

An artistic illustration of a person in a Pilates pose, lying on their back with one leg raised and bent at the knee, and the other leg extended straight out. The person is wearing a blue top and yellow pants. The background is a light blue sky with a white cloud. The text 'PILATES METHOD' is written in a simple, sans-serif font above the word 'Matwork'.

PILATES METHOD

# Matwork

*by Sally Anderson*

pilates<sup>INT</sup>



*"Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being,  
while movement and methodical physical exercise save it and preserve it."*

*- Plato*

Copyright © Sally Anderson 2009

Artwork and layout by Imperial Metric [www.imperialmetric.tv](http://www.imperialmetric.tv)

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

PILATES METHOD

# Matwork

We have been given the work of a genius that will create the very best condition of our minds, bodies and wellness.

That is the legacy of **Joseph Pilates**.

The Principles to be consistently applied when working in the Pilates Method are:

Breath

Centring

Concentration

Control

Flow

Precision

## CONTENTS

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Cat Stretch         | <b>15</b> The Saw              |
| <b>2</b> Neutral Spine       | <b>16</b> Corkscrew            |
| <b>3</b> Pelvic Curl         | <b>17</b> Shoulder Bridge      |
| <b>4</b> Spine Twist         | <b>18</b> Side Lifts           |
| <b>5</b> The Hundred         | <b>19</b> Side Kicks           |
| <b>6</b> Roll Up             | <b>20</b> Basic Back Extension |
| <b>7</b> Leg Circles         | <b>21</b> Single Leg Kick      |
| <b>8</b> Rolling             | <b>22</b> Swimming             |
| <b>9</b> Side Reach          | <b>23</b> The Pike             |
| <b>10</b> Single Leg Stretch | <b>24</b> Teaser Prep          |
| <b>11</b> Double Leg Stretch | <b>25</b> Hip Stretch          |
| <b>12</b> Hamstring Pull     | <b>26</b> Hip Flexor Stretch   |
| <b>13</b> Criss Cross        | <b>27</b> Roll Down            |
| <b>14</b> Spine Stretch      |                                |

This Matwork program has been created as a general workout program and not specifically for any one person. If you feel pain or discomfort at any time when undertaking this program then you should discontinue the movement and seek professional consultation.

cat

# Stretch

On your hands and knees with your weight distributed evenly, find a neutral position of your spine with the abdominals engaged (pulled up)

Exhale and curl your abdominals up to round the back ... aim to round your low back (lumbar spine) more than the upper back

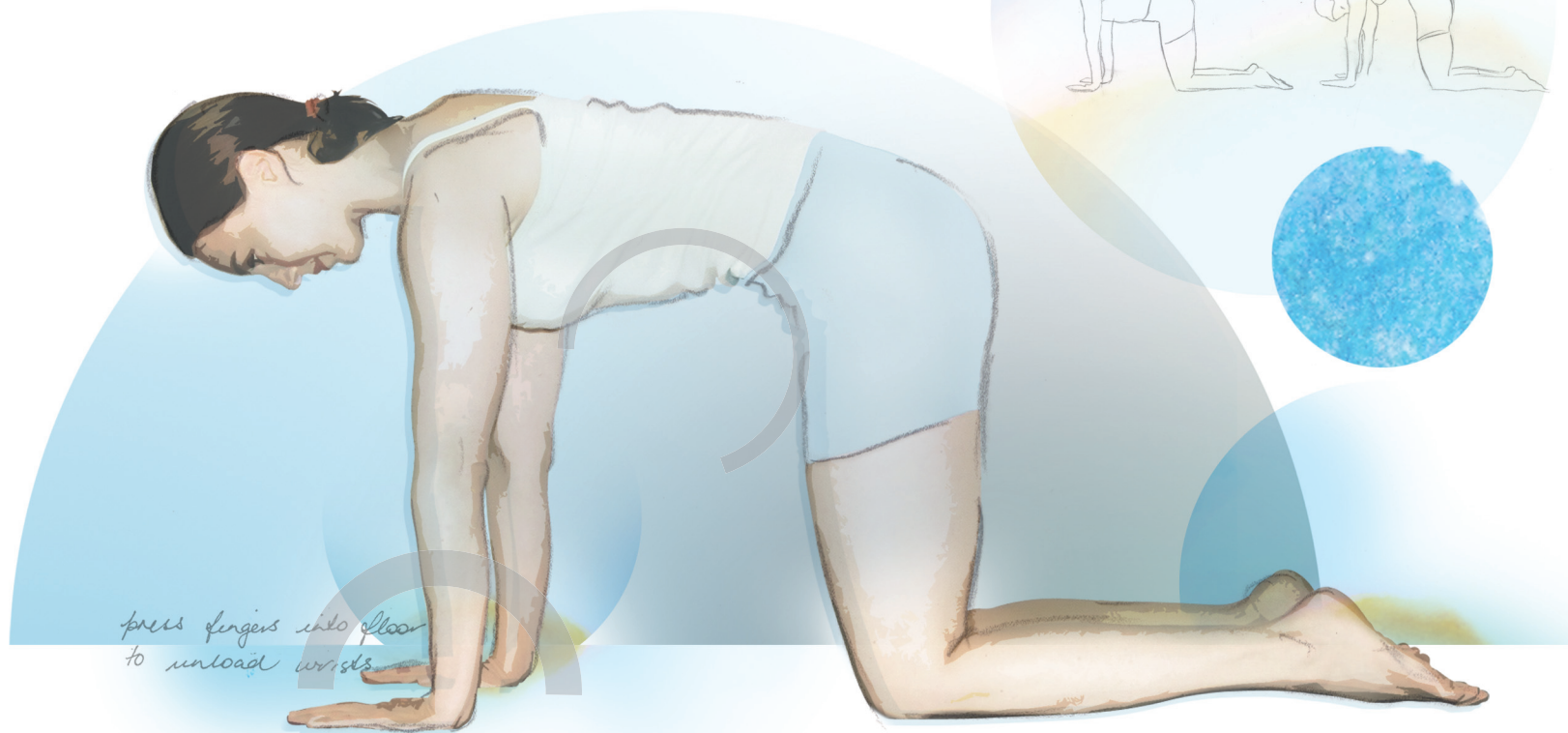
Inhale and lengthen the abdominals to extend your spine into an arch ... aim to extend the upper back (thoracic spine) more than the low back

