



Pilates Progressions, 2nd Edition

How to Earn Your Home Study Course CEC's

Included in this home study:

- Pilates Progressions Workbook
- 25 question exam -70% correct to pass

Criteria for successful completion of this course include:

- Complete the activities in the workbook (does not need to be submitted to NETA)
- Complete and submit the 25-question exam online at <https://www.netafit.org/homestudy-exam/pilates-progressions-2nd-ed/>. You must obtain a minimum score of 70% (i.e., ≥ 17 correct answers) to earn the six (6) continuing education credits (CECs) for this course.
- Exam may also be taken using the answer sheet found on page 51. Keep a copy of the completed answer sheet for your records and mail a copy to the address listed below.

To receive 6 NETA continuing education credits, do one of the following:

Return answer sheet to:

NETA Attention: Home Study Coordinator
12800 Industrial Park Blvd Ste 220
Minneapolis, MN 55441

Enter your answers online:

<https://www.netafit.org/homestudy-exam/pilates-progressions-2nd-ed/>
Item # 9461
Exam Code # 260729

Your certificate of completion will be uploaded to your NETA account within five business days of receipt of completed exam.

Table of Contents

Course Introduction	3
Your Pilates Experience.....	4
Traditional Pilates vs Open Mat Class	5
Pilates Progressions FAQs	9
The ABCs	12
Alignment.....	13
Breathing, Concentration, Core Strength & Control.....	16
Muscle Sequencing	17
Teaching Alignment	18
Spinal Movement	25
Fitness Elements and Variables.....	26
Class Design	32
Pilates Progressions Formula	34
Warm Up	35
Sample Progressions.....	39
List of Exercises.....	45
Sample Master Class.....	46
Final Multiple-Choice Exam	47
Answer Sheet	51
Home Study Course Evaluation	52

Welcome to the Pilates Progressions Home Study

This course is designed to help Pilates instructors bridge the gap between the traditional Pilates method and the realities of teaching in today's fitness environment. While classical Pilates follows a structured sequence and philosophy, group mat classes often include participants with varying experience levels, movement abilities, and familiarity with Pilates principles. Instructors must also navigate the unique challenges of teaching in a health club or studio setting, including late arrivals, early departures, and other common distractions.

Pilates Progressions provides practical strategies for adapting the Pilates method while preserving its core principles, allowing you to create safe, effective, and engaging classes for a diverse population. This home study is intended for instructors with prior Pilates training and teaching experience.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this home study, participants will be able to:

1. Design and instruct safe, effective Pilates mat classes that accommodate participants with varying experience levels, movement abilities, and fitness goals.
2. Apply critical thinking and movement analysis to develop appropriate exercise progressions, regressions, and modifications while maintaining the core principles and integrity of the Pilates method.
3. Integrate traditional Pilates principles into a contemporary group fitness environment, confidently adapting instruction to create an engaging, inclusive, and successful experience for all participants.

Assumptions

1. Participants enrolled in Pilates Progressions have a foundational understanding of Pilates principles, terminology, and mat exercises, as well as prior Pilates instructor training or teaching experience.
2. The instructional strategies presented in this course are intended for teaching apparently healthy adult participants in an open mat class setting. Special populations and individuals with medical conditions or unique movement considerations are beyond the scope of this home study and are not addressed in detail.

Your Pilates Experience

This activity provides an opportunity to reflect on your own Pilates journey and teaching experience. There are many styles and approaches to Pilates, which means instructors and students often learn from different teachers, training programs, and philosophies. As a result, participants may enter your classes with movement patterns, terminology, and expectations that differ from your own.

Taking time to recognize your own learning experiences can help you become a more adaptable and empathetic instructor. By understanding how your background has shaped your teaching, you will be better equipped to connect with students who are new to Pilates as well as those who have trained in a different style. This awareness fosters a more inclusive learning environment while allowing you to honor the core principles of Pilates regardless of the path that brought each participant to your class.

1. How long have you been practicing Pilates Exercise? _____.

2. How long have you been teaching Pilates Exercise? _____.

3. How did you learn Pilates?

- ☐ Video
- ☐ Class Setting
- ☐ Book
- ☐ Private Training
- ☐ Professional Training
- ☐ Other _____

4. Has your method or approach changed since you first learned? How?

5. What are some challenges you've faced as a Pilates instructor?

Traditional Pilates vs. Open Mat class

Characteristics	Traditional Pilates Class	Open Mat Pilates Class
Purpose	Traditional Pilates classes are designed to teach the Pilates method in a structured, progressive manner. Students typically enroll in a 6- or 8-week series that meet once or twice each week, allowing skills and confidence to develop over time. Each session reinforces concepts and exercises introduced in previous classes before building on that foundation with new principles, movement patterns, and exercises. Because participants register for the entire series, they generally demonstrate a high level of commitment to both attendance and learning. Their investment—both in time and often in additional course fees—encourages consistent participation and allows instructors to teach progressively, knowing that students are advancing through the material together.	Open mat Pilates classes are typically included as part of a health club or fitness center membership and are offered on a regular group exercise schedule without an additional fee. Unlike a structured Pilates series, these classes often attract participants with a wide range of experience. Some may be attending their first Pilates class, while others may have years of practice or training in different styles of Pilates. Because attendance varies from class to class, instructors cannot assume that participants have a common foundation of knowledge or movement skills. This requires a flexible teaching approach that introduces key Pilates principles, offers appropriate progressions and modifications, and creates a safe, welcoming experience for individuals of all ability and experience levels.
Attendance	Even in a structured Pilates series, attendance may decline as the session progresses. Participants may encounter scheduling conflicts or competing priorities, while others may discover that Pilates is different from what they expected and decide it is not the right fit for their goals or preferences. Those who discontinue a series often return to Pilates only when it is offered in a more flexible format, such as an open mat class that fits their schedule. As a result, open mat instructors frequently teach a mix of returning participants, former series students, and individuals who are experiencing Pilates for the first time. Recognizing this diversity allows instructors to provide appropriate instruction for everyone, regardless of their prior experience or consistency of attendance.	Attendance in open mat classes can vary significantly from week to week. Some participants discover that they enjoy Pilates and choose to enroll in a structured mat series to deepen their understanding of the method and progress their skills. Others attend on a more casual basis because they appreciate the physical and mental benefits, enjoy the convenience of the scheduled class time, or simply incorporate it into their weekly fitness routine. Open mat classes also frequently attract participants who are trying something new. For example, a member whose usual cycling or strength class has been canceled may decide to attend a Pilates class instead. As a result, instructors should expect a continually changing mix of first-time participants, occasional attendees, regulars, and experienced practitioners. Successfully teaching this

Characteristics	Traditional Pilates Class	Open Mat Pilates Class
Attendance, continued		diverse audience requires flexibility, clear instruction, and the ability to provide appropriate progressions and modifications so that every participant feels challenged, supported, and successful.
Student Experience	In a traditional Pilates series, students progress together as a cohesive group. Because they attend the same sequence of classes, each participant is exposed to the same instruction, practice opportunities, encouragement, and instructor feedback. This shared learning experience allows the class to build upon previously mastered concepts, creating a strong foundation before introducing more advanced exercises and movement challenges. As the group advances together, instructors can confidently layer new skills and increase complexity, knowing that participants have developed a common understanding of Pilates principles and movement patterns. This structured progression fosters confidence, consistency, and a deeper appreciation for the Pilates method.	Open mat classes bring together participants with a wide range of backgrounds and experience levels. Some may be seasoned practitioners with years of Pilates experience, while others may be attending their very first class. In addition, participants who have practiced Pilates previously may have trained in a different style or lineage, resulting in variations in terminology, exercise execution, sequencing, or teaching philosophy. This diversity presents both a challenge and an opportunity for instructors. Rather than assuming a common knowledge base, instructors should provide clear explanations, emphasize fundamental movement principles, and offer appropriate progressions and modifications. By focusing on the underlying principles of Pilates rather than a single "correct" way of performing an exercise, instructors can create an inclusive environment that respects different learning experiences while helping all participants move safely and effectively.
Student Attitude	In a traditional Pilates class environment, students often arrive on time—or even a few minutes early—to prepare for the practice ahead. This time allows participants to transition away from the demands of the day, settle their minds, and begin focusing on the connection between breath, movement, and body awareness. Students enter the class with the intention of practicing Pilates principles, developing greater mind-body	In an open mat class setting, participants often arrive right at the start time or may join the class a few minutes late. While this is common in a flexible group fitness environment, late arrivals can present unique challenges for both the instructor and the participant. New students, in particular, may enter the class without an understanding of the Pilates method, class expectations, or foundational principles that were introduced at the beginning of the session.

