










5 Pilates beginners exercises to try...

Exercise	Start Position	End Position	Description	Time/repetitions
Roll downs			<p>Standing with good posture, feet hip width apart, take a breath in through your nose and as you exhale drop the chin, soften the knees and begin peeling each vertebra of the spine down one by one, allowing the arms to hang and neck to relax, as you reach the bottom begin building back up bone by bone lifting the head last. Make this a flowing continuous movement.</p>	<p>3-5 times, slow and relaxing.</p>
Swimming			<p>On all fours, knees under hips and hands under shoulders, find your neutral spine, draw in the navel to spine and inhale through the nose, as you exhale extend one leg out behind keeping the torso perfectly still before returning to the start position. Repeat with other leg. Then try extending opposite side arm at the same time, exhaling fully and keeping the torso still as you lengthen.</p>	<p>5 times to each side.</p>
Seated Spine stretch			<p>In a seated position, legs lengthened out in front and hands either side of your legs. Lengthen up through the spine and inhale, as you exhale drop your chin and begin rolling forwards, sliding your hands a little way outside your thighs and feel the stretch through the lower back and the back of each thigh. Inhale as you roll back up and lengthen through the spine. Repeat.</p>	<p>5 times, taking the movement further each time.</p>
Shoulder Bridge			<p>Lying on your back, shoulders relaxed, feet hip width and neck relaxed. Curl up the tailbone and first 2/3 bones of the spine and then roll them down. Repeat and each time curl up a little more of the spine until your form a bridge with the hips lifted high and the navel drawn in to spine. Repeat moving the spine like a wheel.</p>	<p>5 times in a flowing and smooth movement.</p>
Neutral Spine			<p>From your last shoulder bridge exercise, tuck one hand between your back and the mat and the other hand place on your stomach. Now tip the pelvis forwards and backwards, pressing the back flat and then arching it. Return both hands to the floor and find a centre point where the back is neither flat nor completely arched.</p>	<p>Repeat until you are sure you have neutral.</p>