

THE PILATES METHOD FOR BRIDES



Alana Reed has a Masters Degree from Columbia University School of Social Work and was certified in the Pilates method by Romana Kryzanowska, the world's leading Pilates instructor and one of five living original protégés of Joseph Pilates himself.

Reed works with clients to sculpt their bodies into their absolute best form by strengthening core abdominal muscles – also known as the Powerhouse – for a flexible body, positive mind and strong spirit. Her mission is to bring these time-proven practices to everyone from frantic hedge fund managers to frenzied brides and moms-to-be.

Here is a sample of 5 Pilates maneuvers that can really help transform your stomach, shoulders, arms, chest and back:



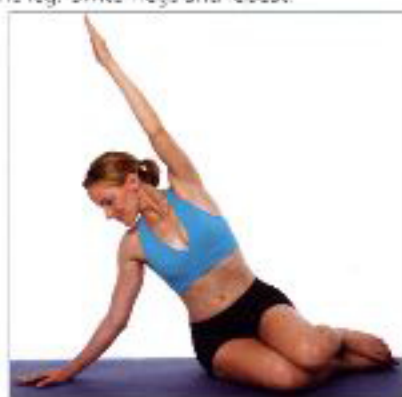
Leg Pull Down

This is considered an intermediate/advanced exercise. This exercise works the shoulders, abdominal muscles, hips and glutes. It also stretches the Achilles tendon and calves. To start, get into a push up position with hands directly under wrists. Pull your abdominal muscles in and up so that the lower back does not sink. Try to create a straight line from the head to the heels. Lift one foot off the floor. Shift your weight backwards, pressing the heel toward the floor. Next shift your weight forward. Repeat this 3x and then switch sides.



The Pilates Push-Up on One Leg

This advanced exercise challenges balance. It also requires a bit of flexibility in the backs of the legs. It works the abdominal muscles, shoulders, chest, arms and upper back. This push up also stretches the hamstrings. To start, stand up tall with arms lifted up to the ceiling. Lift one foot off the floor. Keep the foot lifted off the floor as you roll down and up your hands on the floor. Walk your hands out so that you end up in a push up position. Make sure your abdominal muscles are pulled in and up so that your lower back is not sinking. Bend your elbows straight into your sides. Straighten the elbows. Do a total of 3 push ups. Walk your hands back to meet your foot (you're still on one leg). Try to maintain your balance as you roll up to standing on one leg. Switch legs and repeat.



The Beginner/Intermediate Mermaid

This great exercise stretches the side of the torso as well as the shoulder and hip. To start, sit on your right hip and stack up your knees. Place your right hand on the floor a couple inches away from your right hip. Lift your left arm up to the ceiling and then move it diagonally to the right. While moving the arm, try to sink your left hip toward the floor. This exercise can be followed by the "Mermaid with Side Bend." Switch sides.



The Open Leg Rocker

This challenging balance exercise works the abdominal muscles, arms and shoulders. It also provides a great stretch for the backs of the legs and the lower back. To get into the position, hold onto your ankles or thighs and balance sitting on your tailbone. Don't let your feet touch the floor. Practice extending one leg at a time into the air while holding on to the same spot on your ankle or thigh. Keep your stomach pulled in and your chest lifted (maintain good posture). When this becomes comfortable try extending both legs.



The Mermaid with Side Bend

This intermediate/advanced exercise targets the shoulders, oblique muscles and hips. To try this exercise start by sitting on your right hip with your knees bent and stacked on top of one another. Your left foot should be slightly ahead of your right foot. Plant your right hand firmly into the floor with finger tips facing away from you. It should be directly underneath your shoulder. Press into your hand and feet and lift your body off the floor. Keep your abdominal muscles pulled in and keep your hips lifted, this will prevent body weight from sinking into the wrist and shoulder. Switch sides.