Keep the rhythm as you move – always controlled by the abdominals. Keep your shoulders stable and let the head move gently with the spine

**Do 10**

*Find your centre*





neutral

# Spine

Lie on your back with legs bent in and parallel, and arms at your sides. While you breathe out, pull your abdominals in toward the spine and draw your pelvic floor up...

As you breathe in, let the abdominals relax. Make sure not to allow the spine to move – keep it long along the floor as you work just the abdominals. No tension in the shoulders, arms or anywhere other than your tummy and inner thighs.

## **5 breaths**

*Deep breathing and deep centering*





*shoulders press into floor*

pelvic

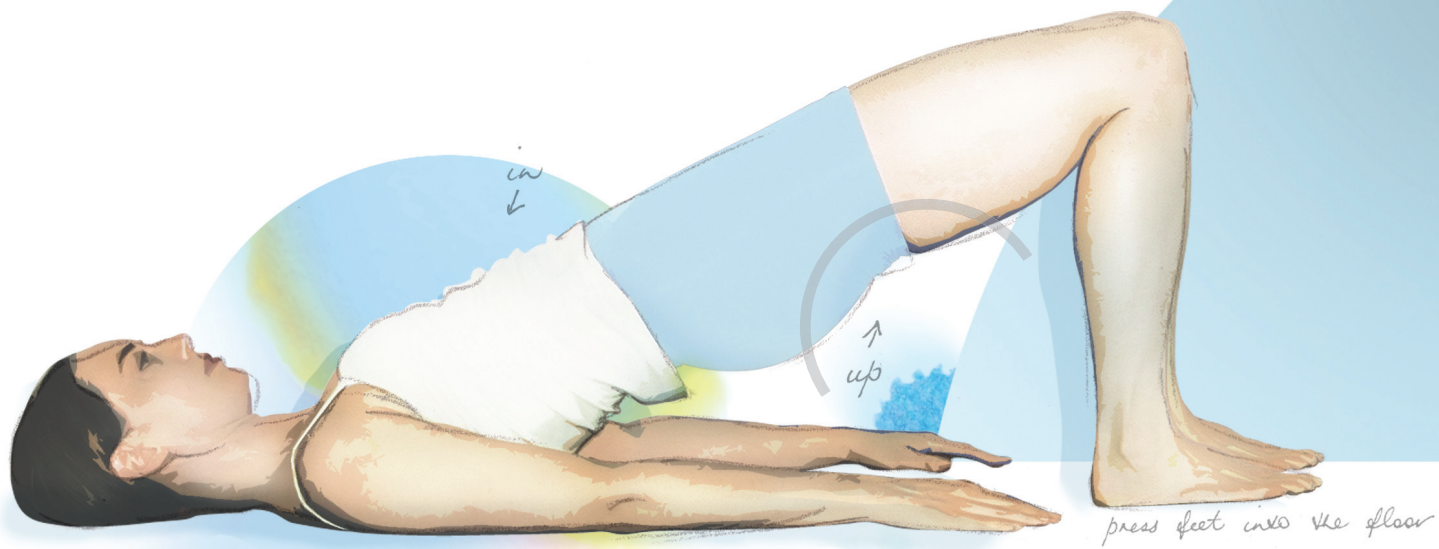
# Curl

From neutral position... pull your abdominals in to imprint the low back and then roll your tailbone up off floor to lead spine up in to a bridge position. Breathe in as you hold the bridge, then breathe out as you roll your spine back down to start position.

Each roll of the spine should articulate the bones throughout ... feel the hip extensors work to support you .... No popping the ribcage in bridge position!

## **Do 6**

*Concentrate on the articulation of the spine and parallel alignment of your legs*



# spine Twist

From neutral position, with arms open to 45 degrees...