Characteristics	Traditional Pilates Class	Open Mat Pilates Class
Student Attitude, continued	connection, and creating a focused, intentional movement experience. This mindset and level of preparation contribute to the deeper learning process that is central to the Pilates method.	These participants may miss important concepts such as breathing techniques, alignment principles, core engagement, and movement expectations that help create a safe and effective practice. Instructors must be prepared to welcome late arrivals while finding ways to quickly provide essential information and integrate them into the class experience without disrupting the flow of instruction for the rest of the group.
Music	Traditional Pilates classes are often taught in a quiet environment without music or other distractions, allowing participants to fully focus on the practice. This intentional setting supports concentration, body awareness, and the development of the mind-body connection that is central to the Pilates method. The emphasis is on learning and applying Pilates principles, refining movement quality, and developing a deeper understanding of each exercise. By minimizing external distractions, students are encouraged to become more aware of their breath, alignment, control, and how their bodies respond to movement.	In an open mat Pilates class, background music is often used to create a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere. The environment may feel less formal, allowing participants to enjoy the overall experience while incorporating movement, stress reduction, and body awareness into their fitness routine. While the focus remains on practicing Pilates principles and performing exercises effectively, the class experience may place greater emphasis on enjoyment, accessibility, and creating a positive connection with movement. This approach can help participants feel comfortable and motivated to continue attending, regardless of their level of experience.
Distractions	Traditional Pilates studios are often intentionally designed to provide a calm, focused environment. Classes may be held in a quiet area of the facility where outside noise and distractions are minimized, allowing students to fully engage with their practice. This setting supports concentration, body awareness, and the development of the mind-body connection that is central to the Pilates method. By creating an environment that encourages focus and presence, students are better able to refine their movement, understand the principles of	Studios used for open mat Pilates classes are often shared spaces that also accommodate a variety of other group exercise formats. Unlike a dedicated Pilates studio environment, these spaces may include numerous external distractions, such as music from neighboring classes, facility announcements, conversations nearby, or the sound of equipment being used in surrounding areas. These environmental factors can create additional challenges for instructors who are working to establish focus, concentration, and mind-body

Characteristics	Traditional Pilates Class	Open Mat Pilates Class
Distractions, continued	Pilates, and connect more deeply with their practice.	awareness. Successful open mat instructors must learn to adapt to the realities of the fitness setting while using effective cueing, coaching strategies, and class management skills to help participants remain engaged and connected to their practice.
Lighting	Traditional Pilates environments often use softer, dimmer lighting to create a calm and focused atmosphere similar to that found in many yoga studios. A thoughtfully designed space can help reduce distractions, encourage relaxation, and support the concentration and body awareness that are central to the Pilates method. Dedicated Pilates studios may offer a variety of lighting options, such as dimmer switches, rope lighting, or uplighting, allowing instructors to create an environment that enhances the overall mind-body experience. These intentional details help establish a sense of focus and provide students with a setting that feels separate from the demands and distractions of everyday life.	In a multi-use group exercise studio instructors may have limited control over the lighting environment. Some spaces may not have dimmer switches or adjustable lighting options, requiring instructors to adapt with the resources available. They may choose to turn off a portion of the lights, leave a corner light or open door for minimal illumination, or modify the environment in other creative ways. In some facilities, the only option may be teaching with the lights fully on. While the ideal setting may not always be available, effective instructors learn to create a focused and engaging Pilates experience by emphasizing quality instruction, purposeful cueing, and connection with participants regardless of the physical environment.
Class Attitude	Traditional Pilates instruction often places a strong emphasis on precision, alignment, and movement quality. Exercises are taught with specific attention to form, technique, and the foundational principles of the Pilates method. Considerable time is dedicated to helping students understand proper execution, develop body awareness, and refine their movements through detailed instruction and feedback. Classes are typically structured around a predetermined sequence or lesson plan, with the instructor intentionally selecting exercises, progressions, and teaching strategies to support student development. A significant portion of the instructor's role is providing	Open mat Pilates classes often allow instructors greater flexibility to adapt exercises based on the needs, abilities, and experience levels of the participants present that day. This ability to modify and personalize instruction can increase student confidence, success, and overall satisfaction with the Pilates experience. Rather than focusing solely on a predetermined sequence of exercises, instructors often place greater emphasis on understanding why an exercise is valuable and how to effectively teach it to a diverse group of participants. The class structure may be adjusted in real time based on student observation, movement quality, and individual needs.

Characteristics	Traditional Pilates Class	Open Mat Pilates Class
Class Attitude, continued	individualized feedback, correcting form, and guiding participants toward a more effective and mindful practice.	As a result, the instructor may enter class with a general intention or focus rather than a fully scripted plan, allowing the session to evolve based on the unique composition of the group.

What is Pilates? Is it cardio or strength?

Pilates can be classified in different ways depending on the emphasis of the class and how it is taught. At first glance, Pilates may appear to be primarily a core-focused exercise format; however, it incorporates movements that challenge strength, stability, flexibility, posture, and control throughout the entire body. Exercises targeting the upper and lower body can create the feel of a strength-training session, while continuous movement performed with minimal rest can increase the cardiovascular demand.

The versatility of Pilates is one of its defining characteristics. Depending on the instructor's programming, pacing, and emphasis, a Pilates class can provide elements of core training, resistance training, mobility work, and cardiovascular conditioning while still maintaining the foundational principles of breath, concentration, control, precision, and mind-body connection.

Where did Pilates come from? Is it just like Yoga?

The creator of the Pilates method, Joseph Pilates, incorporated influences from various movement disciplines, including yoga, which also emphasizes the connection between breath and movement. This integration of mindful breathing helped establish the mind-body focus that remains a central component of Pilates today.

In traditional Pilates, breathing is often highly structured and intentionally coordinated with each exercise. Instructors typically cue specific inhalations and exhalations to support the movement pattern, enhance control, facilitate proper muscle engagement, and reinforce the connection between breath, concentration, and physical effort. This choreographed approach to breathing is a distinctive characteristic of the Pilates method.

What is muscle sequencing?

Because this course is designed to provide instructors with practical tools for teaching successful open mat Pilates classes, we will explore the concept of muscle sequencing and the importance of progressing movement from the inside out. This approach provides instructors with a framework for understanding the purpose behind each exercise and creating meaningful progressions based on student needs.

In an open mat Pilates class, muscle sequencing refers to the order in which muscles are recruited to create efficient, controlled movement. Rather than relying on the strongest muscles to complete an exercise, Pilates emphasizes activating the stabilizing muscles first, followed by the larger movement-producing muscles. This promotes proper alignment, improves movement quality, and reduces unnecessary tension and compensation.

Unlike a traditional Pilates class, participants in an open mat setting often have varying levels of experience, strength, and body awareness. As a result, instructors should focus less on achieving the “perfect” exercise and more on teaching the correct sequence of muscle activation. Instructors will also need to learn to think critically, analyze movement, and select appropriate variations based on participants’ abilities, experience levels, and individual needs while still honoring the fundamental principles of the Pilates method. This approach empowers instructors to create effective, inclusive classes that support success for a wide range of participants. More on muscle sequencing will be discussed later in this course.

How is Pilates different from other exercises?

Unlike many traditional exercise formats that emphasize moving a specific body part or working a primary muscle group, Pilates places a strong emphasis on stabilization, alignment, and controlled movement. Many general exercisers have been conditioned to focus on the part of the body that is moving rather than the muscles responsible for supporting and stabilizing that movement. One of the challenges for the Pilates instructor is helping students develop awareness of their deeper stabilizing muscles rather than relying on stronger prime movers to complete an exercise.

New Pilates students may initially approach exercises with a “more is better” mindset, often influenced by the traditional *no pain, no gain* philosophy. They may attempt to increase the size or intensity of a movement by recruiting unnecessary muscles, creating tension, or compensating with stronger muscle groups. As a result, instructors often need to help students shift their perspective and understand that Pilates is not about forcing movement but about improving movement quality.

A key role of the Pilates instructor is to re-educate participants about the value of mindful, intentional exercise. Pilates can be challenging without being painful, and progress comes from developing control, awareness, stability, and efficient movement patterns. Teaching students to focus on precision and purpose allows them to build strength and confidence in a way that supports long-term success rather than simply pushing through fatigue or discomfort.

How have Pilates classes evolved?

When traditional Pilates classes were first introduced, many instructors were trained with a strong emphasis on precision, discipline, and strict adherence to the principles and exercises of the method. This detailed and exacting approach can be highly effective for some students who appreciate structure, challenge, and a focused learning environment.

However, this teaching style may not resonate with every participant, particularly in an open mat class setting where students often have varying levels of experience, confidence, and familiarity with Pilates. For many participants, a more approachable and encouraging teaching style may be more effective.

