipment-based exercises come after their mat-based counterpart. Combine them with a healthy balanced diet, and three sessions a week. Combine pilates with cardio exercise.

Straight Arm Arc (Demonstrated in Figure 1)

Target: Upper body posture correction and arms
Lie back on a Reformer — knees bent and pulled in towards the chest. Hold onto the handle straps, with your arms extended up to the ceiling, hands held about shoulder width apart. Lower the arms to the carriage, by your side. Inhale while lifting arms, exhale while lowering them to your side. Keep the wrists straight throughout the exercise.

Straight Leg Arc (Figure 2)

Target: The pelvic floor, thighs and abdominals.
Lie down on a Reformer with the straps around the arches of your feet. Keep the legs straight. The headrest can be up or down; keeping it up works the abs better. Lift your legs towards the ceiling in a 'V' shape (and even beyond, so long as the tailbone is firmly on the carriage) and down together to a 45° angle. Exhale on the way down, and inhale as you open up into a 'V'.

Standing Leg Slide (Figure 3)

Target: Abs and legs. Also works on body balance
Stand with one foot on the spring frame and the other on the carriage. Slide the legs away from one another and then back in together. Keep the hips right in the middle of the feet throughout the exercise. Exhale when sliding apart and inhale when bringing your feet back together. Repeat with both knees bent right through. After two sets, take a 'U' turn (change sides) and repeat.

Abs Sit-Ups (Figure 4)

Target: Abs
Sit on the Reformer carriage. Keep your back rounded and your arms relatively bent. While holding the straps, uncurl the spine downwards while exhaling (head and shoulders should remain a good distance off from being all the way down) and sit back up while inhaling.

Arm Push

(Figure 5)

Target: To stabilise the shoulder girdle, work the abs — mainly the obliques or waist muscles. Get down on all fours. Place the hand which is closest to the Wunda Chair on the Chair pedal as demonstrated.

Keeping the spine flat and stable and the abs tight throughout the exercise, exhale while straightening this arm out and pushing down towards the floor, and inhale while releasing and bending it.

Do eight reps and then change sides/arms.



Figure 5

Outer Thigh Pelvic Lift

(Figure 6)

Target: The abs and the lower body, especially the outer thighs

Lie on your back with your knees bent, legs apart and feet on a floor mat. Get your legs inside the Magic Circle, placing it above the knees. Maintain a neutral spine.

Squeeze the legs apart and hold this squeeze constantly throughout the exercise.

Bridge up, one vertebrae at a time, slowly coming off the floor while exhaling, and lower yourself down to the floor in the same manner while inhaling.



Figure 6

Dynaband Leg Lower And Lift

(Figure 7)

Target: Legs and abs.

Sit in the C-Shaper, with the left leg bent. Get the dynaband across the ball of the right foot as demonstrated. The right leg remains straight. Hold the ends of the dynaband with bent arms. Lift the leg while inhaling and lower while exhaling.

Make sure the imprinted position of the spine against the C-Shaper is maintained right through. After eight, switch legs and repeat the exercise.



Figure 7

Lying Hamstring Press Down

(Figure 8)

Target: The abs and lower body, especially the hamstrings

Start by lying on a mat with the heels of the feet up on the pedal of the Wunda Chair, while the legs remain bent.

Exhale while pushing the pedal down to the floor with the heels and inhale while releasing upward to the starting position.



Figure 8

Pectoral Squeezes

(Figure 9)

Target: The entire upper body musculature, especially the chest muscles

Hold the pads of the Magic Circle as demonstrated, squeeze both arms inward while breathing out, and release while breathing in. Keep the elbows lowered right through the exercise.

Waist Work/Obliques

(Figure 10)

Target: Waist muscles

Position yourself on the Ladder Barrel as shown and cross your arms at chest level. Laterally, lower the upper body to the barrel, the waist touching it while inhaling.

Lift the upper body back up into an upright position while exhaling.

Do this eight times and then turn over to repeat the exercise on the other side.

Seated Double Leg 'V' Pump

(Figure 11)

Target: Legs and abs

Sit on the Wunda Chair with your feet positioned (in a 'V' shape) on the pedal pad with the balls of the feet on the pad.

Keep the back totally straight and don't let the upper body move or rock back and forth during the exercise.

Pump the feet down and up.

Exhale while going down; inhale while coming up.



Figure 9



Figure 10

Figure 11



Odds & Ends

- All exercises are done for one set of eight reps, unless otherwise specified.
- Take off your shoes and socks while exercising.
- Don't ever lock joints, as it damages joints, and takes the pressure off the working muscles.
- Don't let springs, levers, carriages, pulleys, etc come back to total resting position mid-set.
- Caution: Those with any health problems will need modifications of the following exercises. Perform them only under adequate professional supervision.