

# 3 Pilates Exercises You Can Do (Almost) Anytime, Anywhere

Need a quick pick-me-up, but you're pressed for time? These exercises are standards of a Pilates mat class and will get your motor running and challenge your abdominals and leg muscles without requiring you to break a sweat. Finish off your mini-workout with a bonus exercise—the Mermaid side stretch—and your body will thank you for it.

## Rolling Like a Ball

Sit on a mat and grasp the lower legs just above the ankles. Drop the shoulders, widen the back and lift the toes off the floor while balancing on the sit bones. Contract the abdominals and roll back to the shoulders (don't roll on the neck); pause and return to the starting position. Use the abdominals to balance on the sit bones without letting the feet touch the mat. Repeat five or six times.



## Single Leg Stretch

Lie on the floor with legs straight and a neutral spine. Raise the head off the floor and contract the abdominals. Bring the right knee into the chest and grasp behind the knee as the left leg extends toward the wall in front of you, a few inches off the floor. Keep the shoulders down and relaxed and the abdominals contracted throughout the exercise. Switch legs and repeat for 10 repetitions.



## The Hundred

Lie on the floor with the legs extended up toward the ceiling. Lower the legs slightly (20 to 30 degrees) while maintaining a neutral spine. Raise the head off the floor and contract the abdominals. With the arms parallel to the floor, take five short breaths in and five short breaths out while pumping the arms up and down in a controlled manner. Do 10 cycles of five breaths in and five breaths out. To increase the challenge, lower the legs to 45 degrees while maintaining a neutral spine.



### **BONUS: Mermaid Stretch**

Sit on the floor with both legs folded to the left side. Place the right hand on the floor to support the body and extend the left arm above the head. Keep the shoulders down and the head in a neutral position while bringing the inside of the arm close to the ear. Hold for at least 15 seconds and then grab the left knee with the left hand and reach over with the right arm. Repeat with the legs folded to the right if desired.