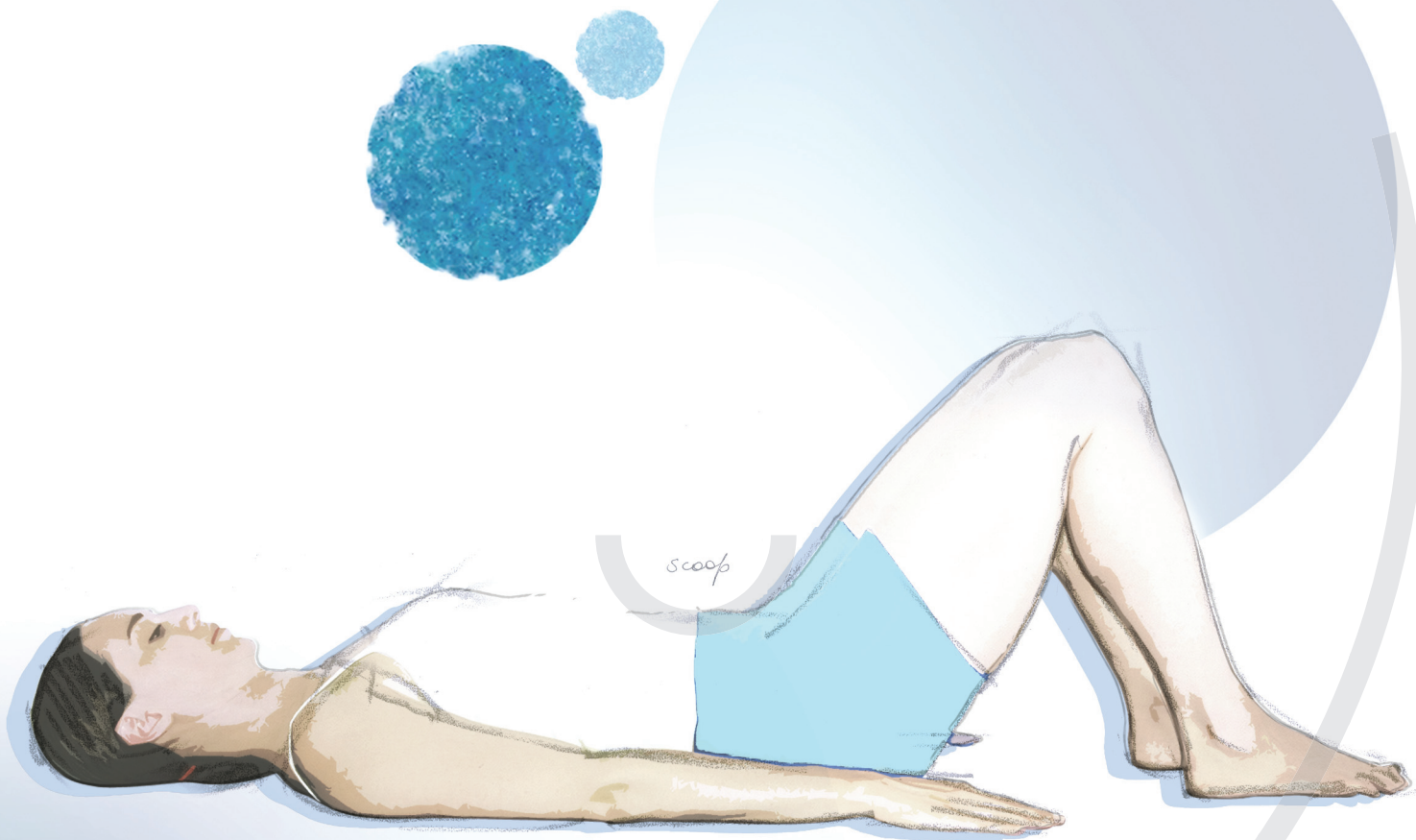
Drop both legs to the right side. Exhale as you pull the tummy in to drag the pelvis back to centre bringing the legs back with it. Repeat to left side...

This should mobilise the spine in rotation.

**Do 3-4 each side**

*Keep breath and movement flowing*





the

# Hundred

Hold a chest lift with the upper body with legs extended at a height that you can maintain with your abdominals in and back lengthened along the floor.

Beat your arms from the back of the upper arm – keeping them straight and reaching past your hips.

Breathe in over 5 beats and then out over 5 beats. You should do 100 beats altogether. That's 10 sets of 10 beats with a full breath cycle over each set.

Keep your abdominals pulled in. If you feel your abs are letting go or you feel it in your back, then bring the legs in to a bent position. You should feel your abdominals holding and working hard.

Use the modified version at any time – it will help you work the abdominals rather than your back or neck

**100 beats! (Or build up to that amount... start with 50!)**

*This is a full body exercise - keep the pace, rhythm and very deep scoop*





# Roll Up

Lengthen out with arms stretched overhead... Bring straight arms to the ceiling ... chest lift to bring head between arms and then exhale as you continue to roll spine up to get to a deep 'C' curve

When your shoulders are over your hips hold the curve and breathe in (try to open up your low back with the inhale)... then long exhale as you roll your spine sequentially back to start position

