





FLATTEN YOUR ABS IN 4 WEEKS (YES, YOU CAN)

We changed up the standard Pilates routine so those same-old toners now have renewed waistline-cinching power.

BY JESSICA CASSITY · PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOHN HICKS

— Pilates is one of the best ways to strengthen your core and create super-flat, firm abs—if you've never tried it, get thee to a session pronto! If you're already a mat-class maven, moves like the teaser and hundred may be getting a little ho-hum. Since we're always looking for new ways to target the tummy, we challenged Julian Littleford, owner of J.L. Body Conditioning in Del Mar, California, to make over some traditional Pilates staples, and boy did he deliver. "By adding new elements like twists, leg work, and balances, you're able to engage more muscles in less time," says Littleford. For ultimate belly flattening, do this simple 15-minute routine several times a week. And, really, what's a few minutes when we're talking about getting your most beautiful abs ever?



A



B

① HUNDRED WITH LEG BENDS

WORKS ABS, BUTT, AND INNER AND OUTER THIGHS

→ **The challenge** Bending and extending your legs, instead of keeping them straight, is harder for your abs to control.

Lie faceup with knees bent, toes pointed, legs and feet rotated out, and heels together. Rest arms at sides. Lift legs and arms as you curl your head and shoulders off the ground [A]. Inhale over 5 counts, pumping arms up and down 5 times, as you extend legs out and up at an angle [B]. Exhale over 5 counts as you pump arms 5 more times and bend knees again. Repeat 10 times, for a total of 100 arm pumps.

② SLOW LEG STRETCH

WORKS ABS AND LEGS

→ **The challenge** You do this more slowly than the traditional move and without holding your legs, so your abs don't get to rest.

Lie faceup on ground with knees tucked toward chest, legs pressed together. Extend arms at sides, then lift them a few inches as you curl your head and shoulders off the ground and extend your legs out and up at an angle [A]. Keeping right foot in contact with left leg, slowly draw in right knee until it's aligned over right hip and turned slightly toward left [B]. Slowly slide foot back out so leg is straight, and repeat with left leg to complete 1 rep. Do 8 reps.



A



B

HAIR AND MAKEUP: FLUKE F. COVERDORF/BERNSTEIN; ANDRULLI USING MAC COSMETICS; BEBE SPORT TOP; ASICS; SPORTS



3 TWIST WITH TURNOUT

WORKS ABS, BUTT, AND LEGS

→ **The challenge** Turning your legs out targets your butt, making this a double-duty toner.

Sit tall with legs extended and rotated out from the hip (feet flexed, heels together, and toes a few inches apart).

Contract your glutes (keep them tight throughout the move) and reach arms out to either side at shoulder height, palms facing down [A]. On an exhale, twist your upper body to the right; keep your chest high and use your abs to power the move [B]. Inhale as you return to center. Repeat to the left to complete 1 rep. Do 8 reps.



4 BEAT SERIES WITH SWIMMING

WORKS BACK, SHOULDERS, BUTT, INNER THIGHS, AND CORE

→ **The challenge** Bringing your heels together zeroes in on the glutes, and slowly circling your arms overhead increases the challenge for the abs.

Lie facedown with arms at sides, palms facing the ground. Raise legs, arms, and shoulders a few inches off the ground; look down, keeping head in line with spine. Quickly beat heels together 50 times. Repeat, slowly moving arms out to the sides into a T position [A]. Beat heels 50 more times as you reach arms in front of you [B]. Finally, flutter arms and legs up and down in opposition for 10 breaths.



A



B

5 PLANK WITH SIDE KICKS

WORKS ABS, BUTT, CHEST, SHOULDERS, AND ARMS

→ **The challenge** Raising one leg out to the side makes the abs work harder and gets more glute muscles in on the action.

Start in a plank position on hands and toes. Lift right leg 6 inches, foot flexed [A]. Rotate leg out from the hip, then slowly sweep it out to the right [B]. Draw leg back in and lower it; switch legs to complete 1 rep. Do 10 reps.



A



6 ROLLING WITHOUT HANDS

WORKS ABS

→ **The challenge** Extending your arms instead of holding your legs shifts the center of gravity, so your abs have to compensate to keep you rolling and balancing.

Sit with knees a few inches apart and pulled in toward chest, feet raised off the ground and toes together and pointed. Round your back so you're looking at your navel. Extend arms in front of you at shoulder height, palms facing down, and roll back slightly until you find a balancing point [A]. Inhale, rock back to your shoulder blades [B], then quickly exhale as you roll up and return to the balancing position. Keep arms extended, feet lifted, and back rounded throughout. Do 10 reps.



INVERTED AB SERIES

WORKS ABS

→ **The challenge** Keeping your torso low and arms raised makes it harder to use momentum to lift up. Lie faceup with legs together and feet flat. Bring arms in front of you, fingers touching, elbows bent slightly, and palms facing you. Curl head and shoulders off the ground [A]. Pulse up 8 times, then stay lifted as you extend right leg, keeping knees together. Extend arms parallel to leg and pulse up 8 times [B]. Switch legs (left leg up, right down) and repeat, then extend both and pulse up 8 more times to complete 1 set. Do 4 sets.

8 SIDE-LYING TEASER

WORKS ABS AND LEGS

→ **The challenge** Starting on your side activates the obliques, which the traditional teaser doesn't really hit.

Lie on your right side with arms and legs extended in a straight line and shoulders stacked [A]. Draw your left

arm down toward your legs as you roll onto your back. Quickly lift legs and torso until you're in a V position with left arm parallel to legs [B]. Reach both arms up toward toes, then place left hand on the ground behind you and lower onto your back. Roll over onto your left side and extend both arms and legs again; repeat back to right to complete 1 rep. Do 4 reps.



9 TEASER WITH WALKING

WORKS ABS AND LEGS

→ **The challenge** Your belly has to work extra-hard when your legs are moving.

Lie face up with arms extended behind head and legs several inches off ground, toes pointed. Flutter legs slowly, as if walking on tiptoes [A]. Roll up slowly, coming into a V position, and extend arms parallel to legs [B]. Continue "walking" legs and slowly roll down to start position. Do 5 reps.





10 SIDE BRIDGE WITH BICYCLING

WORKS CORE, BUTT, AND LEGS

→ **The challenge** Propping up your weight on your elbow makes your entire body work harder to stabilize itself.

Balance on outside of right foot and right forearm, elbow under shoulder. Stack feet and rest left arm along your side. Sweep left leg forward, foot flexed [A]. Keeping leg raised, bend knee, point foot, and extend leg back behind you [B]. Do 8 reps, then switch sides to complete set.



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better world

We just released our second *Shape Pilates* DVD, *Make Over Your Abs, Butt, and Thighs—Fast!* (\$15; shapeboutique.com). On it you'll find the innovative moves and motivating instruction that you expect from *Shape* workouts, plus we'll donate \$1 from every DVD sold to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation to help find a cure. For more information, go to pilatesforpink.com.

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