

Five Pilates Moves That Will Shred Your Core

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If You Want Rock-Hard Abs, This Is What You Need To Be Doing



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If you're concerned about your beach muscles looking good this summer, you may want to step back from the weights and try a different type of workout. We're talking about Pilates. If you're shaking your head at the thought of trying this [full body workout](#), you're hugely mistaken.

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Pilates helps tone the body, making sure that no muscle is under or overtrained, explains Sara Luna, certified Pilates instructor for [Club Pilates](#) in Orange County, CA. “In a nutshell, Pilates works the deep muscles in your body, which end up making the superficial, or ‘beach’ muscles stronger and more efficient,” she says. “Plus, it improves breathing, mental clarity and coordination.” Strengthening muscles that your typical lifting routine might ignore can help improve your overall physique.

Translation: If you want a stronger core and to improve flexibility, you can benefit from Pilates—whether you’re male or female. That’s why many athletes like [Antonio Brown](#), wide receiver for the Pittsburgh Steelers, pro golfer [Tiger Woods](#), and Miami Heat star, [Dwayne Wade](#), all incorporate the Pilates into their regimens. “By challenging new areas of the body in both strength and flexibility, injuries can be avoided and overall functionality improved,” explains Luna.

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Is your interest piqued? Try these five Pilates moves from Luna that will help you shred your core.

1. Hundreds

Lie on your back, flat on an exercise mat. Keeping your back on the mat, lift your legs about a foot off the ground, arms about a foot off the ground at your sides, keeping shoulder blades elevated. Inhale and brace your core. As you exhale, push feet and arms down, close to but not touching the ground, shoulder blades still lifted. Continue pulsing arms and legs on single counts, while inhaling and exhaling for five counts each. Pulse the arms and legs 100 times.

2. Roll Up

Lie on your back, flat on the mat. Extend arms up over your head, legs fully extended. Inhale. Exhale and raise arms up and forward as you curl the spine up off the mat, one vertebrae at a time, until you reach a seated position. Reach towards your toes. Inhale and stretch. Exhale and slowly lower back down, one vertebra at a time, ending with your arms overhead. Repeat five to 10 times.

3. Toe Taps

Lie on your back, legs up in a 90-degree angle, thighs perpendicular to the floor and shins parallel to the floor. Inhale. Bracing your core, keeping your back flat on the floor, exhale and lower one foot toward the floor, keeping the knee bent at 90 degrees. Inhale and bring the leg back up to the starting position. Repeat with the other leg. Do 10-15 reps with each leg.

4. Swimming

Lie flat on your stomach, arms stretched out in front of you, legs lengthened. Inhale. Then

exhale, brace your core and lift the upper back, legs and arms off the floor, keeping the head in line with the spine. Inhale and flutters arms and legs up and down like you're swimming. Continue for 10 breaths, and then release everything. Repeat three times.

5. Bicycle Crunch

Lie on your back, flat on the mat. Place your hands under your head, elbows out to the sides. Using your abs not arms, lift your shoulders head and neck off the ground and bring legs up to tabletop position. Exhale as you twist to the left, bringing right elbow towards left knee, while extending the right leg in front of you. Stay lifted and twist the opposite direction, bringing left elbow to right knee and extended left leg in front of you. Continue alternating 10 times on each side.