Open mat instructors can help create a positive and successful experience by focusing on the essential principles, providing clear and simple instruction, and encouraging progress rather than perfection. When students feel supported and capable, they are more likely to stay engaged, develop confidence, and continue their Pilates practice.

Tips on teaching

One of the most important skills a Pilates instructor can develop is the ability to communicate effectively through purposeful cueing and language. Every participant will process information differently, and successful instructors recognize that there is no single approach that works for everyone.

Some students may understand anatomical terminology, while others respond better to simple, everyday language. Effective instructors learn to use both, combining technical accuracy with accessible explanations. Some participants learn best through verbal direction, while others need visual demonstrations or hands-on awareness to understand a movement. Providing multiple forms of instruction helps ensure that more students can connect with the exercise.

Instructors should also recognize that repeating the same cue in every class may not continue to create the desired response. While consistency is valuable, creativity in cueing can help students develop new awareness and better understand movement. Exploring different ways to describe alignment, muscle engagement, breath, and intention allows instructors to reach a broader range of learners and create a more effective, engaging Pilates experience.

Why Pilates Progressions?

Safe and effective Pilates instruction requires an understanding of appropriate progressions and modifications for the everyday exerciser. Not all body systems develop strength, stability, and coordination at the same rate. A movement may appear to target a larger muscle group, but successful execution often depends on the strength and control of smaller stabilizing muscles first.

For example, during a push-up, the wrists, shoulders, and core stabilizers must have adequate strength and control before the larger muscles of the chest and upper body can perform optimally. Without this foundation, an exerciser may compensate, limiting the effectiveness of the exercise or increasing the risk of discomfort or injury.

Similarly, individuals who focus primarily on developing strength and size in larger, superficial muscles may overlook the importance of deep stabilizing muscles and movement patterns. A strong, muscular individual can still experience strain during simple daily tasks such as bending over to pick up an object if they lack proper sequencing, stability, and control.

Pilates instructors play an important role in helping students develop balanced movement by emphasizing proper sequencing, foundational strength, and quality of movement before progressing to more challenging exercises. This approach allows participants to build strength that supports both exercise performance and everyday function.

Goals vs. Process

A common goal for many Pilates students may be to successfully perform a challenging exercise, such as the Roll Over. However, when the focus becomes solely on achieving the end goal, students may rush the learning process and prioritize completing the movement over understanding and developing the skills required to perform it safely and effectively.

The true value of Pilates lies in the process of developing strength, body awareness, control, coordination, and movement efficiency. Rather than focusing only on achieving a particular exercise, students should be encouraged to appreciate the progression that leads them there. In Pilates, progress is often gradual and may not always be immediately visible; more often, it is experienced through improved awareness, control, confidence, and a deeper connection to movement.

Pilates transforms the individual through consistent, mindful practice. The more regularly and intentionally the principles and exercises are practiced, the greater the ability to create precise muscle engagement, efficient movement patterns, and lasting results. Some ways to approach getting to know the discipline better include:

1. Work toward an ideal but understand that progress is not always seen and more often felt.

2. Learn to layer the components of each exercise. Become accustomed to breaking down an exercise by taking away or adding layers of it's many components. Dis-assembling and re-assembling an exercise offers a greater latitude for a successful practice session. As time and practice sessions evolve, the student will become competent at performing any part of an exercise at will either on its own or complete with all of the layers present.

The A, B, C' S

These are key concepts that make Pilates exercise safe, effective, and functional. They include sound anatomical principles often used during physical rehabilitation.

A = Alignment

Achieving and maintaining proper alignment before, during, and after each exercise is discussed and demonstrated.

B = Breath

The Breath is the most vital aspect necessary for life. Additionally, it enhances and promotes efficient movement through proper muscular usage. The importance of proper breathing techniques is discussed and demonstrated.

C = Concentration, Core Strength, Control

The core muscles are central to Pilates exercises. Core Strength is necessary to allow effortless pain free movement as well as provide protection to the interior of the torso. Concentration ensures that each movement is done mindfully. Control over every movement reduces risk of injury. Concentration on and control of the core musculature is taught, demonstrated and practiced.

S = Stabilization

Stabilizing the joints of the body protects and strengthens them. The stabilization of the core, ribcage, scapula, pelvis and cervical spine is required to perform each exercise effectively.



Alignment

Maintenance of good posture and spinal alignment cannot be overstated. Much of Pilates work is based on the identification and correction of postural alignment malformations. This is accomplished by strengthening the core or trunk musculature and teaching students how to stabilize their appendages. First, we need to understand several terms that help identify desirable alignment and factors that affect alignment.

Neutral Spine

Neutral typically is a term used to describe a position in which nothing is overtly affecting it. There should be a sense of balance. Neutral Spine refers to the curvature of the spine that is achieved by appropriate core strength and flexibility. It is characterized by slight anterior curvatures in the cervical and lumbar vertebrae and a slight posterior curvature in the thoracic vertebrae. The 12 vertebrae that are configured in the anterior curvature (7 cervical and 5 lumbar) are designed to balance the 12 vertebrae configured in the posterior curvature (thoracic).

Kyphosis

Excessive cervical and/or upper thoracic curvature, which results in a hunchback appearance, is referred to as kyphosis. This is common in older people who suffer from osteoporosis or atrophy of the muscles that control the scapula (**Trapezius** and **Rhomboids**).

Lordosis

Lordosis is characterized by excessive anterior curvature of the lumbar spine. Weak abdominals, overly tight hip flexors and spinal erectors and overstretched hamstring muscles can contribute to lordosis, which causes low back pain.

Scoliosis

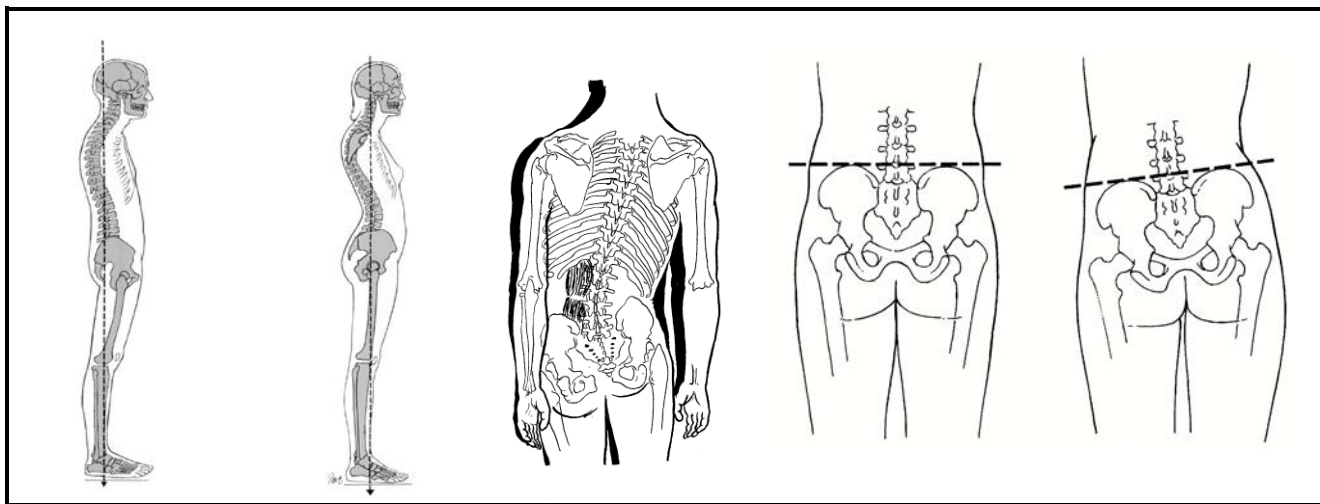
Scoliosis is a spinal alignment abnormality characterized by an exaggerated lateral 'S'-shaped curvature of the spine, which causes the shoulders and pelvis to appear uneven. Scoliosis can be caused by muscular imbalances that, over time, cause irreversible deviations in skeletal alignment.

Neutral Pelvis

Neutral Pelvis refers to the position that the pelvis is in when it is neither tilted anteriorly nor posteriorly and the person's natural lordotic curve is present. The abdominal, hip flexor and gluteal muscles cause an anterior pelvic tilt and the hamstring muscles cause a posterior pelvic tilt. The abductor and adductor muscles of the hip keep the pelvis aligned horizontally. If one muscle group is weaker than its opposing muscle group, or inflexible, the pelvis is moved into an undesirable position. Once again, over time, the shift in pelvic alignment may cause pain and possible permanent dysfunction.

Imprinted Pelvis

Imprinted Pelvis occurs when a slight posterior tilt of the pelvis is present. It is typically achieved by lying in a supine position, abdominals contracted so that the pelvis is tilted posteriorly. This allows the tailbone to come up off of the mat, raising the pubic bone higher than the hipbones (Iliac Crests). Imprinting is not achieved by contracting the Gluteus Maximus, nor is it achieved by overly contracting the **Rectus Abdominis**. Imprinted alignment is used when neutral pelvic alignment cannot be effectively maintained during a particular exercise.



