

## Pilates - The Fundamentals

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**POSTURE:** Standing - Neutral posture

**Feet:** Together and Turn the Toes out to first position (ten to two), rise up on to the balls of the Feet and take the Heels back in line with the Toes.

Feel the ball of the big Toe, the entire outside of the Foot and a point in the centre of the Heel – the “Tripods” these should always connected to the floor

**Body weight:** is evenly placed, front to back, side to side  
Ankle, Knee, Hip, Shoulder alignment

**Knees:** soft and off the joint

Imagine your Feet being rooted to the floor – at the same time lengthen and grow tall to the ceiling. (If you do this correctly the area below your Navel will pull in and up gently and your B-Line will start to switch on!)

**B-Line:** find it and activate it (*see below*).

**Shoulder blades:** Lift the Shoulders to Ears, roll them back one inch, squeeze the *Shoulder Blades* together and place them down into your “pocket”

**Chest:**– open it and turn the palms of the hands to face your thighs

**Neck:** Jut your Chin forward and then draw it back towards you; the neck behind you is long

**BREATHING:** – “Breathe to Achieve”, the “Breath Makes the Move” The breath is Lateral (into your sides) and thoracic ie in the ribcage area, expanding into the upper back. Keep your shoulder blades and arms down and imagine blowing balloons up underneath your armpits!

OCEAN BREATHING – practice either standing or sitting

Hands: Wrap your hands around your Ribs at the front of the body. The middle Fingers are touching. Inhale through your Nose, exhale open your Mouth let your Jaw relax and expel/force the air out of your lungs (quite loud). Just practice this first, trying to make the breath even. Then concentrate on keeping your Shoulder Blades down and relaxed as you inhale – your middle Fingers should part slightly as the Ribs expand – as you exhale they come back together as the ribs shut down. To breathe deeper remember the EXHALE breath is the key - breathe out until you have no air left in your lungs. Eventually we want to be able to Inhale for 5 seconds, exhale for 5 seconds.

Using a scarf or tie: Wrap the band around you under your armpits and under your “chest/breast” – have it quite secure – inhale into the band and try and open your ribs into it – it will tighten, exhale shut the ribs down the band should loosen slightly.

BLAST BREATH – open the mouth, jaw relaxed and expel all the air with force. Imagine cleaning “your glasses” hah

LONG BLAST BREATH – open the mouth, jaw relaxed, expel 75% of the air with force to begin with and the rest until no air is left

PERCUSSION BREATH – open mouth, relaxed jaw like laughing (ha, ha, ha)

## **FINDING YOUR B-LINE**

Fingers on Hip bones trace a straight line into the centre, (you may notice this line is in front of your hipbone) press very hard, cough – this line will pop out and then in. Now **WITHOUT SQUEEZING YOUR BUTTOCKS OR TUCKING YOUR PELVIS UNDER** draw/pull your “stomach” away from the fingers. Press further and draw in again imagine you are drawing your fingers back past the line of your hipbones. OR imagine wearing a belt below your navel, start to do your belt up, 1 notch, 2 notches and then 3 notches and hold that. These are your lower abdominal muscles – keep this B-Line turned ON, for the rest of your life! **REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT PULLING YOUR NAVEL IN TOWARDS YOUR SPINE**

**THE OFFERING** - For any exercise where you are lying on your back

With a cushion under the ball of your Head, lift the Pelvis up, grasp the Buttocks with the palms of Hands, then pressing the Hips away from the Ribs towards the Feet, roll/print the Spine on to the floor. That is, Offer Your Buttocks Towards Your Heels.

Imagine 2 coins: draw a line from your navel to your spine – this is L3 and is your “Lumbar Coin” Where your Tailbone meets your Sacrum is your “Sacral Coin” This is **STABLE SPINE**  
Watch the video “the offering” in the Beginner’s lounge and practice

## **SQUEEZING YOUR CORE**

Standing, place your Hands around you, just below Ribcage – Fingers are at the front, Thumbs at the back.

Imagine the area between your Ribs and Hips has been evacuated – ie there are no organs there - just a space. Replace the space with a large apple. Remove the core of the apple and throw it away. You are now left with a hollow cylinder which is roughly in front of your spine. Now starting from the muscles in the Back, squeeze the hollow cylinder from the back, sides and front until it disappears – you should feel the muscles in the lower Back, sides and front drawing in tightly! This is the Core.

## **PELVIC FLOOR**

Imagine the pelvic floor is a lift, close the lift doors and go up in the lift to floor 1 – hold for 10 secs, floor 2 hold for 10secs, floor 3 hold for 30 secs

B-Line – always on  
Squeeze the CORE and LIFT your FLOOR (in that order!)

The CORE to elevate  
The B-LINE to flex

**BLINE, SQUEEZE THE CORE, LIFT THE FLOOR = STRENGTH AND STABILITY**