

UNLEASH YOUR ATHLETIC POTENTIAL



No matter your sport (or lack thereof), Larkin Barnett's unprecedented AthleticKinetics System brings spins, spirals, diagonal pathways and changing levels into play to help increase total-body strength, range of motion, movement efficiency and flow, while sculpting killer legs, arms and abs. The endgame: It's gold medal worthy!

by Larkin Barnett

My movement studies and teaching career began four decades ago when I received both a bachelor's and master's degree in dance, as well as training with top modern dance companies. I chose to add the Pilates method to my teaching modalities because 17 months of intensive Pilates training strengthened my body more rapidly than 17 years of modern dance.

Pilates was inspiring because it shared the "centered" movements from modern dance, but I still missed the exciting three-dimensional spins, spirals and jumps integral to dance technique, choreography and performance. This missing link while on the Pilates mat and equipment became the motivation for my AthleticKinetics System®. This repertoire challenges the intrinsic muscles that encircle the entire body to promote a wide range of benefits, including increased strength, range, efficiency and flow, as well as leaner, sculpted arms, hips and thighs and a trimmer waistline.

AthleticKinetics provides the seasoned Pilates enthusiast, as well as the athletic and dance-inspired Pilates student, with a competitive edge, injury prevention, artistry and an exhilarating sense of dynamic motion. For example, when you consistently initiate movement from your vital internal source while imagining that you're inside a 3-D cube—with a conscious use of all of the space around you—dynamic movement quality and flow replaces positioning. Every aspect of my system is designed to embody Pilates' principles, along with elements from dance pioneer Rudolf Laban's studies and the science of kinetic forces, to help you cross-train your body, boost creativity, relieve stress and feel rejuvenated.

The following routine is designed for all levels—do the exercises up to three times a week. If necessary, modify the moves by breaking down the steps. Get ready to spiral up to the next level, whatever your game or goals may be.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROD FOSTER; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY BEAUTY AND THE BEACH; TOP BY UNDER ARMOUR; BOTTOMS BY LULULEMON ATHLETICA

Spiral 3

PROP: Magic Circle

PURPOSE: promotes coordination; strengthens and tones the thighs, hips, abdominals, shoulder girdle and arms; enhances range of motion in the hips and trunk; helps to clarify where the body is in space

SETUP: Lie on your left side compressing a Magic Circle. (See photo on opposite page.)

1. Extend the Circle overhead, with your elbows slightly bent, and using your core/breath, lift your head and neck off the floor. Lift and bend your top leg, externally rotating it toward the back of the room. Extend your bottom leg toward the front of the room, toes pointed, while rotating your trunk in opposite directions.

2. Inhale. Exhale, bringing the Circle to your navel while moving into a fetal position. Sweep the Circle overhead and rotate it toward the back-right corner of the room, curling up into Z-Sit position, with your top foot against your bottom knee.

3. Inhale. Exhale, lifting your right hipbone off the floor to initiate a rotation and move the Circle overhead.

READY TO RIDE This move preps the body for surfing and snowboarding.



Slide your collarbone, armpits and shoulder blades toward your hips.

4. Move the Circle toward the back-left corner of the room. Place the Circle on the floor, with your right hand holding the top pad and your left hand holding the bottom pad. Shift your weight to your left side of your hips, keeping your legs bent and your top leg hovering off the floor. Exhale, pushing the Circle down for 3 reps while corkscrewing your abs in.

5. Inhale. Exhale, bringing the Circle to your navel and returning your legs to the floor. Extend your right leg to your right side, keeping it externally rotated, then extend it in front of your body, moving the Circle as you go and ending with your abdominals in a deep C curve.

