

b+s
PILATES
PICK-
ME-UP

how to... work the whole body

For all-over exercise it is hard to go past the Pilates pelvic curl. This one exercise works the abs, articulates the spine, strengthens hamstrings, glutes and inner thighs, and works the shoulders and upper arms.

Lie on your back with knees bent and arms by your sides. Exhale to scoop the abdominals in and curl

your tailbone off the floor to peel the spine up into a bridge position. Hold for an inhale, then exhale as you uncurl the spine back to the start. Do 10.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ELLA PELLEGRINI

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5 REASONS TO HIT THE GYM

Get motivated and say goodbye to excuses

1 Staying active really does beat the middle-age spread

People who keep up an active lifestyle into middle-age gain fewer kilograms over time, a US study has found. "It's the maintenance of the physical activity that's the important thing," says Dr Arlene Hankinson, of Northwestern University in Chicago. "It's not so much about achieving some dramatically high activity level, it's about maintaining a level of daily physical activity over time."

2 There's more chance you'll have a good night's sleep

Experts agree an aerobic exercise routine can help you sleep better. A study at Northwestern University in Chicago showed that 16 weeks on an aerobics training program improved average sleep quality for poor sleepers. If your schedule dictates you can only hit the gym at 5am, an hour of exercise can do more good than an extra hour of sleep.

3 You will feel less stressed

Any type of exercise can ease tension and stress. However, if you really need to blitz some pressure, go for high intensity as researchers at the University of Missouri-Columbia found that high-intensity exercise is superior in reducing stress and anxiety than low-intensity exercise.

4 It's one of the healthiest ways to boost your mood

Exercise has tremendous benefits for mental health. "Individuals who exercise report fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression, and lower levels of stress and anger," says Jasper Smits of the Anxiety Research and Treatment Program in the US.

5 Be a good role model

The rate of childhood obesity is climbing. One of the best ways parents can tackle the problem is to be active and be a good role model.



TEXT: DONNA DUGGAN; PHOTOGRAPHY: GETTY IMAGES