

BEAUTY SOLUTIONS: HOW TO FAKE A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

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Posture
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The Better-Posture Workout

FIVE MOVES TO A TALLER, TRIMMER, STRONGER YOU

B

BAD POSTURE DOESN'T JUST MAKE YOU LOOK TIRED

(and older and heavier), it hurts your health. Once you're over 40, slouching makes you more susceptible to complications related to osteoporosis, because it puts more pressure on the spine. "Strong muscles maintain good form," says Pilates master trainer Ton Voogt. "The better your alignment, the less stress you put on your joints."

Maintaining good posture isn't easy. Gravity, fatigue and hours of sitting encourage slumping. This workout, custom-designed by Voogt and partner Michael Fritzke, targets the muscles most important for postural poise. It features the duo's squishy but strong Triadball, which is popping up in Pilates classes nationwide. (No ball? No problem—see the stand-ins with each move.) This quick routine is safe enough to do every day. At just three times a week, you'll feel results in two to three weeks. In six weeks, you'll be walking taller. →



1. CHEST AND UPPER BACK STRETCH

Stand with your legs hip-width apart, knees slightly bent. Holding ball in both hands, extend arms in front of your chest at shoulder height. Shift the ball to your right hand. Gripping the ball, slowly open your arms wide and around to bring the ball behind you. Do not arch your back. Keeping the ball as high as possible in back, pass it to your left hand; bring the ball and both arms around to the front. Do three sets leading with your right hand, then switch hands.

TRAINER TIP Holding the Triadball ensures that you work the arm, shoulder and back muscles together. It also forces you to bring your hands all the way together in back to get a good stretch. If you don't have a ball, use a rolled up pair of socks.

PHOTO: MARK WEISS. HAIR AND MAKEUP: RENEE MAJOUR FOR RJ BENNETT REPRESENTS. STYLIST: KATY ROBBINS@KATYROBBINS.COM



2. HIP STABILIZER (Works hips, legs and core)

a | Lie on your left side, positioning ball between the floor and your rib cage. Keeping your neck long, place your left elbow on the floor, keeping your left shoulder directly above your elbow. Bend left leg on the floor in front of you, so your left knee is in front of the hips. Place right hand on the floor for stability. Straighten your right leg and slide it behind you, keeping your hips stacked on top of each other and your left leg on the floor.

b | Lift right leg straight up slowly, then lower it to the floor. Repeat eight to 10 times; switch sides and repeat.

TRAINER TIP Don't drop your straightened leg to the floor; lower it with control. Imagine that you are drawing a straight line on the wall behind you. If you don't have a ball, use a rolled up towel.

WORKOUT SUMMARY

Time it takes 15 to 20 minutes

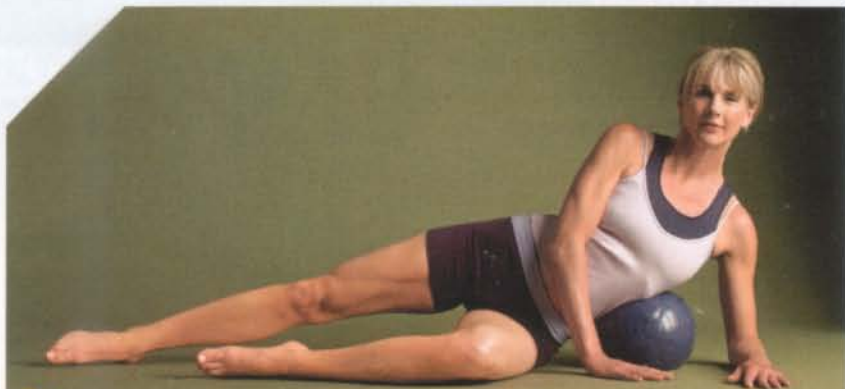
How often Three to seven times a week

See results in Two to six weeks

Equipment The lightweight Triadball is a new Pilates tool. Malleable, yet strong enough to support you, it helps beginners learn exercises while allowing advanced students to work more deeply. Created by Voogt and Fritzke as a low-tech alternative to Pilates machines, such as the Reformer, it helps strengthen the core and improve alignment by perfecting form. The ball is available at zenirgy.com (\$19.95); enter code MOREPOST at checkout to get a 10 percent discount.

