

# STRENGTHENING THE CORE: THE PILATES SERIES OF 5



## **What Is the Series of 5?**

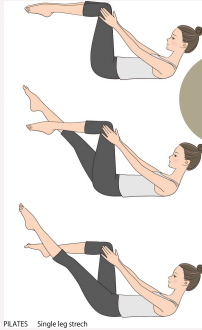
The Series of 5 is a classic Pilates abdominal sequence created by Joseph Pilates. It targets the deepest layers of the core, improves spinal stability, and builds endurance through controlled, precise movement. It's often called "the abdominal series" for a reason because it works everything.

## **The Series of 5 teaches you how to:**

- Maintain core engagement while moving the limbs
- Coordinate breath with effort
- Strengthen the entire powerhouse (abs, hips, back)
- Move with precision and control

This sequence becomes a tool you can use for life, even just 3 minutes per day makes a difference.

## THE PILATES SERIES OF 5 EXERCISES

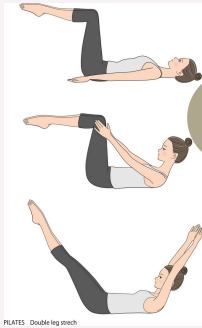


PILATES Single leg stretch

1

### Single Leg Stretch

Curl head and shoulders up. Pull one knee in as the other leg extends long. Switch legs smoothly while maintaining abdominal connection.



PILATES Double leg stretch

2

### Double Leg Stretch

Pull both knees into the chest. Inhale as arms and legs extend out; exhale as they circle back in. Keep low back anchored.



PILATES Single straight leg stretch

3

### Single Straight Leg Stretch (Scissors)

Curl head and shoulders up. Lift one leg toward the ceiling as the other reaches long. Gently pulse the top leg twice, then switch while keeping your core steady.

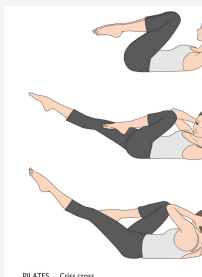


PILATES Double straight leg stretch

4

### Double Straight Leg Stretch

Hands behind head. Keep both legs lifted and together. Inhale to lower the legs only as far as the low back stays anchored; exhale to lift them back up with control.

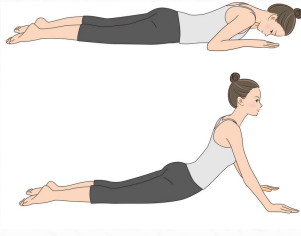


PILATES Criss cross

5

### Criss-Cross

Hands behind head. Bring opposite shoulder toward bent knee while extending the other leg. Alternate sides with control instead of speed.



### **Counter Stretch: Swan Prep**

After all that flexion, open the front body with gentle extension.

### **Modifications + Options**

For comfort and safety:

- Keep the head on the mat.
- Bend the knees more.
- Limit range of motion on any leg-lowering movements.
- Take a break between exercises or do fewer reps.

For added challenge:

- Add The Hundred before beginning the series.
- Increase reps from 4–6 each to 8–10.
- Flow continuously from one exercise to the next.

### **3-Minute Core Booster (At-Home Plan)**

Use this anytime you want a quick, powerful Pilates core routine.

Minute 1

- 20 seconds Single Leg Stretch
- 20 seconds Double Leg Stretch
- 20 seconds Single Straight Leg Stretch

Minute 2

- 20 seconds Double Straight Leg Stretch
- 20 seconds Criss Cross
- 20 seconds rest or hold a gentle ab curl

Minute 3

- Repeat any 2 favorites or add The Hundred (30–60 seconds)

*Finish with Swan Prep or a gentle counter stretch.*