

Pilates Fundamentals — Workbook

This workbook is your hands-on companion to the Pilates Fundamentals course. Each section mirrors a course module and gives you exercises, worksheets, and checklists to move from watching to doing — and from doing to understanding. Complete the sections in order; the templates at the end support your ongoing practice tracking.

The Six Principles and the Powerhouse

Internalise the six classical Pilates principles and locate your powerhouse before you execute a single exercise.

Exercise: Principles Self-Audit

Read each principle below. Without looking at your notes, write a one-sentence definition and a real-life example (outside the mat). Then rate your current default: 0 = never present, 3 = sometimes present, 5 = always present.

- Write your own definition and a non-Pilates real-life example for each of the six principles (Centering, Concentration, Control, Precision, Breath, Flow).

- Which principle feels most natural to you already, and what does that reveal about how you move in everyday life?

- Which principle will be hardest to maintain during fast sequences, and why?

Worksheet: Powerhouse Location Log

Perform the TA-finding drill (fingertips 2 cm inside hip bones, cough, recreate without coughing) three times across three different days. Record your observations each time.

Date of attempt

What sensation did you feel under your fingertips on the cough?

Describe the sensation when recreating the engagement without coughing

Were you able to maintain normal breathing during the 3-out-of-10 contraction? (Y/N)

Any asymmetry between left and right side? Describe

Rate the clarity of sensation (1 = barely felt it, 5 = very clear)

Checklist: Principles Setup Checklist — Before Every Session

- Mat is unrolled in a clear space with at least 1.5 m of length available
- Remove shoes and jewellery that could snag
- Take three breath cycles before beginning — note the quality of each exhale
- Set an intention for which principle you will consciously monitor today
- Perform the TA-finding drill once before the first exercise
- Confirm neutral spine or imprint position before any leg movement
- Decide your session length before starting and stick to it

Section

Track your technical execution of the ten foundation exercises and identify your personal form-fault patterns.

Exercise: The Hundred Breath Drill

Set a timer for 3 minutes. Perform the Hundred with legs in tabletop. Between each set of 10 breaths, pause and answer the prompts below without moving. Do not adjust based on an ideal answer — honest observation is the data.

- After set 1 (breaths 1–10): Where did you feel the pumping motion — shoulder, elbow, or wrist? What does that tell you about your arm connection?

- After set 2 (breaths 11–20): Did your lower back remain in imprint, or did it begin to arc? If it arced, at exactly which breath did it start?

- After set 3 (breaths 21–30): Rate your exhale — was it percussive and engaged, or passive? What changed your breathing quality mid-set?

Worksheet: Foundation Exercise Technique Tracker

After each practice session in Weeks 1–4, rate your execution of each exercise (1 = major form faults present, 3 = mostly clean, 5 = fully controlled). Note the specific fault if rating is below 4.

Date

The Hundred — rating (1–5)

The Hundred — form fault if rating below 4

Roll-Up Prep — rating (1–5)

Roll-Up Prep — form fault if rating below 4

Rolling Like a Ball — rating (1–5)

Rolling Like a Ball — form fault if rating below 4

Single Leg Stretch — rating (1–5)

Single Leg Stretch — form fault if rating below 4

Double Leg Stretch — leg height at which imprint broke (degrees approximate)

Spine Stretch Forward — did you grow taller as you folded? (Y/N)

Bridge — did spine peel sequentially or lift in a block? (Sequential / Block)

Swan Prep — any sharp lumbar discomfort? (Y/N)

Checklist: Post-Session Foundation Review

-] The Hundred: arms pumped from shoulder joint, not elbow
-] C-curve maintained throughout Single and Double Leg Stretch
-] No neck tension during abdominal series — if present, head returned to mat
-] Exhale was the effort breath on every exercise
-] Spine Stretch Forward: grew taller rather than chasing the toes
-] Bridge: each vertebra peeled off the mat one at a time
-] Child's Rest was held for at least one full breath cycle after Swan Prep
-] Session completed within the planned time window

Intermediate Exercises and Building Sequences

Apply the full beginner repertoire in a sequenced 25-minute session and identify which exercises are ready for progression.

Exercise: Full Sequence Run-Through

Follow the 25-minute session order from Module 3 exactly as written, timing each section with a stopwatch. Do not skip exercises or change the order. After the session, complete the prompts.

- Which exercise caused the first notable form breakdown? Describe exactly what changed (which body part lost position, and at which rep).

- Did the session feel long enough, too long, or too short? What does that tell you about your current fitness and concentration capacity?

- Which transition between exercises felt awkward or rushed? How would you smooth it in the next session?