Complementary workouts While there's no need to supplement these moves with a specific type of workout, this routine will improve your existing workouts by retraining your body to work more efficiently. "Whether you're lifting weights or walking on a treadmill, good form will help you do it better," Voogt says. If you're trying to lose weight, add three to five 45-minute low-impact workouts—such as swimming or walking—to this routine.

TRAINER TIP Keeping your abs engaged—think navel to spine—will prevent you from overextending your lower back. Try lifting your torso up and forward. If you feel any discomfort in your lower back, do the exercise with your legs rotated in (point your feet toward each other and turn your heels out). If you don't have a ball, use a large rolled up towel. →



2a



2b

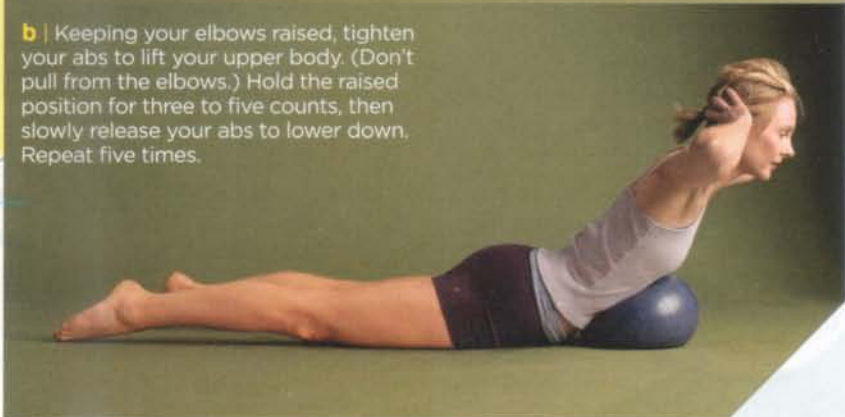


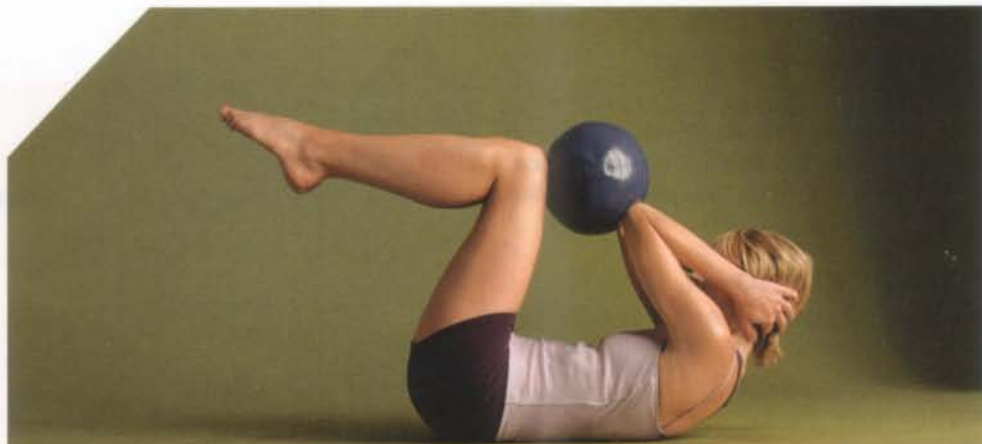
3. UPPER BACK LENGTHENER (Works back and shoulders)

a | Lie face down on the floor, positioning the ball under your sternum, and curl forehead down to floor. Extend your legs and keep them slightly apart. Place your fingertips together on the back of your head. Lift your elbows as high as you can.