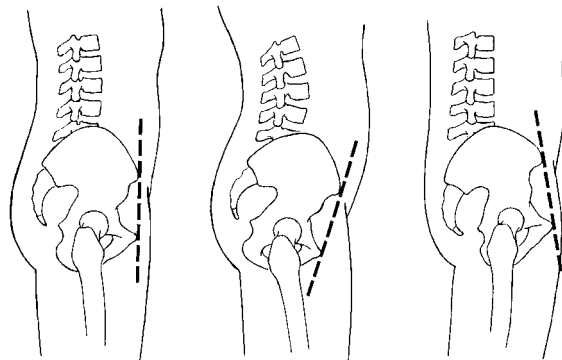
Kyphosis

Lordosis

Scoliosis

Scoliosis disrupts the levelness of the hips and shoulders

Vertical or
Standing Representation

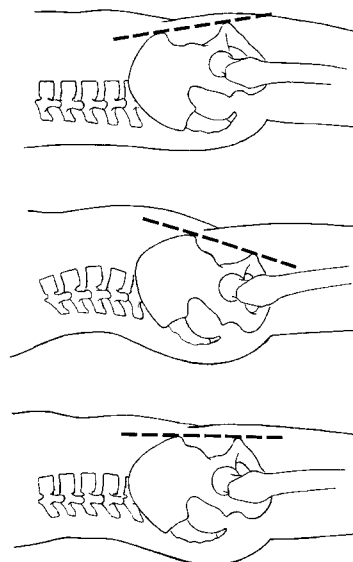


Neutral

Anterior Tilt

Posterior Tilt

Horizontal or
Supine Representation



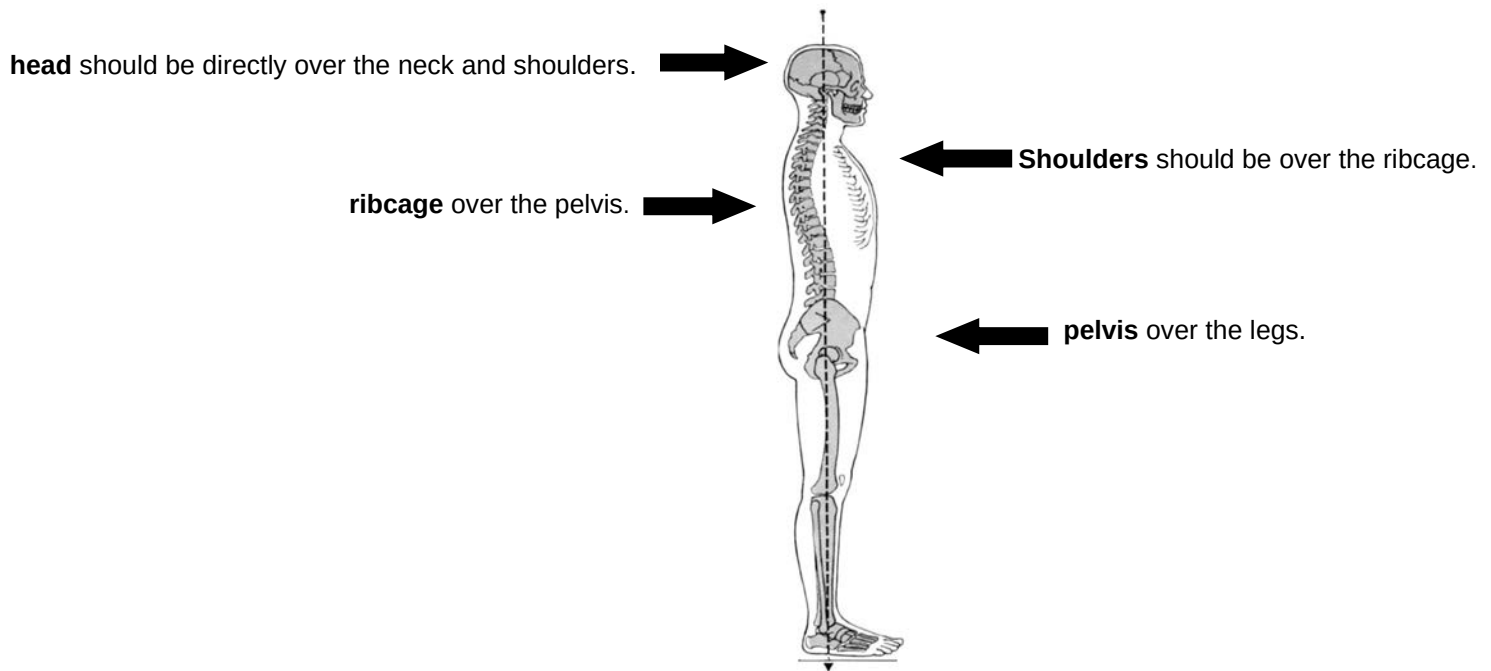
Posterior Tilt

Anterior Tilt

Neutral

Posture

When observing someone's profile we should be looking at how the body parts line up. The **head** should be directly over the neck and shoulders. **Shoulders** should be over the ribcage, **ribcage** over the pelvis, and **pelvis** over the legs. Any body parts that do not line up in this manner are vulnerable to excessive forces produced by gravity and momentum. Imagine carrying two buckets of water. It is easier to carry one bucket on either side. What would the results be if you were to carry both buckets in front of you or behind you? It is quite certain that you would have to put a lot more effort into carrying both buckets in front or behind rather than at your sides lined up and balanced with the remainder of your body.



Breathing Technique

With the PILATES BREATH, we inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth.

Inhale through the nose

- The nose is a filter for our respiratory system. It is the first attempt to reduce the amount of toxins in our body.
- Breathing through the nose warms the air slightly before it travels through our lungs.

Exhale through the mouth

- Exhaling through the mouth provides a more effective forced exhalation.
- Forced exhalation engages the respiratory muscles, compresses the abdominal cavity, and assists abdominal muscle contraction.
- The abdominal muscles are the primary protectors of the spine. Any time the abdominals are not contracted, the spine is unprotected.

Concentration

Concentration requires the realization that every movement of every body part is important and that all movements are integrated. Concentrate on each small movement and allow the movements to flow. Dismiss all activity around you and concentrate on your body as it responds to the mind's direction. This meditative kind of concentration will bring clarity of thought, better mental focus, less mind wandering, increased mental energy and a calmer, positive frame of mind.

Core Strength

The Core is the pivotal point of the body. All movements emanate from this center and are transferred outward. The core includes the deep internal muscles of the spine and central region, as well as the superficial muscles.

Control

Control over every movement is necessary to prevent injury. It begins with awareness of the smallest movements, allows mindful adjustments to maximize the effectiveness of the exercise, while minimizing the associated risks. By focusing on control, the body can utilize the internal and superficial muscles to achieve a balanced body.

Muscle Sequencing

Core Muscles

All Pilates exercises focus on stabilizing or mobilizing the spine. Therefore, they all require a basic understanding of core muscles and how they work. The core muscles are deep muscles that work to stabilize and support the body. Core muscles are divided into different types:

1. Local core muscles
2. Global core muscles
3. Large skeletal muscles

Local Core Muscles

The deepest layer most important for stabilization. These muscles include:

1. Multifidus
2. Deep 1/3 of the Psoas
3. Transversus Abdominus

Global Core Muscles

These muscles fire after the local core muscles and stabilize the body for motion. These muscles include:

1. Rectus Abdominus
2. Gluteus Medius
3. Erector Spinae

Large Skeletal Muscles

These muscles fire to create motion. They include:

1. Pectoral Muscles
2. Latissimus Dorsi
3. Quadriceps

The correct firing orders of the muscles must be maintained to avoid injuries, instability, and pain. Before a limb moves or a spinal curve begins, the local core must fire first. This activation is subtle and is triggered by the breath. Once the deep foundation is secure, the global core fires next to manage the load and guide the shape of the trunk. Only after the local and global core units have established a stable base do the large skeletal muscles fire to execute the primary movement. Consider the chest lift of the hundred exercise as an example:

Correct firing pattern: exhale, deep lower belly pulls flat (local); ribs slide down toward hips (global); shoulder blades lift off the mat, keep the spine safe.

Incorrect firing pattern: the hip flexors (large skeletal muscles) or rectus abdominis (global) fire first, causing the lower belly to dome upward and placing immense pressure on the low back and neck.