## **Do 6**

*Try to roll smoothly through the spine each way.  
Keep the legs anchored to the floor*





leg

# Circles

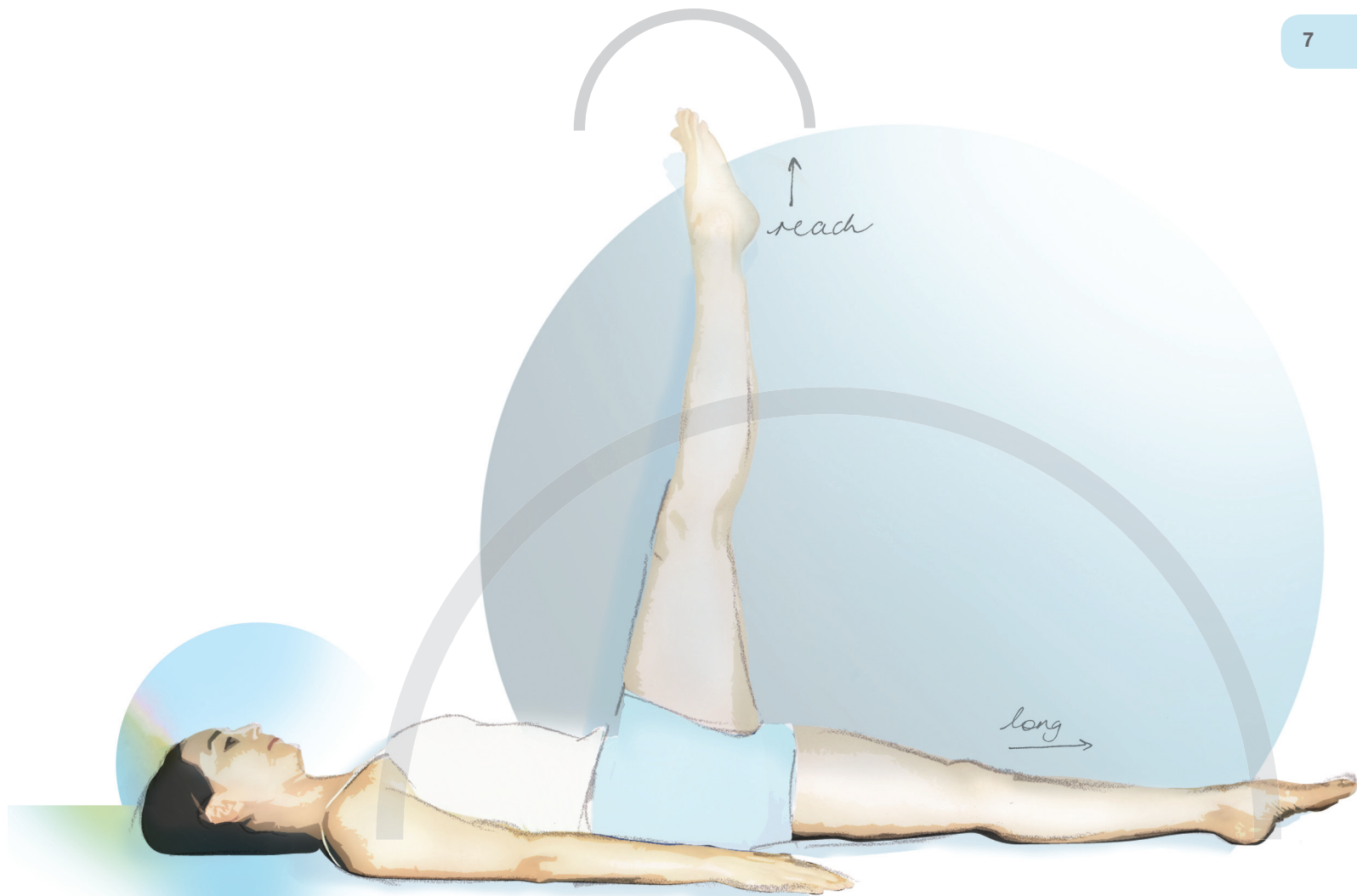
Raise one leg to the ceiling... anchor the thigh bone in the hip joint... pull the abdominals in and draw circles on the ceiling.

Going across the opposite leg and around, then reverse...

**Do 5 circles each way, each side**

*Keep a “quiet” pelvis and press the bottom leg into the floor*





# Rolling

Start in an upright position with legs bent in tight, hands on front of your ankles, spine rounded and head tucked in between your knees. Balance in this position. Breathe in as you roll back to your shoulder blades, and breathe out to come back to starting balance. Stay in the same 'ball' position all the way through.

If your back "clunks" or isn't comfortable when you roll, then do the Roll back instead – feet on the floor and curl back a little, then stack back up.

**Do 4-6**

*Like a 'ball'. Feel the low back roll on the mat each time.*

tuck head into knees



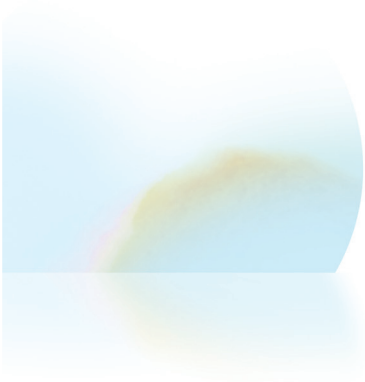
side

# Reach

Sit cross-legged with arms out to a 'T' position. Inhale and reach your torso to the right ... fingertips touch the floor. Exhale and side reach top arm over to the right. Repeat to the left. Make sure your ribs are kept drawn in and the low back stays flat. No arching!

**Do 3 each side**

*Aim to really open up the ribcage each side. Long spine all the way...*





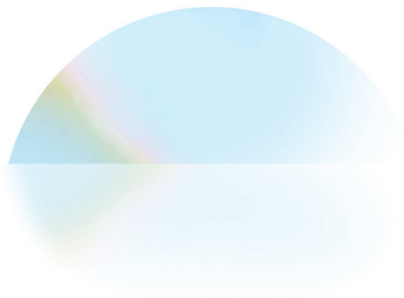


# single leg Stretch

Roll back to lie in chest lift position... legs bent in to chest. Exhale as you reach the right leg away... inhale to change. Keep repeating. The bent leg draws in to the chest, hands pulling it deeply in.

