

Grounding:

Grounding is a Pilates fundamental. Your goal is to activate a strong muscular connection from the inside of the legs up through the center of the body to the bottom of the ribcage.

You will need a 6-8" ball.

- 1.) Assume the "hook lying" position: Supine, knees bent, feet flat on the floor, parallel, hip width apart. Arms at the sides, palms down, and the ball held gently between the knees. Neutral spine and pelvis. (If your hip flexors are a little tight bring your feet closer to your bottom, more under your knees.)



Inhale to prepare, then on a long controlled exhale:

- 2.) Plant the feet into the floor, draw the heels towards the buttocks using your hamstrings (isometrically – they do not actually move.)
- 3.) Squeeze the ball between the knees using the inner thighs (the ball must be firm so your knees do not come together.)
- 4.) Engage the muscles of the pelvic floor. You should feel a lifting sensation inside the bowl of the pelvis.

- 5.) Draw your navel toward your spine and even up to the ribs a little as you engage the transverse abdominals.
- 6.) Open your shoulders and draw your shoulder blades down onto your back by reaching towards your feet with the tips of the fingers. Feel the lats engage. Relax the neck, empty the lungs.
- 7.) Hold the contraction and inhale into the back, keeping the ribs flat. Hold the breath for a beat and then exhale as you relax completely.

Do five repetitions. Empty the lungs fully on each exhale, and flow through the sequence of muscular engagements. Inhale into the back so as not to lose the connection from abs to ribs by flaring the lower ribs. Go deeper with each rep. Add breath cycles while holding the contraction.

Concentration and flow are essential. Steps 2 – 6 should be done in one smooth sequence as the lungs are being emptied. As you would in Yoga, time the exhale so you empty the lungs just as you arrive at the final muscle engagement.

The tongue, neck, jaw and traps (top of the shoulders) stay relaxed.

The grounding sequence can also be done standing, without the ball. I find this is a great way to “get connected” before committing to a hard bit of climbing. I think it would be a great way to quickly get in touch with your posture and support during a long day on your feet at work.

And remember, if this seems like a hard concept to grasp,

“Patience and persistence are vital qualities in the ultimate successful accomplishment of any worthwhile endeavor.”

Joseph Pilates