Effective muscle sequencing helps participants build strength from the inside out. As deep (local) stabilizers become more responsive, movement becomes smoother, posture improves, and more advanced Pilates exercises can be performed safely and efficiently. However, in an open mat environment, expect participants to substitute stronger muscles for weaker stabilizers. Common compensations include:

- Overusing the hip flexors instead of the deep abdominals
- Gripping the gluteals or quadriceps excessively
- Elevating the shoulders due to upper trapezius dominance
- Holding the breath during challenging movements
- Sacrificing alignment to achieve a larger range of motion

Rather than correcting every compensation immediately, prioritize the most important element of the exercise. Providing one or two focused cues allows participants to successfully integrate proper sequencing without becoming overwhelmed.

Because participants learn differently, instructors should use layered cueing to help develop proper sequencing.

- Begin with alignment cues (see Teaching Alignment below) before adding movement
- Introduce breathing patterns to facilitate deep core activation
- Add one movement component at a time rather than giving multiple instructions simultaneously
- Encourage participants to move slowly enough to notice which muscles are working
- Reinforce quality over range of motion or repetitions

Teaching Alignment

Teaching alignment in Pilates is critical because proper positioning ensures load is distributed evenly across joints, preventing injury and maximizing core engagement by allowing proper muscle firing. When the skeleton is correctly stacked, the nervous system can efficiently activate the deep local stabilizers before the large global muscles take over. Instructors should teach alignment before movement. Resist the urge to immediately begin the exercise. Spending a few extra moments establishing alignment often improves movement quality and reduces compensations.

Practicing alignment and breathing first from a seated position allows students to watch the instructor without straining their head or neck to see. Instructors can use the concept of a box to teach alignment succinctly. It involves keeping the following points squared and stacked:

- Both **shoulders** should stay level and wide, away from the ears
- The two **hip** bones (anterior superior iliac spine, or ASIS) should remain level and parallel to one another
- The **ribcage** should stay soft and anchored, stacked directly over the pelvis

Teaching shoulder alignment from a seated position.

Students are seated, arms relaxed by their sides.

1. Instruct them to lift their shoulders to their ears.
2. Now have them press the shoulders down away from the ears.
3. Demonstrate placing your hands on the top of the shoulders as a reference to keep their shoulders depressed.



Teaching breath from a seated position.

Students are seated, one hand on abdomen, other on chest.

4. Instruct them to breathe normally and notice which hand moves more, chest or belly.
5. Now have them keep chest still, breathing only into the belly.
6. Reverse, only breathe into the chest. This will help them feel and understand the breathing pattern we do NOT want them to focus on. It is chest breathing and is shallow. It does not utilize all of the breathing muscles.
7. Now have them keep both chest and belly still, breathing into the back and side of the ribs.
8. Demonstrate placing your hands on back of students ribcage, instructing them to pull the breath into your hands.



Practice neutral spine in all of the following starting positions.

1. Standing
2. Classic Pilates
3. All 4's
4. Seated
5. Prone
6. Kneeling
7. Side Lying

POSITION	CUES	VISUAL REFERENCE
Standing	Front view • Toes and knees straight ahead • Feet line up directly under ASIS • Hips, ribs and shoulders level Side view • Plumbline through ear, shoulder, hip, knee & ankle • ASIS and pubic bone are in level plane	
Classic Pilates	Neutral • ASIS and pubic bone in flat plane • Feet and knees same distance apart, same width as ASIS • Shoulders may need to be adjusted away from ears to relax upper body Imprint • Pubic bone slightly higher than ASIS • Back of hips (not necessarily waist) pressed stable into mat • Feet and knees same distance apart, same width as ASIS • Shoulders may need to be adjusted away from ears to relax upper body	
All 4's	• Hands under chest (not shoulders) • Knees under hips • Straight line from ears, shoulders through hips • Both shoulders and both hips are square	

POSITION	CUES	VISUAL REFERENCE
	to floor	
Seated	Side View • Plumb line through ear, shoulder and hip • Press sacrum forward to stack spine Modifications: • Bend knees • Prop hips	
Prone	• Straight line through ear, shoulder, hip, knee and ankle • Pull abdominals away from the mat ie; imagine that the floor under navel suddenly got really cold • Relax Upper body, no straining or gripping with the shoulders	
Kneeling	• Knees line up directly under ASIS • Hips, ribs and shoulders level • Equal curve on both sides of the waist • To practice position of neutral side lying raise one arm in front of body, then bend elbow to touch ear.	

POSITION	CUES	VISUAL REFERENCE
Side Lying	• Straight line through nose, sternum, navel and pubis • Hips, ribs and shoulders level • Equal curve on both sides of the waist • Head rests on hand like a pillow	

A simple teaching progression is:

- Find the starting position
- Check posture and body placement
- Establish breathing
- Engage the appropriate stabilizers
- Initiate movement while maintaining alignment

Remind participants that alignment is not something they set and forget, but rather something they should continually monitor throughout the exercise. Encourage internal awareness. Rather than relying solely on external appearance – which may look different on each participant due to structural differences, previous injuries, or mobility restrictions – help participants develop proprioception by asking reflective questions such as:

- “Can you feel both sit bones equally?”
- “Do both feet feel equally grounded?”
- “Can you keep the same spinal length as you move?”

Practice V-Sit to C-Shape



Starting Position: Seated tall, legs softly bent, knees hip width, feet on floor with arms extended in front, parallel to floor.



1. Practice: Exhale - rolling pelvis behind sit bones, Inhale – return pelvis to neutral. Keep neck and thoracic spine in neutral, only flex pelvis



2. Hinge: Inhale – keep spine in neutral, lean back as if supported with a board, Exhale – Return to seated



3. Hinge and stay ¼ way to floor, Inhale

Exhale – roll pelvis behind sitz bones, tuck pelvis only

Inhale – extend and return pelvis to neutral, stay hinged ¼



4. Lift feet off floor to V-sit position

Exhale – roll pelvis behind sitz bones, tuck pelvis only

Inhale – extend and return pelvis to neutral, stay hinged ¼

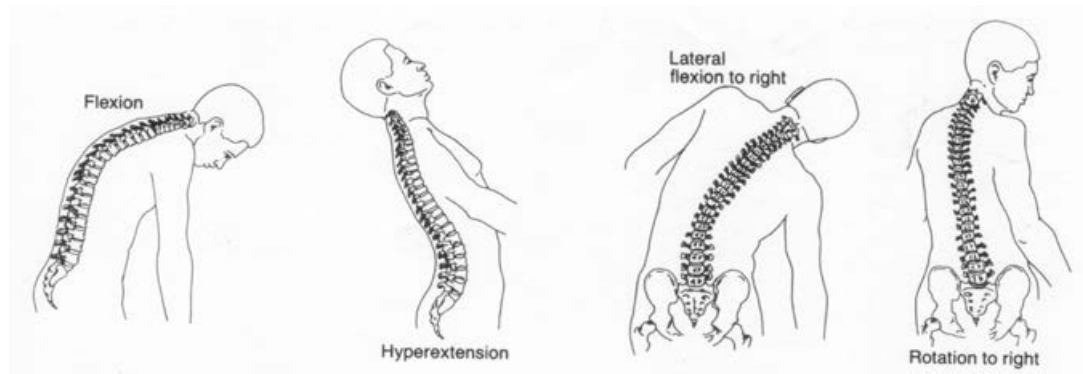
5. Slowly lower into Crunch and Table Top Position



Spinal Movement

There are 6 directions of spinal movement.

1. Forward Flexion
2. Extension
3. Rotation R
4. Rotation L
5. Lateral Flexion R
6. Lateral Flexion L



Examples of exercises that focus on movement patterns of the spine

1. Flexion – AB Prep, Hundreds, AB Series
2. Extension - Breast Stroke, Swimming
3. Rotation – Spine Twist, Saw, Single Leg Stretch w/ Obliques
4. Spinal Articulation – Spine Stretch Forward
5. Roll up, Roll back – ½ Roll Back, Roll Up, Teaser
6. Rolling - Rolling like a Ball, Seal, Open Leg Rocker
7. Stability - Plank

Identify the major muscle groups involved in each movement pattern, to include prime movers and stabilizers.

Flexion:

Extension:

Rotation(L & R):

Lateral Flexion (L & R):

Fitness Elements and Variables

Below are some suggestions to get you thinking about how you can add various layers to exercises for added benefit. Conversely, think about ways you can remove layers from an exercise to help a student learn one part of it at a time.

Starting position. One of the simplest ways to progress a Pilates exercise is by changing the starting position. The starting position influences the amount of stability required, the effect of gravity, the size of the base of support, and the complexity of the movement. In an open mat class, progressing exercises in this way allows participants of varying abilities to perform the same movement pattern at an appropriate level.

Some examples of progressions based on starting position include:

- Supine to Seated to Standing

This progression gradually increases the influence of gravity while requiring greater postural control.

