

# Pilates for Athletes

Developed by Helen Vanderburg  
2018 IDEA Top Industry Contributor  
2018 CanFitPro Lifetime Achievement  
CanFitPro Presenter of the Year      IDEA Presenter of the Year

## **Introductions**

Pilates mat and small equipment exercises have great benefits for athletes whether they are participating in recreational or competitive sport. This unique series of Pilates exercises suit the needs of athlete and fitness participant by giving them core integration exercises to enhance stability, balance and strength. Learn sequences of movements to target trouble areas in active participants to release tension, increase trunk integration and ultimately improve performance.

## **Athletic Endeavors Overview**

- High repetition
- Prolonged physical output
- High demand on joints and connective tissue
- Activity induces asymmetry
- Physical and psychological demand

## **Benefits of Pilates for Athletes and Fitness Enthusiasts:**

1. Deep breathing exercise assist in breath control
2. Diaphragmatic breathing techniques increase the function of the diaphragm and limber the rib cage
3. Increased flexibility, mobility and stability
4. Restores the energy, muscular and connective tissue balance of physical work of activities
5. Whole body and trunk integration
6. Symmetry and balance
7. Mindful focus
8. Quiets the senses and calms the body

**Breathing:**

1. Deep diaphragmatic breathing
2. Restorative breathing
3. Calming breathing

**Stress, Strain and Injury:**

1. Repetitive use
2. Over use
3. Over training
4. Poor biomechanics or imbalances
5. Lack of recovery

**Pilates Programming Strategy:**

1. assess the stresses due to training
2. assess the static and dynamic posture
3. observe tightness and weakness in movement
4. choose exercises based on assessment and observation

**Movement Assessment Exercises:**

1. Standing overhead reach
2. Standing forward bend
3. Cat cow
4. Low lunge
5. Spinal extension

## Trunk Integration Series

Exercise	Description	Variations
Standing spinal movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side bend R/center/L/center</li> <li>• Extension/Flexion</li> <li>• Rolldown/up (finish down in all 4's)</li> </ul>	
All 4's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cow/Cat</li> <li>• Tail Wag</li> <li>• Arm marching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move F/B &amp; side-side</li> <li>• Add opp arm I/E rot</li> <li>• Pushups &amp; arm jumping</li> </ul>
Mermaid seat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side bend</li> <li>• Rotation</li> <li>• Hip lift</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add arm circles</li> <li>• Do other side after Rev Tabletop series</li> </ul>
Reverse tabletop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press up/down</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add legs</li> <li>• Add hamstring stretch forward</li> </ul>
Supine prep work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knee lifts/folds</li> <li>• Ab/Oblique curls</li> <li>• Bridge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single, alternating, reciprocal, double</li> <li>• Add legs w/upper body</li> <li>• Single leg versions</li> </ul>
Side Lying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Top leg lifts</li> <li>• Bottom leg lifts</li> <li>• Double leg lifts</li> <li>• Banana</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vary pacing</li> <li>• Add pulses</li> <li>• Add kicks F/B or circles</li> </ul>
Prone work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single leg kick</li> <li>• Swan prep&gt;Upper/Lower/together&gt;Swan&gt;Dive</li> <li>• Press ups on knees to toes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pacing, pulses</li> <li>• Rocking</li> <li>• Add props (ring/ball)</li> </ul>
Supine ab work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Series of 5 (SLS, DLS, SSLs, DSLs, CC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add bridge work to give hip flexors a break and balance w/back extension</li> </ul>
Rollup variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rollup</li> <li>• Rolling like a Ball</li> <li>• Teaser</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add holds at top of movement</li> <li>• add rollover versions</li> <li>• roll to standing</li> </ul>

Reference: Fusion Workouts by Helen Vanderburg, Human Kinetics

[helen@henvanderburg.com](mailto:helen@henvanderburg.com)

[www.fusion-fitness-training.com](http://www.fusion-fitness-training.com)

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