

Figure 1

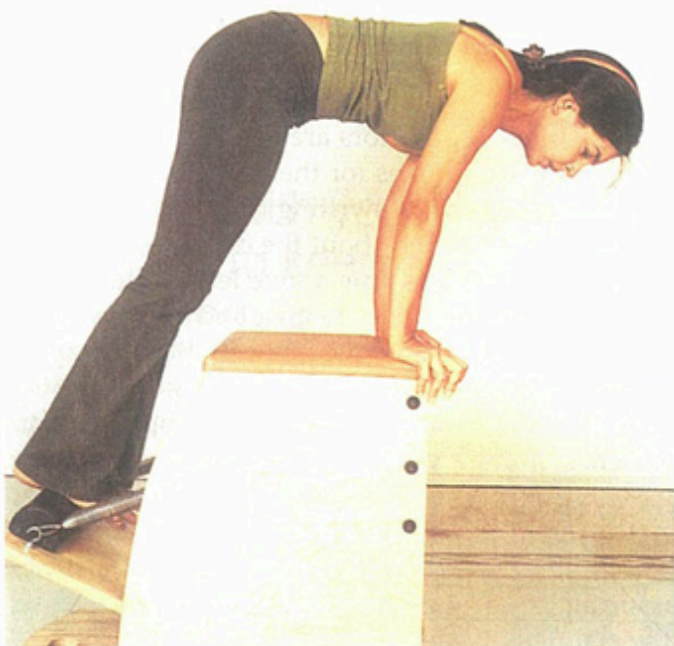


Figure 2



Figure 3

Pilates Revisited

Last issue we gave you the beginner's guide. Nawaz Modi Singhanian gives you the advanced Pilates equipment-based exercises

Pieces of equipment such as the Reformer-Trapezius Combo, Studio Reformer, Allegro Reformer, Combo chair, Wunda chair, C-Shaper, Magic Circle, Barrels are going to plummet you into a new world of fitness.

Upper Back Extension (Figure 1)

Target: Upper body and the core (mid-section)
Lie down on your stomach and keep your legs together and straight throughout the exercise. Stand the Magic Circle up on its edge near your head. Bend your arms overhead and grip both the pads. Push the Magic Circle down to the floor while hyper-extending the upper body. Exhale on your way up and inhale going back down to the starting position.

Hip Lift (Figure 2)

Target: The abdominals and legs
Lean forward into the Wunda Chair and readjust your body weight forward onto the seat while standing on the pedal. Exhale while lifting your hips and inhale while lowering them. Keep your legs straight throughout the exercise.

Triceps Dips (Figure 3)

Target: The upper body, specially the triceps and the core
Grip the handles of the Combo Chair while standing on the foot pedals. Keep the core tight and the upper body straight. Exhale while straightening the arms and lifting the body up, and inhale while bending and lowering. Keep your hips off the seat at all times. The lower you go before lifting yourself up, the more beneficial the exercise gets.

Sit-ups (Figure 4)

Target: Abs and improving spinal mobility
Sit on the step of the Baby Arc/Spinal Corrector with your legs apart, knees bent and feet on the floor. Uncurl the back onto the arc, one vertebra at a time and inhale, until the head is positioned onto the other side of the arc. Keep your arms straight, extend them all the way back overhead and onto the mat while doing this. Exhale while sitting back up slowly to an upright position while your arms circle around to your side and then straight up parallel to each other at shoulder level.

Scissors (Figure 5)

Target: Abs and legs (for flexibility and strength)
Lying with your hips on the arc, hold the arc handles on either side — make sure that the upper/mid back is on the mat so that there is no pressure on the neck. Ensure that throughout the exercise your pelvic section does not rotate on the top of the arc. Keep your hips square (this applies to all arc exercises where hips are on the arc in this manner, until otherwise specified). Keep your legs straight and your feet pointed. Scissor them, forward and backward, wide apart while exhaling and inhale while switching legs (do 8 reps, counting right and left as 1).

Bicycle (Figure 6)

Target: Abs and legs (for flexibility and strength)
Positioned as in the 'Scissors' exercise, imagine riding a large bicycle. Exhale while cycling and inhale while switching legs (do 8 reps, counting right and left as 1).

Lower & Lift (Figure 7)

Target: Abs and legs (for flexibility and strength)
Positioned as in the 'Scissors' exercise, start with keeping your legs straight and feet pointed towards the ceiling. Lower both legs down while exhaling to the extent that the spine still remains neutral and does not arch. Lift the legs back up towards the ceiling while inhaling.