Example: Roll Down

Supine imprint and pelvic tilts

Seated half roll back

Standing roll down

Standing roll down on one leg

- All 4's to Kneeling to Standing

This progression decreased external support while increasing balance demands.

Example: Hip Extension

All 4's leg reach

Tall kneeling hip hinge

Standing hip extension

Single leg deadlift

- Larger to Smaller Base of Support, Lower to Higher Center of Gravity

This progression increases the need for balance by moving from a fully supported ground to single leg upright position.

Example: Side Leg Series

Side-lying

Modified side-plank

Side-plank

Standing

Lever length. A lever is the distance between the body's axis of rotation (such as a hip or shoulder joint) and the point where the force is applied. As the lever becomes longer, the muscles must generate greater force to control the movement, increasing the demands on strength, stability, and coordination.

Some examples of progressions based on lever length include:

- $\frac{3}{4}$ Roll Back
 - Arms reaching forward
 - Arms across chest
 - Arms overhead
- Shoulder bridge
 - Knees bent, both feet on the floor
 - One foot lifted into tabletop
 - Single-leg bridge with lifted leg fully extended
- Hundred
 - Tabletop legs
 - Knees at 45 degrees
 - Legs fully extended close to floor

Pelvic placement. By changing the position of the pelvis, instructors can alter the stability demands, muscle recruitment, and complexity of an exercise without changing the movement itself. In an open mat class, progressing exercises through pelvic placement allows participants to work at an appropriate level while reinforcing core control and movement quality. Imprinted pelvis increases trunk support and is often used when participants are developing core strength or learning movement control. Neutral pelvis promotes balanced muscle activation and is more functional in nature.

Examples of exercises that can be regressed (imprint) or progressed (neutral) by pelvic placement include:

- Hundred
- Double leg stretch
- Single leg circles

Tempo. Tempo is one of the most versatile tools for progressing or regressing a Pilates exercise. Changing the tempo of an exercise challenges participants to either sustain muscular engagement for longer periods or demonstrate greater control while moving more dynamically. A slower tempo increases time under tension, improves body awareness and proprioception, enhances control and movement precision, reveals compensation and movement faults, builds muscular endurance, and ensures the movement is being accomplished via muscular strength and not momentum. A faster tempo challenges coordination and rhythm, requires participants to maintain control during more dynamic movement, increases cardiovascular demand in some exercises, and tests whether movement quality may be maintained under speed.

Examples of exercises that can be progressed via tempo include:

- Leg circles
 - Slow tempo challenges the ability to isolate hip movement
 - Fast tempo requires pelvic stability while controlling changes in direction

- Hundred
 - Slow tempo emphasizes focus on breath
 - Fast tempo increases cardiovascular demand and requires stability
- Roll up
 - Slow tempo places the greatest demand on abdominal control
 - Fast tempo with a brief isometric hold at the most challenging point increases difficulty

Coordination. As participants become stronger and more proficient, exercises can be progressed by increasing the coordination required rather than simply adding repetitions or making the movement more physically demanding. Progressing through coordination challenges the neuromuscular system, improves motor control, enhances body awareness, and reinforces the principles of concentration, precision, control, and flow.

Some examples of progressions based on coordination include:

- Shoulder bridge
 - Lift and lower the pelvis
 - Alternate marching while maintaining pelvic stability
 - Extend one leg and return, alternating sides
- Roll up
 - Perform the base exercise
 - Add coordinated arm movements
 - Continue directly into spine stretch forward before returning to the mat
- Single leg stretch
 - Perform the base exercise
 - Coordinate breath with leg change
 - Change to a non-complimentary breathing pattern

Fun with Progressions

Try writing out a few alternatives to any basic exercise. Practice teaching them and consider when each variation would be most appropriate.

Basic Exercise:

Traditional starting position:

New starting position:

How does changing the starting position change the exercise?

What occasions might you try this exercise with an alternate starting position?

Basic Exercise:

Traditional lever length:

New lever length:

How does changing the lever length change the exercise?

What occasions might you try this exercise with an alternate lever length?

Basic Exercise:

Traditional pelvic placement:

New start pelvic placement:

How does changing the pelvic placement change the exercise?

What occasions might you try this exercise with an alternate pelvic placement?

Basic Exercise:

Traditional tempo:

New tempo:

How does changing the tempo change the exercise?

What occasions might you try this exercise with an alternate tempo?

Basic Exercise:

Traditional coordination:

New coordination:

How does changing the coordination change the exercise?

What occasions might you try this exercise with an alternate coordination?

Class Design – sets your participants up for success

Here are some ways to engage students on a deeper level.

Goal vs. Process – Pilates works on the individual over time. Help participants understand that consistent practice is a process of developing strength, control, and body awareness—not simply achieving a particular exercise or movement goal.

Progress in Pilates is not measured solely by mastering increasingly difficult exercises. True progress is reflected in how participants move, feel, and connect with their bodies over time. In an open mat environment, where students may attend irregularly and each class includes participants of varying abilities, instructors should look for subtle improvements rather than relying on a predetermined sequence of exercises.

Signs of progress may include:

- Improved postural awareness during both Pilates exercises and everyday activities
- Greater ability to recruit the deep stabilizing muscles before initiating movements
- Improved breath control and coordination between breath and movement
- Better alignment and fewer compensatory movement patterns
- Increased balance, stability, and control
- Greater range of motion while maintaining proper alignment
- Improved muscular endurance and the ability to maintain quality movement throughout class
- Increased confidence and independence with exercise modifications and progressions
- Enhanced body awareness, allowing participant to recognize when movement feels efficient versus compensatory

Observing the process and encouraging self-reflection are ways to encourage a process-mentality. Rather than focusing on if a participant can perform a specific exercise, instructors can observe where the movement appears smoother and more in control, if neutral alignment is maintained longer, if breathing is coordinated with movement, and if participants are able to self-correct when alignment changes. Additionally, participants are often the best judges of their own progress when given the opportunity to reflect. Consider ending class with questions such as:

- What movement felt easier today?
- Where did you notice improved control?
- What challenged your stability?
- What is one thing you'll pay attention to before your next class?

This shifts the focus from achievement to awareness and reinforces Pilates as a lifelong practice rather than a checklist of exercises.

Create and share intention or theme for each class. One of the easiest ways to create purposeful, engaging classes is to begin each session with a clear intent or theme. Rather than simply leading participants through a series of exercises, a theme provides direction for both the instructor and the class. It helps participants understand why they are performing each movement and encourages them to approach the practice with greater awareness – especially important for an open mat audience.

In an open mat setting, where participants may attend only occasionally and each class includes a mix of abilities, a class theme creates consistency without requiring everyone to be at the same point in a progression. A class theme helps participants:

- Develop a deeper understanding of Pilates principles through repetition in different contexts
- Improve movement quality by focusing on one or two key concepts rather than trying to perfect everything at once
- Build body awareness and confidence through intentional practice
- Recognize connections between exercises instead of viewing them as isolated movements
- Experience variety while maintaining consistency in instruction

A theme does not have to be elaborate. Often, the most effective classes focus on a single concept that can be revisited throughout the session. Examples include:

- Scapular stability and shoulder placement
- Pelvic stability during lower-body movement
- Initiating movement from the deep core
- Spinal articulation and mobility
- Hip stability and lower extremity alignment
- Balance and single leg control
- Moving with fluidity rather than speed

Introduce the theme during the warm up and explain why it matters. Then, revisit it as participants move through different exercises. Rather than teaching each exercise independently, continually connect it back to the day's focus.

For example, if the theme is shoulder placement, participants might explore scapular awareness during seated breathing, shoulder stability during arm openings, maintaining scapular control during the hundred, shoulder organization during plank, and relaxed upper trapezius engagement during standing roll downs.

Finally, keep the theme flexible. A theme should guide the class without limiting your ability to adapt to the participants in front of you. Having flexibility is especially valuable in an open mat environment where attendance and ability levels vary from class to class.

Pilates Progressions Formula

This simple formula provides a framework for guiding students through their best possible class experience. Begin with the fundamentals and clearly explain the purpose of each exercise. Anticipate where students may encounter challenges and be prepared with appropriate modifications, progressions, or coaching cues. Continually consider the needs and abilities of your audience, and thoughtfully evaluate each exercise you choose. Ask yourself: *Is this the right exercise for these participants, in this moment, to help them move safely and successfully toward their goals?*

- **Choose a foundational exercise** and clearly identify its purpose.
- **Anticipate common challenges** and plan strategies to address them through cueing, modifications, or progressions.
- **Ask, "Why are we doing this exercise today?"** Every exercise should support a specific objective.
- **Consider your audience.** Are there special populations, injuries, or varying fitness levels that require adjustments?
- **Establish the intention, purpose, or theme** of the class to create a cohesive experience.
- **Select one or more variables to manipulate** (e.g., range of motion, tempo, stability, leverage, resistance, or base of support) to progress or regress the exercise while maintaining its purpose.
- **Be creative.** Build on familiar exercises and movement patterns while staying true to the principles of Pilates. Thoughtful variations keep classes engaging without sacrificing quality of movement.

