

Eliminate Back Pain and Find Core Strength

With 6 SIMPLE Pilates Exercises

Allison Zang, MS CHHC

ACE® Certified Personal Trainer
Comprehensively Trained Pilates Teacher
AFAA Group Exercise Instructor

ABSolute Pilates and Wellness Center
<http://www.movewithabsolutepilates.com>

Allison Zang offers no warranty or guarantee as to the accuracy or comprehensiveness of any of the information or content contained in any of the pages of this e-book. It simply offers informed subjective opinion, advice and guidance to those wishing to undertake physical activity and to enjoy a healthy lifestyle.

Allison Zang hereby accepts no liability for any loss or damage suffered as a result of the use or misuse of any information or content, or any reliance thereon.

It is the responsibility of all users of this e-book to ensure they have sought the appropriate medical advice before practically applying the information to their own training.

The information in this document is the property of Allison Zang . No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photographic, recorded, translated or otherwise, without the permission of the copyright holder.

You Don't Have To Live With Back Pain!

In almost 10 years of experience in the fitness industry and Pilates training the biggest complaint I hear from my clients is chronic back and neck pain. For most people it's not so acute that they really want to do anything about it. They just live with low-level pain all the time and avoid activities, which make things worse.

The problem is that chronic back pain signals a muscular and postural imbalance that can get worse and that can leave you open to a greater injury and possibly the need for spine surgery. And these imbalances do not simply affect your back, but can cause imbalance and injury to your other joints leaving you with aching hips, knees, ankles, toes, shoulders, and elbows.

Most of us have heard that we need to strengthen our abs to help our backs, or strengthen our core, but when I ask my clients what that means most of them have no idea. Even the classical abdominal and back strengthening exercises such as crunches and superman extensions will make your pain worse if they are not done correctly.

Did you know that your lower back is not supposed to move a lot? On the hand your neck, shoulders, and ribcage should have plenty of free motion in many directions? For most of us our necks and shoulders are too tight and our lower backs are too loose, and that is a big part of the pain problem.

Luckily Pilates can help by strengthening the muscles that stabilize the pelvis and increasing mobility in the other areas of the spine and torso. Pilates focuses on breathing and abdominal stabilization as its basis, moving out to the rest of the body from a strong stable center of gravity.

Simple Exercises Will Help Your Back Pain

In this book I will teach you 6 simple Pilates fundamental exercises that will ELIMINATE BACK PAIN in less than 30 sessions. I have used these exercises with over 100 clients who all swear by them!

If your doctor has cleared you to exercise and you would like to get rid of your back pain, do these 6 exercises exactly as described twice per day--morning and night--for 30 days. After the 30 days you can cut down to once a day or less, but use these movement guidelines in all of your other activities and you will be feeling great!

I. Conscious Breathing

Part of the pain response is that we tend to stop breathing, which when you have back pain makes everything much worse. Here is a simple breathing exercise that will start the process of getting your ribcage to move more and feeling how your abdominal muscles assist in breathing.

Lie on your back with your knees bent, your feet hip width apart, and your arms by your sides. Pay attention to your breathing and to the muscles in your torso. The abdominal muscles are not just in front, they actually wrap around your torso from your spine to the front, around your ribs, waist, & pelvis, forming the round sides of a cylinder.

Feel your ribs move to the front, side, and back as you breathe—the abdominals are helping to move your ribs! Now pay attention to your pelvis. Make sure that you are not pushing your lower back into the floor; your pubic bones should be in the same horizontal line as your hip bones--you may have an arch in your lower back and that's OK, you are supposed to! Now as you inhale let your ribcage, abs, and pelvis relax. As you exhale contract your pelvic floor as though you had to stop peeing, feel your abs wrap tighter around your ribs and waist like a corset, and feel your diaphragm under your ribcage pull up and under the ribs. Make sure again that you are not flattening your lower back into the mat. Put your hands on your belly and notice that now it pulls in (it may feel soft, but you are going for width and depth, not for tightness!).

Repeat 10-15 times.

II. Pelvic Tilts

Add a small rocking movement of your pelvis--tipping it back as you exhale (hipbones back and tailbone up) and forward on the inhale (arching the lower back). Repeat the tilt/arch 10-15 times.

Then try to move side to side without moving your knees or ribcage. Pretend that someone dropped a hot ash on your right hip bone so that it drops towards the mat a little, and then the left. Breathe as you need to and go between the right and left hip 10-15 times.

Finally, combine these movements into a small circle. Pretend that your belly is a big bowl of your favorite snack and you are trying slowly to move all around the bowl without spilling any. Begin by tilting your pelvis back and then go around to your right hip, your tailbone (arching the low back off), the left hip, and back to the beginning. Repeat 3-6 times and then reverse the direction. Breathe constantly and slowly.