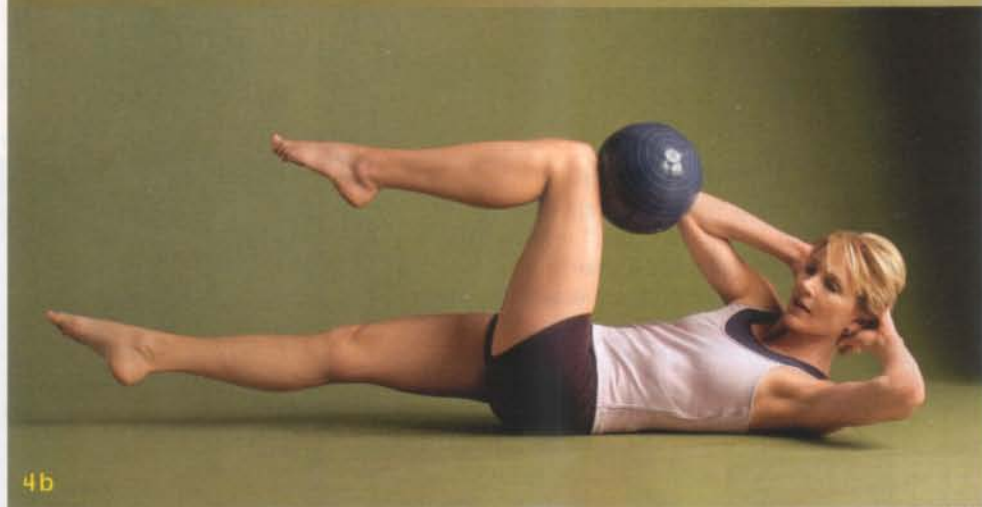


b | Keeping your elbows raised, tighten your abs to lift your upper body. (Don't pull from the elbows.) Hold the raised position for three to five counts, then slowly release your abs to lower down. Repeat five times.





4a



4b



4. CRISSCROSS ABS TIGHTENER

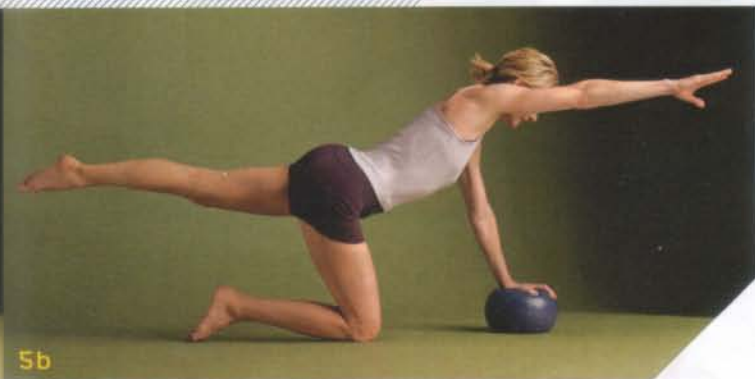
a | Lie on your back, bend your knees, and raise your shins so they're parallel to the floor. Grab the ball with your right hand and place it in front of your thighs, close to your knees. Place your left hand on your neck and bring your left elbow forward so it holds the ball against your legs. Next, position your right elbow to touch the ball, right hand behind your neck.

b | Holding the ball suspended between your right elbow and left knee, twist your torso to the left as you straighten your right leg. Hold for two counts. Slowly return to starting position and then twist to the left, holding the ball between your left elbow and right knee, to complete one rep. Do six to eight reps.

TRAINER TIP Keep both shoulders off the floor throughout the exercise; doing so will really work your upper abs. If you don't have a ball, bring your elbows close to your knees and try to touch the top elbow to the bent knee as you twist.



5a



5b



5. TORSO TONER (Strengthens abs, shoulders and legs)

a | Kneel on your hands and knees, aligning your knees directly underneath your hips and your wrists directly underneath your shoulders. Keeping your head in line with your back, place your left hand on top of the ball.

b | Shifting your body as little as possible, slowly extend and lift your right arm and left leg simultaneously. Hold for three to five counts; slowly return to the starting position. Switch sides and repeat three times. Do three sets.

TRAINER TIP Stay long! Keep your abs contracted as you lift your arm and leg, so you do not arch or "hang" in your back. If you don't have a ball, use a rolled up pair of socks. **M**