

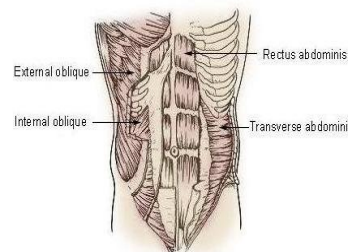
PATIO BREEZE



PILATES: QUICK FIX FOR FLABBY ABS?

There is no real quick fix for each exhale. Anytime the torso is “flabby abs”. Pilates will help strengthen abdominal muscles from the deepest layer to the most superficial. From deepest to outer layer we have the transverse abdominis, internal obliques, external obliques and rectus abdominis. All of these muscles make up the abdominal muscles. Just breathing in Pilates will help target the deepest layer of the abdominals. Abdominals are kept taught throughout every exhale the abdominals tighten and “flatten” out. Actually, it is this deepest layer, the transverse abdominis that “flattens” out and is exercised on

tional benefits of strong abdominals.
 Back pain relief
 Pelvic stability.
 Prenatal and post natal women will benefit from maintaining activity and strength in the pelvic floor and deeper abdominal muscles areas.
 Abdominals protect internal organs. Strong abdominals provide greater protection.



MILITARY POSTURE

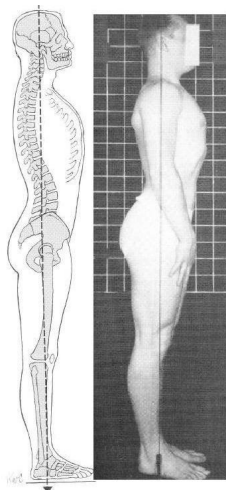
Do you see some people and think, “They must be in the military?” They are standing a little more proud and tall than the average person? These people might have what is called a military type posture. If we take a look at the posture of these proud and tall standing people we’ll notice that their skeleton looks fairly ‘normal’ or ‘neutral’ in many parts. But if we take a closer look, we’ll see that is not the case. The head doesn’t seem to far forward or back. The neck seems have a nice curve not overly flexed or extended, slightly extended at the most. (Notice how it seems as

though the head is tilted upwards slightly indicating a slight extension in the cervical spine on the picture to the left.) The vertebrae of the upper back is just slightly back of the ideal line or plumb line. It’s not until we move towards the bottom of the skeleton that we notice that the lumbar spine is hyperextended and the pelvis anteriorly tilted. The knees also hyperextended all of which gives a more forward and upright appearance. If we consider the muscles, the abdominals and hamstrings will be slightly elongated and possibly weak so areas to focus on

strengthening. The lower back muscles and hip flexors are areas that will be shorter but stronger so will require some lengthening and stretching. Many Pilates exercises both on the mat and reformer can help strengthen and lengthen the necessary areas. Many exercises on the reformer will help strengthen the hamstrings and lengthen the hip flexors. Many mat exercises will provide a means of strengthening the abdominals. Any exercises involving imprint will not only help strengthen the abdominals but also help lengthen the lower back muscles.

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Military posture

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Most of us have done crunches or sit ups or at least attempted to at some point in our lives. Many of us out there have experienced tension and strain in our neck and shoulders while doing crunches or sit ups. This pain in the neck is usually due to using the muscles in the neck and shoulders to pull the head and shoulders up rather than using the abdominal muscles to flex the spine. The natural curve of the cervical spine is said to be anterior convex. If you run your hand on the back of someone's neck, from the base of their neck to the base of their skull, there should be a nice curve inwards then back out to the base of the skull. The various movements that can be performed by the cervical spine are, flexion (nodding your chin forward), extension (lifting your chin upwards), lateral flexion (tilting your ear towards your shoulder) rotation (rotating your head in one direction or the other). The movement we are particularly interested in is flexion of the cervical spine and in particular of the first two cervical vertebrae. I like to think of this small movement, slight flexion of the cervical spine, as a pre-

paratory movement or position for the neck before actually flexing the spine which in turn raises the head and shoulders up off the mat. This preparatory movement is called craniovertebral flexion but is also more commonly known as a head nod. How is the head nod performed?
 Step 1: Lying down, face up on a mat. Knees bent and feet sit bones apart, arms by your sides on the mat. Looking straight up at the ceiling, pretend you are looking at the red light on a traffic light.
 Step 2: Inhale and nod your head looking down at the green light, feeling a slight lengthening of your neck or cervical spine.
 Step 3: Exhale and look back up at the red light. Repeat Step 2.
 The head nod is performed in step 2. Why is the head nod performed? The head nod is performed to position your cervical spine in a flexed position so that when you perform a movement or exercise where your head and shoulders are raised off the mat, the focus is on your abdominals contracting and flexing your spine which in turn will raise your

head and shoulders off the mat rather than using your neck and shoulders to pull your head and shoulders off the mat. Let's try this.
 Step 1: Lying down, face up on a mat. Knees bent and feet sit bones apart, arms by your sides on the mat. Looking straight up at the ceiling, pretend you are looking at the red light on a traffic light.
 Step 2: Inhale and nod your head looking down at the green light, feeling a slight lengthening of your neck or cervical spine.
 Step 3: Exhale, contract your abdominals until your feel your spine flex, raising your head and shoulders off the mat, bringing your arms to hover off the mat as well.
 Step 4: Inhale, holding this flexed spinal position and head, shoulders and arms off the mat.
 Step 5: Exhale, lengthening your abdominals and slowly bring your spine back to a neutral position, lowering your arms, shoulders, neck and head onto the mat.
 Repeat steps 2-5 until you feel very little tension in your neck and shoulders and until you feel your abdominals working to flex your spine.

GROUP CLASSES

Join one of our group classes. Matwork or reformer work. Can't find a class that suits your schedule? Let us know and we'll consider starting a new class.

Classes are small, 4-5 people.

New to the studio or know someone who wants to start or try Pilates? Try our **NEW CLIENT SPECIAL**, \$10 for first hour, one on one private session.

Technical Inspiration: Head and Cervical Placement