III. Ab Curl

First do some small nodding movements of your head/chin keeping the back of your head on the mat and trying to move from the base of your skull. After 5-10 nods do some small circles in the same manner (pretend you are drawing circles in the air with your nose) 5-10 times in each direction.

Then bring your hands behind your head and allow the back of your head to really sit in your hands. Nod your head and then pretend you are holding a small orange under your chin (in other words keep space between chin & chest). Exhale fully and let your ribs drop in and down (don't shove them down!) as you curl your upper body towards your pelvis (do not pull forward from your head at this point--use the ribs). This is more about curling your ribs up than straining your head forward.

Stay there for a moment and consciously breathe, making sure that you have not tucked your hip bones back to the floor—see if you can get as deep and wide in your belly as when your head was down.

Repeat 5-10 times.

Always work with pulling the belly in and not pushing out!

IV. Arm Circles

Still on your back with the pelvis neutral, bring your arms/hands back to your sides. Slowly lift arms up to ceiling as you inhale. When arms are at shoulder level exhale as you reach them towards the ceiling (keep head down) allowing your shoulder blades to lift and spread as wide as they can; then inhale as you drop the shoulder blades down and squeeze them together in your back while your arms stay in position towards the ceiling. Repeat 5-10 times.

Keep your arms up but allow your shoulder blades to relax. Keeping your ribcage down and plenty of space between your hands, exhale as you stretch your arms back overhead, and inhale as you circle them around to the sides and back to your hips. It is important that your ribs stay down; it is not important that your hands touch the floor.

Do 4-6 in each direction. This can also be done standing against a wall. This should not hurt your shoulders. Stay in a pain free range of motion.

V. Prone Hip Extension

Lie on your stomach with your forehead resting on your hands and do the same breathing as above. It is harder to breathe here, but think about expanding your ribs to the side and contract your abs with each exhale.

On an exhale press your hips into the mat and as you inhale lift one straight leg off the ground. Keep your hips still and do not move your back. Think about lengthening between your hip and the top of your thighbone.

Remember that we only have about 15 degrees of hip extension, so this should not be a huge movement. Exhale to lower your leg.

Alternate legs 5-10 times and then do both at the same time 5-10 times.

VI. Flight

Lay prone on your stomach and place arms by your sides with palms down and forehead resting on the mat or a folded towel. Set up your pelvis the same way as above as you exhale, contracting your abs and pressing your hips and pubic bones into the mat.

This time as you inhale lift and lengthen your head & chest off the mat while at the same time reaching your hands towards your feet.

Exhale, contract your abs deeply and lift your hands/arms. Don't overarch your lower back or your neck! Keep chest open & feet down.
Repeat 5-10 times.

Why These Exercises Work

You might be wondering how such seemingly simple movements could have such a profound effect on your back. The answer has to do with CORE STRENGTH.

CORE STRENGTH is internal strength that comes from the small internal support muscles around your pelvis and lower back.

The Transverse Abdominals

This innermost layer of abdominal muscle runs horizontally from the lumbar spine to the front of the abdomen, from the diaphragm to the pubis. It works together with the lumbar multifidus and pelvic floor muscles to stabilize your pelvis and lumbar spine.

The Lumbar Multifidus

These small muscles attach your vertebrae to each other. They help move and stabilize the spine in all movements and when weak or imbalanced can cause vertebral shifting and sometimes nerve impingement.

The Pelvic Floor

The muscles of the pelvic floor help keep the contents of our abdomens from falling out, keep us in control of our bladders and bowels both long and short term, allow us to enjoy sex, and help stabilize our pelvises and lower backs.

CORE STRENGTH comes from these smaller muscles working together as a team, and the exercises in this book with strengthen them to work together and keep you out of pain!

ABSolute Pilates is dedicated to helping busy people back in to there favorite jeans without guilt, calorie counting, or pain. Allison has over ten years of experience in the fitness industry. She is a comprehensively trained Pilates Instructor, Pre and Post Natal Pilates, Pilates for Osteoporosis, and Pink Ribbon Pilates certified. Allison teaches in her own studio in Mechanicsburg, PA.

Allison specializes in both functional Pilates exercise for everyone from non-exercisers to the superfit as well as performance enhancement for amateur and professional athletes (including golfers, runners, cyclists, squash & tennis players, dancers, basketball and football payers). Allison has extensive experience working with clients who suffer from a variety of illnesses & injuries including but not limited to:

- * Neck, back, and joint pain (disk herniations, spinal surgeries, stenosis, scoliosis, joint replacements, frozen shoulders, rotator cuff injury)
- * Osteo & rheumatoid arthritis
- * Osteoporosis
- * Spinal cord injury (including paraplegia)
- * Mastectomy
- * Abdominal surgeries
- * Parkinson's Disease
- * MS
- * Cerebral palsy
- * Muscular dystrophies
- * Fibromyalgia
- * Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Website--<http://www.movewithabsolutepilates.com>
Contact— allison@movewithabsolutepilates.com