**Do 6 each side**

*Stretch and pull legs against each other each time.  
Eventually breathe in for two and out for two.*





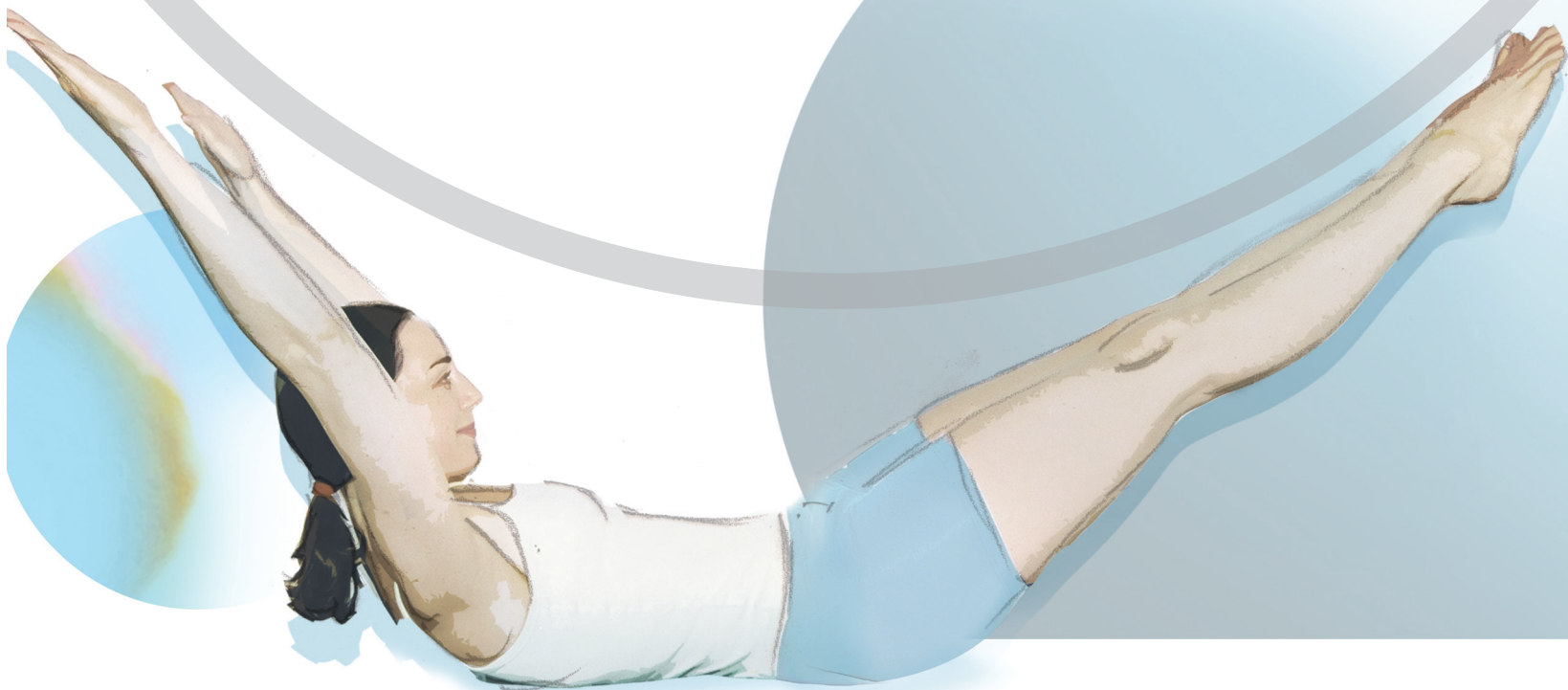
# double leg Stretch

From lying in chest lift with legs bent in... inhale to simultaneously extend arms overhead and legs out at eye level... exhale scoop tummy to pull all limbs back in.

## Do 6

*Stretch arms and legs as far as possible in opposition each time, but always with the chest staying lifted.*





# hamstring

## Pull

Stay in chest lift and pulse one leg toward your face with exhale.

Change legs on the inhale, keeping the abdominals and legs reaching long. Take care to keep your tailbone long on the mat.

The bottom leg pressing into the floor helps keep your tailbone long and the backs of the legs working.

**Do 6 each side**

*Keep arms reaching up above shoulders and bring the leg to the hands each time. Eventually breathe in for two then out for two.*



criss

# Cross

From lying in chest lift with the legs bent in and hands behind your head – legs extend one at a time as your chest rotates to the bent leg...

Working the oblique abdominal muscles.

Exhale to each side and inhale on the change through centre.

**Do 6 each side**

*Wring out the lungs on each rotation. Deep exhales.*





spine

# Stretch

Start in sitting with arms reaching forward in line with the shoulders, legs extended along the floor and open as wide as a mat. Breathe out to curl your body forward, aiming the crown of the head to between your knees. Hold for the inhale then breathe out as you stack your spine back up to sitting.

Pull your abdominals in to support and flatten the low back throughout – not hingeing at the hips. Keep your spine stretching and lifting all the way!