Warm-Up

In a traditional Pilates class, the warm-up is often performed in a supine position. Because participants cannot easily see the instructor, they must depend on verbal cues. This can be challenging for beginners, who often benefit from visual demonstrations and additional feedback as they learn new movement patterns.

Traditional Pilates Warm-Up Example

Classic Pilates Position

Awareness Exercises

- Breathing
- Pelvic Placement
- Scapula Elevation and Depression
- Scapula Protraction and Retraction
- Head Nod

Warm-Up Exercises

- Ab Prep
- Hundred
- Breast Stroke Prep
- Shell Stretch

Open Mat Warm-Up

Starting the warm-up in a seated position creates a more accessible learning environment. Participants can observe demonstrations while listening to verbal cues, making it easier—especially for beginners—to understand and perform the movements correctly. Eye contact and interaction with the instructor also foster a stronger sense of connection and engagement. In addition, because most daily activities are performed while sitting or standing rather than lying on the floor, introducing movement patterns in these functional positions helps participants develop skills that transfer more readily to everyday life.

Open Mat Warm-Up Example

Seated

- Breathing
- Spine Articulation
- Shoulder Stability
- Shrugs
- Lateral Raises
- Front Raises
- Arm Circles

Quadruped

- Contralateral Arm/Leg Extension
- Scapula Protraction/Retraction
- Plank

Seated

- Full Roll Back (3/4 & Crack your “walnut”)

Classic Pilates

- Pelvic Tilts
- Neutral Pelvis w/ isometric contractions
- Ab Prep
- Imprint with Breath
- Hip Rolls
- Hundred

Open Mat Warm-up

Starting Position: Seated, modify as needed – allows participants to see you, feel connected

Breathing: Inhale through nose, Exhale through mouth. Relax on the inhale, Squeeze ribs and abdominals on exhale. Gradually introduce ribcage and back breathing

Spinal Articulation:



Inhale – get taller

Exhale – roll back off of sitz bones to full c-shape

Inhale – leading with sternum, stack spine up to seated position

Repeat

Begins to teach neutral and imprint, warms up spine

Shoulder Rolls: Roll shoulders forward and backward, emphasizing position where scapula is retracted and depressed “locked and loaded”

Teaches scapula stability

Shoulder Shrugs: Emphasize shoulders to ears being weak position, reinforce strong “locked and loaded” position

Preparation / Setting the Core:

- 1) Inhale and Kegel, Exhale stay
- 2) Inhale Kegel and stabilize shoulders, Exhale stay
- 3) Inhale Kegel, stabilize shoulders, Head Nod, Exhale

Arms: Inhale – Reach fingertips to the side, raising arms to shoulder height

Exhale – Return hands to sides (repeat)

Inhale – Reach fingertips to front, only as high as neutral posture can be maintained

Exhale - Return hands to sides (repeat)

Arm Circles: Inhale – Reach arms overhead as if removing a hat

Exhale – Arms circle out to sides as if swimming, movement comes from shoulder blades

Teaches and emphasizes moving from the inside out

Change Position: All 4's



Sunbird: Inhale – Extend right arm forward, left leg back
Exhale stay, Inhale stay, Exhale – Return (reverse and repeat)

Add Rotation: Inhale– Extend right arm forward, left leg back
Exhale –Engage TVA, Rotate ribs around spine and drop right shoulder, keep hip still
Inhale – Return to center
Exhale – Return to start (reverse and repeat)

Fires erector spinae and multifidus. Teaches balance by moving ribs while stabilizing hips.



Sequencing: Inhale– Extend right arm forward, left leg back
Exhale –Engage TVA, flex spine to round, then pull knee to elbow
Inhale – Return to center
Repeat 2X
Exhale – Return to start (reverse and repeat)



Scapula Retraction: Maintain neutral spinal alignment, keep arms straight. Squeeze shoulder blades in toward spine, dropping chest without arching the back. Return to neutral.

Strengthens serratus anterior. Students cannot perform pushups without adequate scapular stability.



Plank: Practice holding plank with slightly bent elbows, almost a push-up! Push ups start with a plank and then elbows bend and straighten.

Shell Stretch: Inhale – back gets longer and wider, Exhale – contract abdominals

Teaches back breathing. 70% of lungs are located in the back.

Full and $\frac{3}{4}$ Rollbacks: see “Sample Progressions”

Classic Pilates: Introduce Neutral Spine, practice isometric contraction in Neutral

Sample Progressions – Full Rollback

Full and $\frac{3}{4}$ Rollback (lever length, prep for Roll-Up)

Starting Position: Seated tall, legs softly bent, knees hip width, feet on floor with arms extended in front, parallel to floor



1. Full Rollback

Inhale – stay, Exhale - roll back off of sits bones $\frac{1}{4}$ way to floor,

Inhale – stay, Exhale- roll $\frac{1}{2}$ way pressing low back to floor,

Inhale – stay, Exhale – roll $\frac{3}{4}$ way to floor pressing bra line to floor,

Inhale – stay, Exhale- release all the way to floor arms overhead, legs extended, back relaxes away from the floor.

Bend knees and roll up to seated

Sample Progressions – $\frac{3}{4}$ Rollback



2. $\frac{3}{4}$ Rollback

Inhale – stay, Exhale - roll back off of sits bones $\frac{1}{4}$ way to floor,
 Inhale – stay, Exhale- roll $\frac{1}{2}$ way pressing low back to floor,
 Inhale – stay, Exhale – roll $\frac{3}{4}$ way to floor pressing bra line to floor,
 Inhale – stay, Exhale- contract abdominals rounding forward to head between knees
 Inhale – stack spine to sitting tall

3. Repeat with hands across chest

4. Repeat with hands behind head

Notes: Try to keep feet on the floor, use breath as a tool, notice all the cheating, let it be hard!

Sample Progressions – Hundred

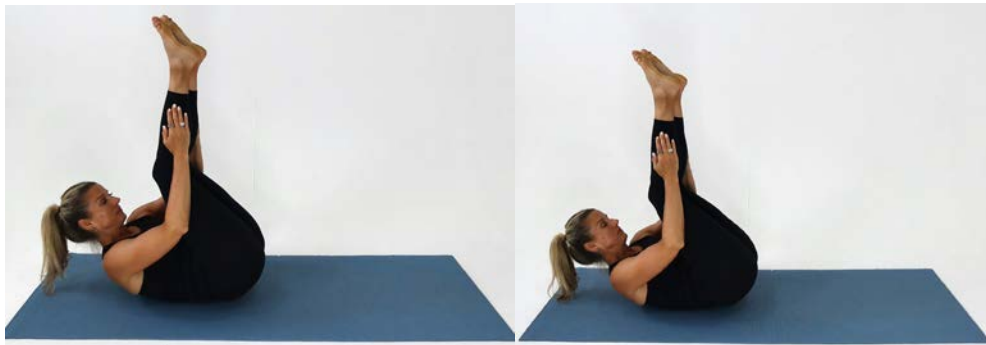


Hundred Progressions

Starting Position: Classic Pilates

Notes: Encourage pelvic stability, allows participants to strengthen back muscles and self-modify. Keep hips still, no wobble. This is about stabilizers, not the prime movers.

1. Floor to Tabletop – pelvis in neutral
Inhale – let right foot float off mat to 90/90 angle ie: Table Top, Exhale – return to mat
(Reverse and repeat for several repetitions, last time legs stay in air)
2. Table Top and lower – Pelvis in imprint
Inhale – let right foot lower several inches toward mat, Exhale - return to 90/90
(Reverse and repeat for several repetitions)
3. Crunch and Table Top – pelvis in imprint
Inhale – prepare, Exhale – Flex spine to crunch position and stay
Inhale – let right foot lower several inches toward mat, Exhale - return to 90/90
Inhale – let left foot lower several inches toward mat, Exhale - return to 90/90
Inhale – let both foot lower several inches toward mat, Exhale - return to 90/90
4. Proceed to Hundred, varying leg positions and/or breathing patterns



Sample Progressions – Rolling Like A Ball

Rolling Like a Ball (teaching gross to small)

Starting Position: Supine, knees bent to chest, spine flexed, nose to knees

1. Begin flapping lower legs, starting the rolling movement
Notice any flat spots, uneven rolling
Focus on rounding the spine evenly
Repeat rolls, encouraging even C-shape
2. Pause at the top of the roll
Focus on keeping the spine round, no extension (it will be tempting)
Add breath, Inhale back, Exhale forward
Keep legs still, have movement come from abdominals
3. Seal
Legs in Froggy position, adding beats at the pause
4. Open Leg Rocker
Legs extended and abducted, hands at calves, ankles or feet
Add spinal extension to pause at top of roll



Sample Progressions – Teaser



Start – Pelvis in imprint, legs in tabletop, arms overhead at 45°

Inhale – to prepare

Exhale – use momentum to “throw” body up to round balance

Inhale – Lift arms and extend spine

Exhale – Arm circle, round spine and slowly lower to start position



Start – Pelvis in neutral, legs extended

Note: Legs may bend, especially during spinal extension phase. It is a function of strong quads and hip flexors.

