

Pilates Ball - 10-Minute Abdominal Programme

Roll up – place ball behind back and when exhaling slowly curl down to lean back on ball. Hold for an inhale, then curl up to seated neutral when exhaling. Repeat twice then move ball back in stages. At each stage repeat twice before moving ball. Should be about 4 stages finishing with ball between shoulder blades.

Hip Twist – place ball between feet. Neutral spine, arms out to side. With knees bent (double knee fold) slowly take knees to one side as you exhale then return on an inhale. Level 2 – when knees are at one side, straighten and then bend again before coming back to centre. Level 3 – keep legs straight throughout. Repeat 8 times in each direction.

Single Leg Stretch – whilst lying on back in neutral place ball underneath lower back. Keep upper back on floor and pelvis in neutral. Bring one knee to chest and extend other leg. Hold position for an inhale, change legs over on an exhale. Repeat 8 sets.

Double Leg Stretch – neutral spine, with ball underneath lower back. Legs at double knee fold position. Keep neutral spine. Exhale and extend both legs, inhale to bring back to double knee fold. Start with small movements then slowly increase/lower legs as long as it is still felt in lower abdominals. Repeat 8 times.

Scissors – neutral spine with ball underneath back. Both legs straight and extended to ceiling. Keep neutral spine and exhale to take one leg to floor and other leg towards chest. Hold for an inhale. Change legs on an exhale. Start slow and smooth, then exhale fast and quickly change legs. Repeat 8 sets.

Bicycle – neutral spine with ball underneath back. Start at double knee fold position and slowly start cycling legs. Start small and towards the ceiling making sure that neutral spine is kept. Then increase range of movement, moving slowly. Repeat 8 sets.

Core Lifts – lying on back, legs straight with ball underneath the middle of one shin. Other leg extended to the ceiling. Exhale and slowly lift hips towards ceiling (upper back stays on the floor, bottom lifts off the floor). Hold for an inhale, slowly lower on an exhale. Repeat 8 times.

- Release neck and shoulders
- Full body stretch
- Lower back release