**Do 4-6**

*Really use the breath.*

*Aim to put your head between your knees... over time.*





the

# Saw

Sitting erect, open the legs wider than the mat, arms stretched out to the sides. Inhale to rotate to the right... exhale spine stretch over the right leg. Inhale there then exhale to stack back up to centre.

Repeat to the other side.

**Do 3 each side**

*Aim to “saw off” the little toe with your hand each side.*





# Corkscrew

Lying on your back with both legs extended high to the ceiling, squeezing legs together through the heels and inner thighs.... Circle your legs around to the right, then reverse.

Keep alternating, all the time deepening the abdominals and keeping your torso stable.

Keep the hamstrings engaged to anchor the pelvis too.

**Do 3 each way**

*Keep the circle size to what you can control.*

*This needs all the scooping of abdominals that you can muster.*

*It's a challenge!*





shoulder

# Bridge

From neutral position, pelvic curl up and hold your bridge position.

Extend one leg to the ceiling...then reach that foot to touch the floor, keeping the pelvis pressing up, then raise the leg back to the ceiling.

The body needs to stay stable in bridge position while the working leg moves.

Keep your ribs IN!

**Do 6 each side**

*Press the standing leg firmly into the floor and keep your pelvis lifted and level.*





side

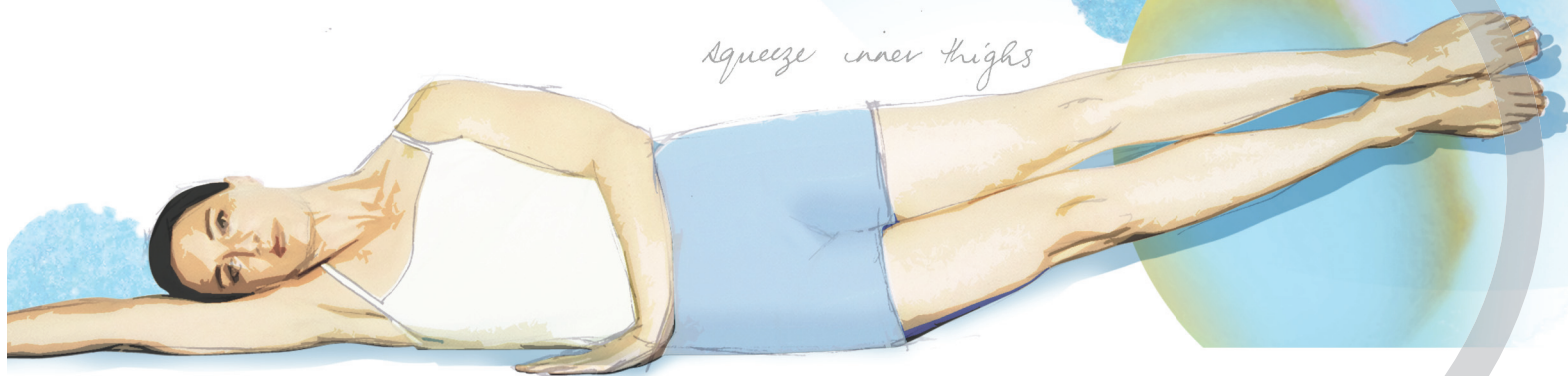
# Lifts

Lying on your side in a long position, with your underneath arm long and palm down. Top arm forward or alongside the torso. Breathe out to lift both legs off the floor using your obliques, then as you breathe in return the legs to hover just off the floor.

**Do 6 each side**

*Reach your legs out long before lifting and keep it small. You should feel the waist activate.*