Traditional Pilates Exercises

Awareness Exercises

Breathing
Pelvic Placement
Scapula Elevation and Depression
Scapula Protraction and Retraction
Head Nod

Warm Up Exercises

Ab Prep
Hundred
Breast Stroke Prep
Shell Stretch

Workout Exercises

Half Roll Back
Roll Up
One Leg Circle
Spine Twist
Rolling Like a Ball
Single Leg Stretch
Obliques
Double Leg Stretch

Scissors
Rollover Prep
Shoulder Prep
Heel Squeeze Prone
Breast Stroke
One Leg Kick
Saw
Side Kick
Side Leg Lift Series
Spine Stretch Forward
Half Roll Back with Rotation
Teaser Prep
Single Leg Extension
Swan Dive Prep
Swimming
Leg Pull Front Prep
Seal
Side Bend
Push Up Prep

Sample Pilates Progressions Master Class

Seated

Breathing

Spine Articulation
Shoulder Stability
Shrugs
Lateral Raises
Front Raises
Arm Circles

Quadruped

Contralateral Arm/Leg Extension
Scapula Protraction/Retraction
Plank

Seated

Full Roll Back (3/4 & Crack your
“walnut”)

Classic Pilates

Pelvic Tilts
Neutral Pelvis w/ isometric contractions
Ab Prep
Imprint with Breath
Hip Rolls
Hundred

Seated

Spine Twist

Standing

One Leg Circle
Calf Raises
Spine Stretch Forward to Pushups

Prone

Breast Stroke Prep
One Leg Kick
Heel Squeeze Prone
Shell Stretch
Swimming

Seated

Hip Flexor/Abdominal Distinction
Teaser Prep w/ Arm Circles
Rolling like a Ball
Ab Series
Hip Twist

Side Lying

Leg Kick
Side Leg Series

Prone

Swan Dive Prep

From Quadruped

Hip Stretch
Hip Flexor Stretch

Seated

Side Bend
Spine Stretch Forward
Cleansing Breath
Full Exhalation Breath

Pilates Progressions

Home Study Exam



Course # 9461 Exam Code # 260729

1. _____ Pilates classes are designed to teach the Pilates method in a structure, progressive manner.
 - A. Beginner
 - B. Traditional
 - C. Open-mat
 - D. Advanced
2. Which Pilates principle enhances and promotes efficient movement through proper muscular usage?
 - A. Alignment
 - B. Breath
 - C. Concentration
 - D. Stabilization
3. Neutral pelvis refers to the position in which a person's natural _____ curve is present.
 - A. Imprinted
 - B. Kyphotic
 - C. Lordotic
 - D. Neutral
4. Which of the following is considered to be a local core muscle?
 - A. Rectus abdominis
 - B. Gluteus medius
 - C. Multifidus
 - D. Pectoral muscles
5. What would be the positional relationship between the ASIS and pubic bone in classic Pilates position with a neutral pelvis?
 - A. ASIS and pubic bone in flat plane
 - B. ASIS slightly higher than pubic bone
 - C. Pubic bone slightly higher than ASIS
 - D. Pubic bone slightly lower than ASIS
6. Which exercise focuses on spinal flexion?
 - A. Breast stroke
 - B. Hundred
 - C. Swimming
 - D. Saw
7. Which of the following would happen first when correctly firing muscle groups for the hundred exercise?
 - A. Shoulder blades lift off the mat
 - B. Ribs slide down toward hips
 - C. Lower belly domes
 - D. Lower belly pulls flat

8. Which position could be used to practice the neutral side-lying position?
 - A. Kneeling
 - B. Prone
 - C. Seated
 - D. All 4's

9. Performing the leg series in a standing position would most challenge which variable?
 - A. Tempo
 - B. Momentum
 - C. Balance
 - D. Breathing patterns

10. The "S" principle in Pilates refers to
 - A. stabilization.
 - B. structure.
 - C. safety.
 - D. science.

11. What would be an appropriate progression for the $\frac{3}{4}$ rollback exercise?
 - A. Hold the breath
 - B. Lift the feet off the floor
 - C. Bring the hands behind the head
 - D. Relax the core

12. Which exercises teaches back breathing?
 - A. Scapular retraction
 - B. Shell stretch
 - C. Plank
 - D. Push-up

13. Which of the following is an example of a large skeletal muscle?
 - A. Multifidis
 - B. Psoas
 - C. Quadriceps
 - D. Gluteus medius

14. What is the traditional starting position for the hundred exercise?
 - A. Classic Pilates
 - B. Supine
 - C. C-curve
 - D. All 4's

15. Starting the warm up in a _____ position creates a more accessible learning environment.
- A. supine
 - B. seated
 - C. classic Pilates
 - D. all 4's
16. Which exercise primarily demonstrates spinal articulation?
- A. Hundred
 - B. Saw
 - C. Spine stretch forward
 - D. Seal
17. The _____ influences the amount of stability required, the effect of gravity, the size of the base of support, and the complexity of the movement
- A. Starting position
 - B. Lever length
 - C. Pelvic placement
 - D. Tempo
18. What refers to the order in which muscles are recruited create efficient, controlled movement?
- A. Muscle sequencing
 - B. Muscle stabilization
 - C. Muscle control
 - D. Muscle coordination
19. Adding an alternate march during the shoulder bridge exercise would be an example of progression via which means?
- A. Starting position
 - B. Lever length
 - C. Tempo
 - D. Coordination
20. Which muscle/muscle group cause(s) a posterior pelvic tilt?
- A. Hip flexors
 - B. Abdominals
 - C. Hamstrings
 - D. Gluteals
21. A _____ challenges coordination and rhythm, increasing cardiovascular demand in some exercises.
- A. longer lever
 - B. shorter lever
 - C. faster tempo
 - D. slower tempo

22. _____ is a means of encouraging a process-mentality.
- A. Comparison
 - B. Self-reflection
 - C. Discipline
 - D. Consistency
23. What triggers local core activation?
- A. Skeletal muscles
 - B. The breath
 - C. Concentration
 - D. Global muscles
24. Which progression would increase the influence of gravity while requiring greater postural control?
- A. Standing roll down
 - B. All 4's leg reach
 - C. Side-lying leg series
 - D. Side plank
25. What is the distance between the body's axis of rotation and the point where the force is applied?
- A. Lever
 - B. Tempo
 - C. Placement
 - D. Sequence

Pilates Progressions Home Study Answer Sheet



Name:		NETA ID	
Address		Phone:	
City/State/Zip:			

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 1. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 11. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 21. (A)(B)(C)(D) |
| 2. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 12. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 22. (A)(B)(C)(D) |
| 3. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 13. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 23. (A)(B)(C)(D) |
| 4. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 14. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 24. (A)(B)(C)(D) |
| 5. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 15. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 25. (A)(B)(C)(D) |
| 6. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 16. (A)(B)(C)(D) | |
| 7. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 17. (A)(B)(C)(D) | |
| 8. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 18. (A)(B)(C)(D) | |
| 9. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 19. (A)(B)(C)(D) | |
| 10. (A)(B)(C)(D) | 20. (A)(B)(C)(D) | |

Questions: (Please feel free to attach additional questions and comments you may have)

Return for credit (choose one of the following):

- ☐ Mail to NETA 12800 Industrial Park Blvd Ste 220 Minneapolis, MN 55441.
- ☐ Complete online: <https://www.netafit.org/homestudy-exam/pilates-progressions-2nd-ed/>

Item #: 9461
Exam Code # 260729

Your Certificate of Completion will be uploaded to your NETA account within five business days of receipt of your completed exam.

Thank You!

Customer Evaluation

1. Please Rate the Study Material: 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest

Organization and flow of material	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Quality of the study materials	1	2	3	4	5	NA
Usefulness of course material	1	2	3	4	5	NA

2. Would you recommend this home study to others?

3. What other home study courses would you be interested in?

4. Primary purpose for purchasing this home study course

- ☐ Convenience
- ☐ Topic
- ☐ CEC's

5. What can we do to improve our home study courses?

6. Are you currently NETA certified? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If no, what organization are you certified with? _____

7. How do the NETA Home Studies compare to other home studies from other organizations?

1 2 3 4 5 NA