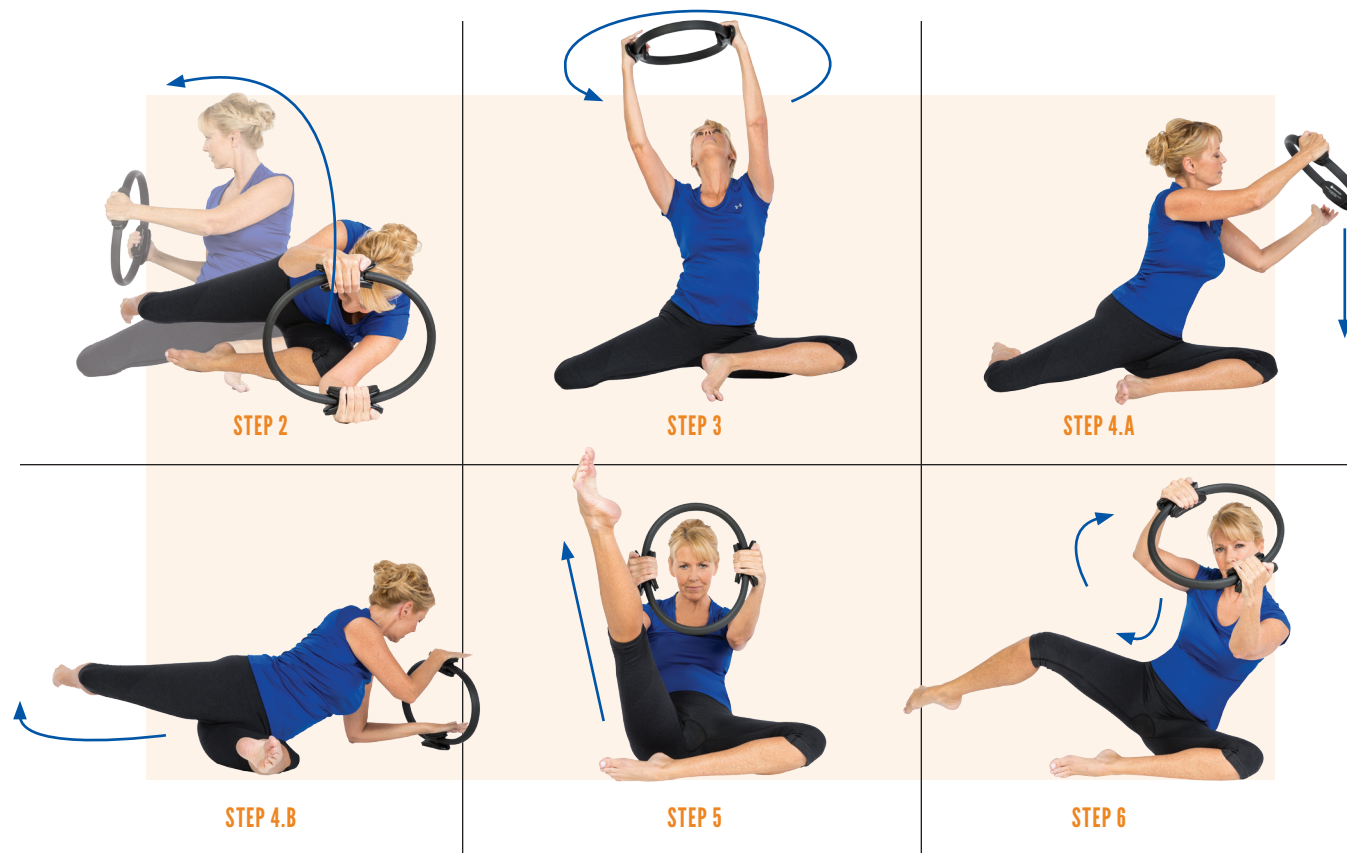
6. Inhale. Exhale, bending your right leg and moving it and the Circle backward,

then toward your navel and finally back to your starting position, with the Circle overhead. (See opposite page.)

7. Do 1–2 reps. Switch sides and repeat.

TIPS: The Circle is your guide for knowing where to move and face. Always execute twists keeping your spine lifted and elongated both upward and downward. The rotation comes from continuously contracting your deep abdominals—like wringing out a rag. Perform as if you're on stage, moving with clarity within a 3-D cube. Pay attention to the diagonal corners of the room.

MODIFICATIONS: Omit the Circle but picture it leading you through space. Relax your hips and legs in Z-Sit. Keep your legs on the floor for your push-ups and C curve. If you have spine, hip or neck problems, skip this exercise altogether.



Thread the Needle on the Chair

SPRING SETTING: 1 light
PURPOSE: targets the abdominals; enhances arm, trunk, hip and leg strength; improves leg and trunk flexibility; promotes symmetrical muscular development and movement of the body into multiple planes; accesses the front/side/back muscles
SETUP: Kneel on the floor, with your right side next to the pedal, and squeezing your legs together. Place your right fingers lightly on the pedal, and draw your left elbow into your waistline, palm facing inward. Contract your abdominals and direct your gaze toward your left palm. Bend your body slightly toward your left.

1. Inhale. Exhale, side-bending toward your right as you push the pedal down and float your left arm overhead.

2. Gradually rotate your trunk toward the pedal, pushing it the rest of the way down and moving your left arm through space as if you were threading the eye of a needle. End with your fingertips pointing to the back corner of the room.