*squeeze inner thighs*

side

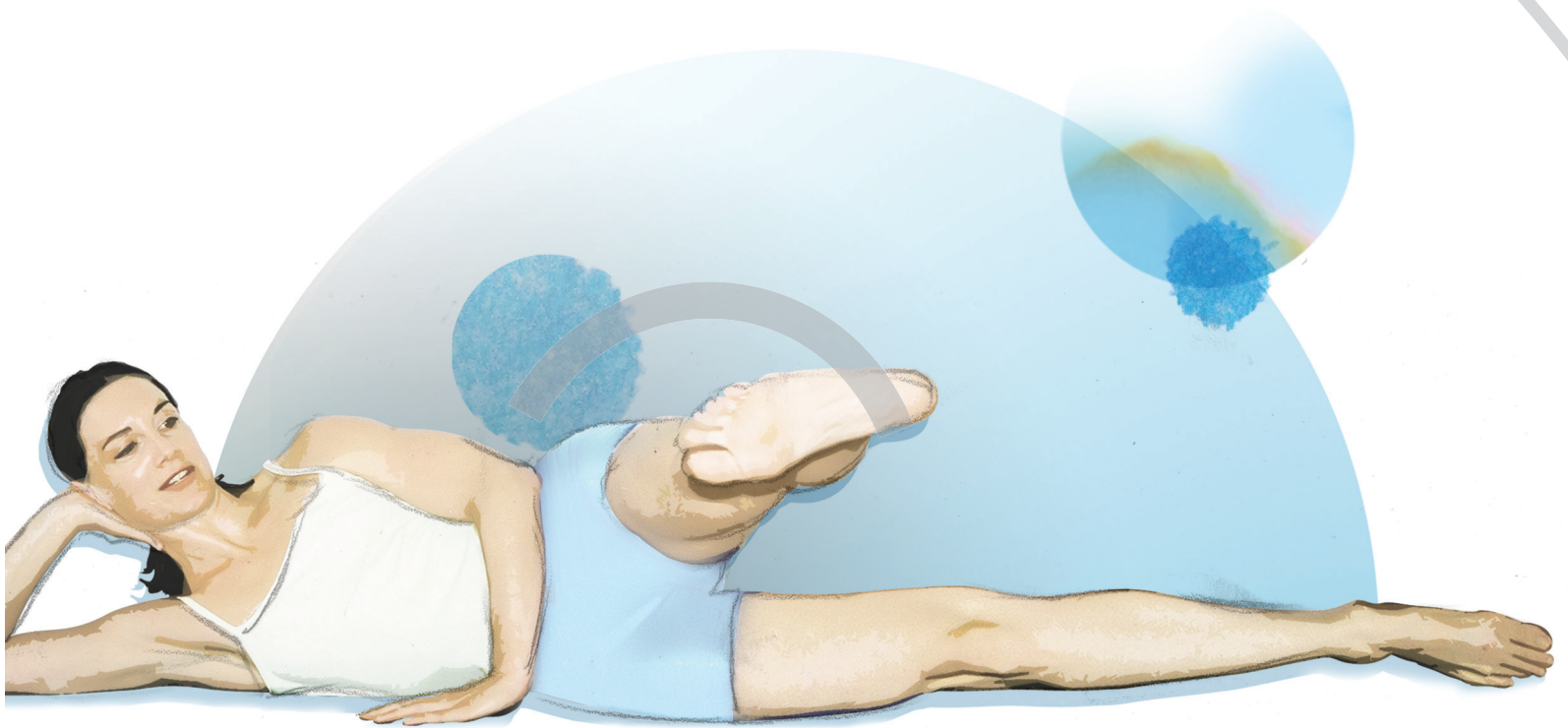
# Kicks

Side lying with the upper body raised, kick the top leg forward on the exhale, then reach that leg back on an inhale. Pelvis must stay stable and lengthened away from the shoulder so that the hinge is at the hip joint only. You can add a little pulse on each movement as you progress. Abdominals and ribs in, in, in...

**Do 6 sets each side**

*Only as far forward and back as you can keep the body stable.  
No crazy swinging and rocking!!*





basic back

# Extension

Lying on your front with both legs together and arms at your sides, forehead on the mat. Pull your abdominals up under you then lift the chest and arms off the mat. Breathe as you feel most comfortable and keep your neck lengthening out of the spine.

Feel the upper back work

**Do 6**

*Think of staying long like a “dart” and lengthen the neck out of the spine.*



single

# Leg Kick

Lying on your front, raise the torso into a lengthened “sphinx” position, with legs stretched out and together.

Kick one foot in to your bottom for two counts, then change.

Abdominals must stay pulled up underneath you, ribs in, neck long and shoulders down.

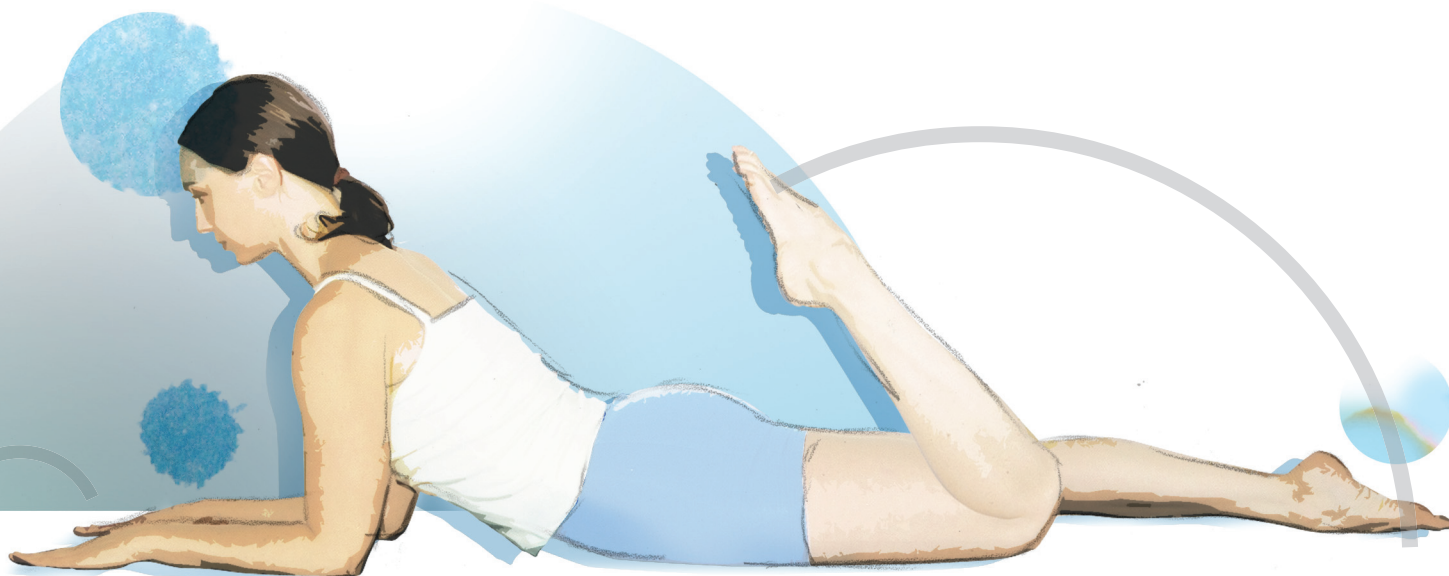
Increase the pace as you increase control.