Figure 7

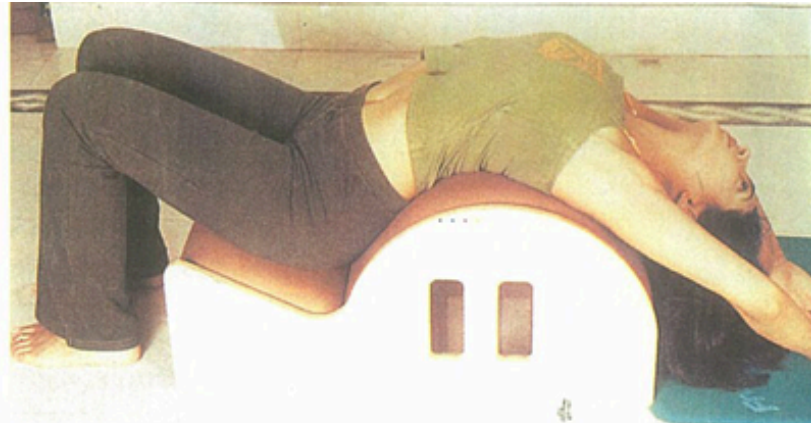


Figure 4

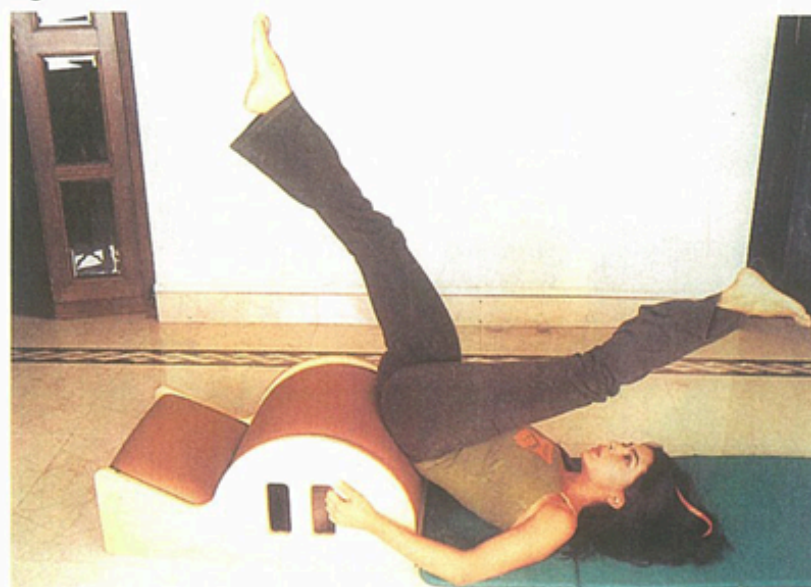


Figure 5



Figure 6



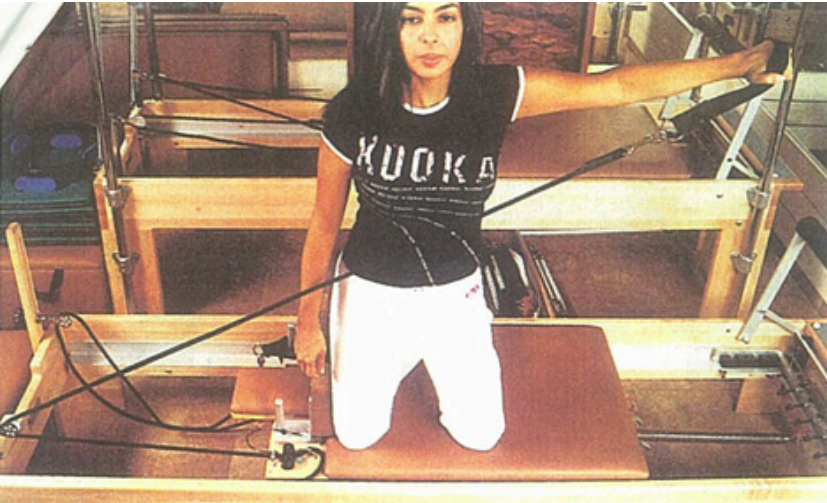


Figure 8

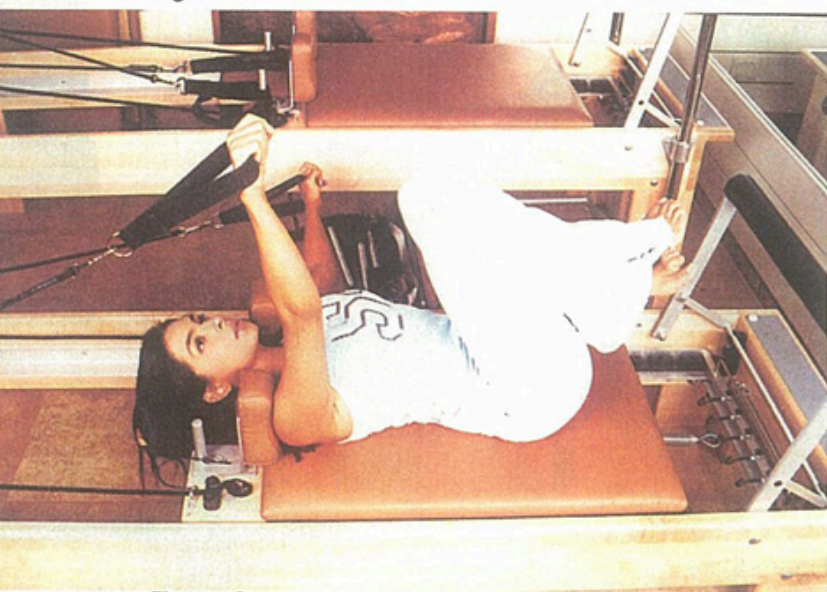


Figure 9

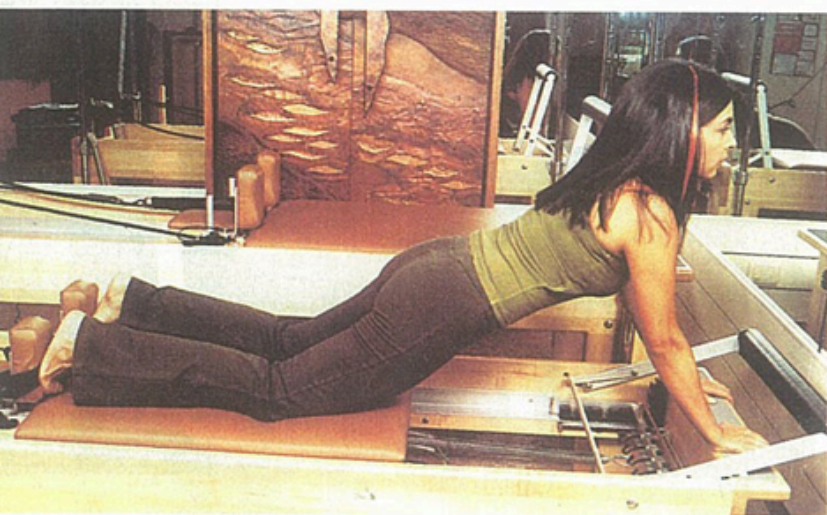
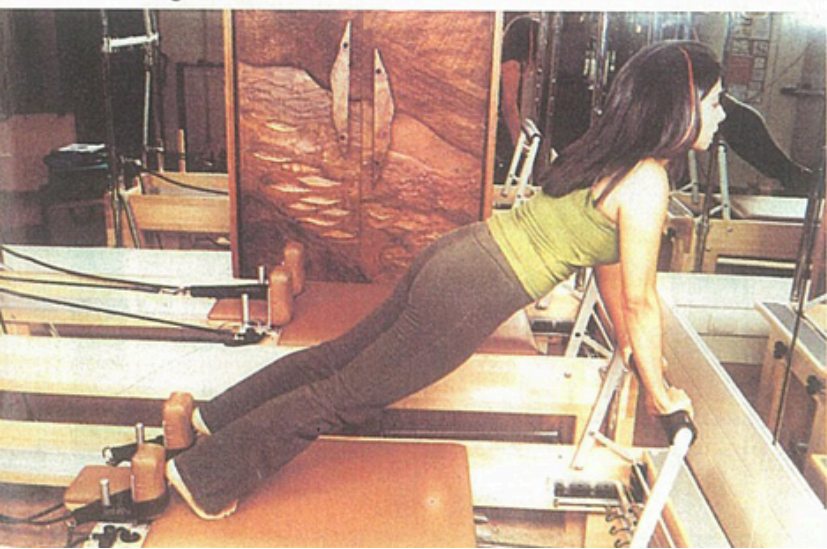


Figure 10



Diagonal Pull (Figure 8)

Target: Core control, arm and shoulder girdle strength

Kneel sideways on any of the Reformer carriages, with your knees about shoulder-width apart. Hold/entwine only the front cable loop with the hand which is further away from it. Exhale while pulling it up in a diagonal lift position and inhale while lowering back to starting position. Do 8 reps per side.

Cheerleading Arms (Figure 9)

Target: Posture, upper back and arms

Lie down on any Reformer with the headrest down, knees bent and close to the chest. Hold cable loops and inhale as you lift the right arm towards the ceiling, moving the left arm to the side in a lateral lift position. Exhale as you press both arms straight down to the carriage by your side. Switch arms (right and left being counted as 1, do 8).

All-fours Core Control (Figure 10)

Target: Core and upper body

Keep the foot-bar down. Get onto all fours as demonstrated. Keep your knees and palms shoulder width apart. While inhaling, using only your arms and shoulders, push back, then slide your knees back until your knees, hips and shoulders are in a diagonal line (keep your back straight). Exhale while using, first the knees and hips and finally, the arms and shoulders to slide back into starting position.

Inverted 'V' Stretch (Figure 11)

Target: Hamstring and back flexibility and strength

Using any Reformer, raise the foot-bar up to the highest level. Stand on the carriage with heels in the middle of the shoulder rest (imagine wearing low pumps right through the exercise). Hold onto the foot-bar, arms being a bit wider than shoulder width. Push back through the shoulders and then the hips, while exhaling. Come forward — first hips, then shoulders — while inhaling. Now the whole body should be at a diagonal to the floor. Keep the back straight and abs tightly drawn in throughout the exercise.

Caution: Those with any health problems will need modifications to the following exercises. Medical clearance and adequate professional supervision is required.

Figure 11