Worksheet: Progression Readiness Assessment

After completing at least 6 sessions with the full repertoire, score each exercise using the criteria below. Use this to decide which exercises are ready to progress to Level 3 (legs extended at 45 degrees, continuous flow).

Exercise name

Current level (1 / 2 / 3)

Imprint maintained throughout? (Y/N)

Breath correct on every rep? (Y/N)

Zero momentum used? (Y/N)

Progression-ready? (Y / Not yet)

Specific next progression step

Checklist: Side Kick Series Quality Checklist

-] Waist lifted off mat on the underside — obliques active throughout
-] Hips stacked vertically, not rolled forward
-] Pelvis completely still during Front-Back Kick — no rotation to increase range
-] Top hand on mat provides zero weight — it is a balance aid only
-] Up-Down: inner thigh controls the lowering, no gravity drop
-] Circles: tennis-ball-sized, not momentum-driven arcs
-] Completed all three exercises on Side 1 before turning over
-] Transition to Side 2 was smooth and deliberate, not rushed

Exercise: Rotation Quality Drill — Crisscross and Saw

Perform 5 reps of Crisscross on each side, then 5 reps of the Saw on each side. Record your observations immediately after.

- During Crisscross: did you feel the rotation in your ribs/thorax, or did you just feel your neck pulling? If it was the neck, what adjustment brought the sensation to the ribs?

- During the Saw: did your sitting bones stay grounded on both sides equally, or did one hip lift more? What does that asymmetry suggest about your mobility?

Postural Analysis, Modifications, and Building a Sustainable Practice

Complete your self-assessment, personalise your modification strategy, and design your 12-week practice plan.

Worksheet: Postural Self-Assessment Record

Perform each of the four self-assessment tests (Wall Test, Mirror Side Profile, Prone Press-Up Tolerance, Thomas Test) and record your findings. Compare these results after 8 weeks of consistent practice.

Date of assessment

Wall Test: lumbar gap (in finger-widths)

Wall Test: interpretation (lordosis / flat / normal)

Mirror profile: ASIS position relative to plumb line (forward / centred / behind)

Swan Prep: any sharp lumbar discomfort? (Y/N)

Thomas Test: resting leg lifts from surface? (Y/N — indicates tight hip flexors)

Primary postural pattern identified (Lordotic / Kyphotic-lordotic / Flat-back / Unsure)

Priority modification for next 4 weeks (based on pattern)

8-week reassessment date (fill in as target)

Exercise: Modification Design Lab

Choose two exercises from your repertoire that currently feel uncomfortable or feel like you are compensating. For each, design three progressively easier modifications using the Level 1–4 ladder (lever length, base of support, range of motion, tempo).

- Exercise 1: name it, describe the specific discomfort or compensation you observe, then write Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 versions with one concrete change per level.

- Exercise 2: repeat the same process.

- How will you know when each modification can be retired in favour of the standard version? Write a specific, observable criterion (not a feeling — a measurable position or rep count).

Checklist: 12-Week Practice Habit Checklist

- Practice time of day confirmed and calendared for the first 4 weeks
- Practice location confirmed with at least 1.5m clear floor space
- Mat is permanently out or stored in a single visible, accessible location
- Grip socks or bare feet — shoe-free policy established
- Practice log (template below) is printed or open on device beside the mat
- Weeks 1–4 session plan written (from Module 4 progressive plan)
- Weeks 5–8 progression milestone defined (at least one Level 3 exercise)
- 8-week postural reassessment date entered in calendar
- At least one friend or accountability partner told about the commitment
- First session of Week 2 is already scheduled before Week 1 ends

Your Action Plan

1. Complete the Powerhouse Location Log drill on Day 1, Day 3, and Day 5 before touching any other exercises
2. Memorise the six principles by writing each one on a separate index card with your own one-sentence definition
3. Perform only the Module 2 foundation sequence (Hundred through Bridge) for the first two weeks — do not rush to add intermediate exercises
4. After every session, fill in the Foundation Exercise Technique Tracker before rolling up the mat
5. Complete the Postural Self-Assessment at the end of Week 2 and again at Week 10 to track structural change
6. Apply the 25-minute session order exactly as written for at least three consecutive sessions before experimenting with sequence changes
7. Schedule a deliberate "progression audit" every four weeks using the Progression Readiness Assessment worksheet
8. When form breaks in any exercise, immediately regress to the Level 1 version rather than pushing through — record what triggered the regression
9. Fill in the Practice Log template after every session — if you miss a session, log why (injury, schedule, motivation) so patterns become visible
10. At Week 12, compare your current Technique Tracker scores against Week 1 and your postural reassessment results, then set three specific goals for the next 12 weeks