**Do 6-10 each side**

*Squeeze your inner thighs together as you kick and keep a lovely lifted torso.*







# Swimming

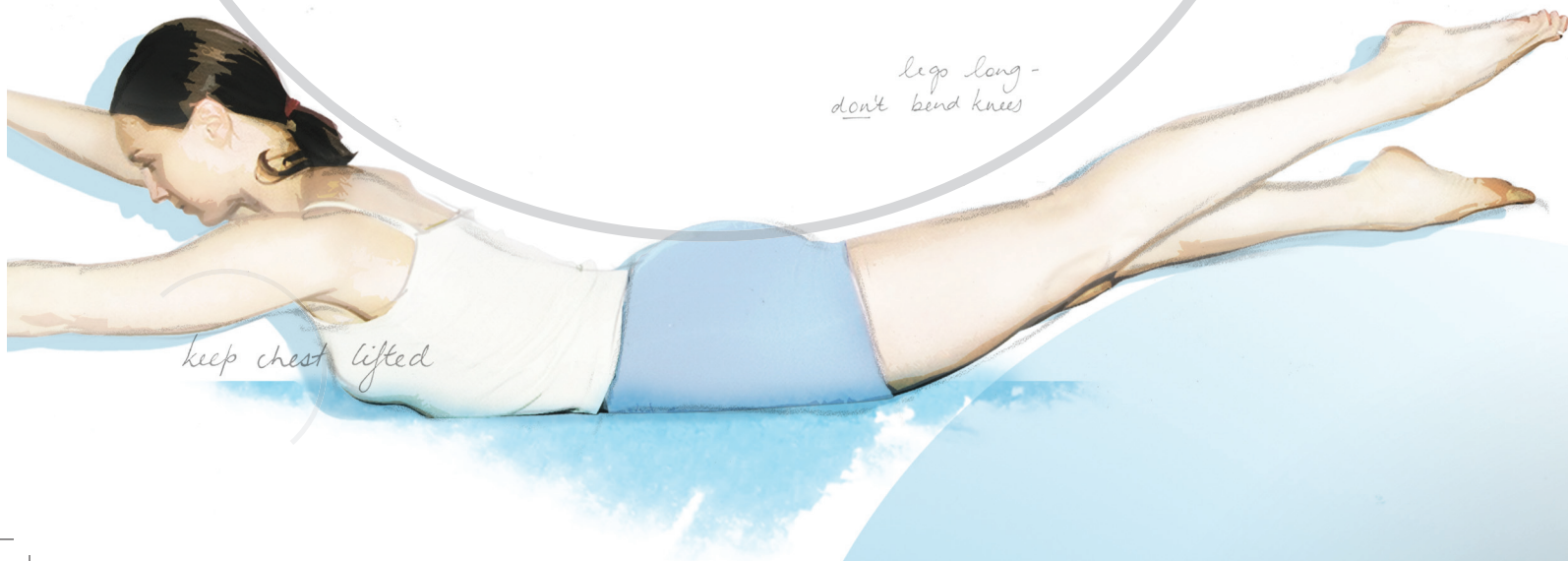
Lying on your front, reach your arms overhead and legs outstretched ...

Lift all limbs and upper torso just off floor. Raise right arm and left leg then change. Keep alternating as you breathe flowingly throughout.

**Do 40 changes**

*An easy 'English Channel'. Keep your abs and ribs up underneath you and legs together.*





the

# Pike

Press your hips up toward the sky in a pyramid position arms and legs stretched, and your head in between your arms

Press both heels firmly into the ground and continue to lengthen the back and send the tailbone as high as you can.

**Stay for 3-5 breaths**

*Careful not to arch your back or stick your ribs out  
– it's not quite the same as downward dog!*



send tailbone  
as high as you can

hands and feet  
flat to the floor



# Teaser prep

Sitting erect with bent legs high off mat, arms reaching alongside calves, spine long and abdominals deep. Exhale to roll your spine back into the mat and inhale to roll it back up to start position.... Legs stay stable.

To modify, place your tip toes on the floor and use the same breath pattern and movement

**Do 4**

*Another full body challenge to keep working on, it's only the beginning...*



*scoop and lift!*

hip

# Stretch

Lying on your back, bend the left ankle over the right knee then pull your right knee in to your chest. Repeat other side...

If you feel discomfort in your knee in any way then release the position

**Hold each side for 6 breaths**

*Breathe deeply and feel your hip muscles soften with each exhale.  
Go to your happy place...*





hip flexor

# Stretch

Kneel in a lunge position with your torso upright and your tailbone under. Then press into a lunge to stretch that hip. Keep your abdominals in, tailbone under and torso erect.

**Hold each side for 6 breaths**

*Keep the abdominals pulled in and feel the nice stretch.*



roll

# Down

To transition, squat with your legs in hip width position and hands on the floor, head hanging. Exhale to almost straighten legs and then roll torso up to standing. Roll down and up using an exhale to roll your spine forward, hold and inhale keeping your back rounded and abdominals in, then exhale to roll back up.

## **Do 4**

***Abs and hamstrings do all the work as your anchor  
- everything else is easy.***



soft knees