3. Extend your left leg out to your left side to about hip height, extending your left arm toward your leg.

4. Bend your left leg backward into a bent, externally rotated position, extending your left arm backward.

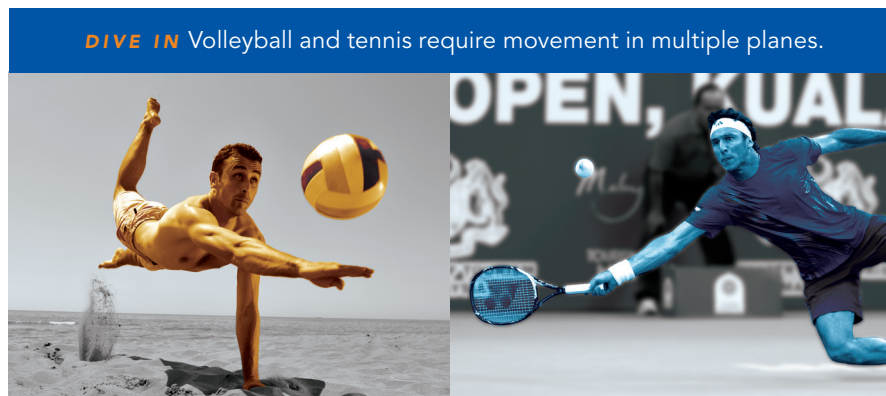
5. Return your left leg and arm to your side, then extend both forward.

6. Move your spine into a deep C curve, bending your left leg and holding onto your left foot with your left hand.

7. Extend your left leg forward, then out to your side as high as possible in an externally rotated position. Your body will tip as a unit toward the Chair.

8. Return your left leg forward. Curl your body into a C curve while bending your left leg. Do 2 percussive beats: "Slice" your left foot backward along the outside of your right leg, then move it backward next to the inside of your right leg.

9. Bolt your legs back together, and thread your left arm to the back-right corner of the room.



DIVE IN Volleyball and tennis require movement in multiple planes.

10. Gradually come out of trunk rotation to a side-bend, bringing the pedal back up.

11. Do 1–2 reps of the entire sequence. Repeat on your other side.

TIPS: Kneel on a supportive mat. Anchor your support arm on the pedal with your shoulder girdle floating downward, and lift your body weight upward. Focus on your exhalations to assist the contraction of your deep core muscles. Visualize pushing a thread through the eye of a needle while moving your arm and leg into the space around your body as if you are within a 3-D cube. Picture your body as a gently elongating elastic band.

MODIFICATIONS: Keep your gesture leg bent. Allow your foot to sweep along the floor. Hold your gesture leg instead of your foot; this will shorten the lever, modifying the range of motion of your leg and supporting your torso. Skip this exercise if you have spine, hip or knee problems.

WANT MORE?

Order *AthleticKinetics: Pilates and Performing Arts Aesthetic DVD and Companion AthleticKinetics Manual for Reformer/Chair/Cadillac* for \$29.95 at www.pilates.com. For mat moves, check out *Practical Pilates Using Imagery* (\$34.95).

SETUP & STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5



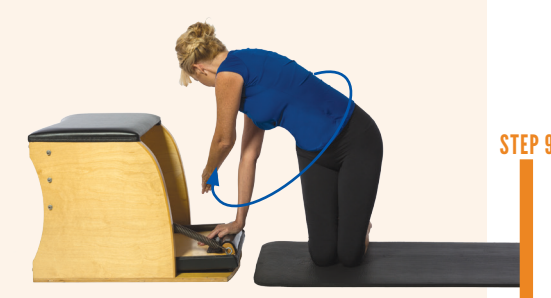
STEP 6



STEP 7



STEP 8



STEP 9



STEP 10

GEAR GUIDE

Balanced Body Ultra-Fit Circle
 (\$34; www.pilates.com)

Gratz Pilates Wunda Chair and Electric Chair
 (\$1,470 and \$2,195, respectively; www.pilates-gratz.com)

Airex Fitline Premium Fitness Mat
 (\$67.95; www.optp.com)

Adagio on the Chair

SPRING SETTING: 1 light or medium
PURPOSE: increases flexibility in the quads, hip flexors and hamstrings; targets the abdominals; enhances trunk, hip and leg strength; promotes functional movement in vertical, horizontal and sagittal planes in space.

SETUP: Sit sideways straddling the Chair, with your left knee bent and foot on the pedal in the up position. Bend your right knee to your side, holding onto your foot with your right hand, elbow bent to your side. Bend your left elbow to your side, palm in front of your chest.

1. Inhale, turning your body toward the left-front corner of the room, as you extend your left arm overhead. Exhale, pushing the pedal down as you extend your right leg forward.

2. Inhale, bringing the pedal back up as you return to the starting position. Exhale, bringing the pedal down as you extend your right leg forward and left arm overhead.

3. Inhale, bringing the pedal back up as you return to the starting position. Exhale, moving the pedal down as you extend your right leg out to your right side and left arm overhead.

4. Inhale, bringing the pedal back up as you return to the starting position. Exhale, moving the pedal down as you turn your body toward it, placing your hands on the edge of the seat, and move your right leg into a bent position behind your body. Inhale, standing on the pedal. Exhale, tilting your body forward while keeping your right leg bent and externally rotated.

5. Inhale, bringing the pedal back up as you return to the starting position. Do 1–2 reps. Switch sides and repeat.

TIPS: Keep your legs in an externally rotated position. Instead of gripping your leg, allow it to snuggle into your hip socket. Be aware of the muscles encircling your entire body elongating like a rubber band. During your exhalations, contract your abdominals, thinking of cinching a parachute harness. Enjoy the spiraling sensation of accessing multiple planes in space.



SETUP

SLOW AND STEADY Fluidity is the name of the game for figure skating and hurdling.



STEP 1



STEP 2



STEP 3



STEP 4

MODIFICATIONS: Keep your gesture leg bent. Hold your gesture leg instead of your foot; this will shorten the lever, modifying the range of motion of your leg and supporting torso. Use one arm to hold onto the Chair for stability.

NO APPARATUS?

Don't miss our e-newsletter for Adagio on the Mat! Sign up for free at www.pilatesstyle.com.

Flamingo Fly on the Chair

SPRING SETTING: all
PURPOSE: strengthens the arms, chest, back, core and base of the powerhouse (legs, hips and pelvic floor)

SETUP: Stand on top of the Chair facing the pedal, holding onto the handles with straight arms and allowing your legs to dangle in mid-air. Keep your legs straight, with your toes pointing toward the floor. Gently draw your shoulder girdle downward.

1. Inhale. Exhale, extending your left leg forward and bending your right, focusing on spiraling your abs toward your spine.

2. Inhale, returning to the starting position.

3. Without pausing, alternate legs. Work toward repeating the sequence twice for a total of 4 leg movements, concentrating on contracting your deep abdominal muscles throughout.

TIPS: Bolt the full circumference of your upper legs together. Picture a flamingo standing on 1 leg with its other leg tucked underneath. Visualize engaging your abdominals like shrink-wrap toward your spine. Use the power of your breath to access an internal source of support from your deep abdominals. (Your core helps you to maintain shoulder girdle organization, spine stability and to move your legs.) Keep your upper-body muscles floating and drawn downward away from your ears.

MODIFICATION: Practice lifting and bending both legs toward you.

ADVANCED: Turn your body to face toward the right corner of the room as you do the exercise; repeat toward the left. Work toward 4 in a row.



STEP 1



STEP 3

STRENGTH IN SPACE

Long jumping and punting demand it!



Former dancer Larkin Barnett, BA, MA, is a Nautilus award-winning author, Polestar Pilates-certified instructor and founder of the AthleticKinetics System® Pilates Teacher Trainings. Larkin has been teaching and sharing her techniques for four decades, including as a movement therapist and fitness professional at Canyon Ranch Spa, where she has trained celebrities and Olympic athletes. Larkin has been a professor of dance and exercise science at Virginia Commonwealth University, Florida Atlantic University, Longy School of Music and Lappeenranta University in Finland. She has trained with top modern dance companies specializing in Rudolf Von Laban's spatial concepts. Her college dance professor studied with the students of Laban. Larkin taught, performed and choreographed at Harvard University and the NYC Laban Center.

Currently, Larkin is a Pilates on Tour faculty presenter and travels internationally to provide teacher trainings and layperson workshops in her AthleticKinetics System. She also holds two Golf Pilates certifications. Larkin is in the process of co-authoring a book with a pulmonary oncologist and works with his patients who have respiratory problems using her Foundation Formula® and Vertical/Horizontal/Sagittal/3-D Breathing®. She was chosen as a President's Challenge Advocate, and prepares teachers and parents to help children get fit through her Pilates-based curriculum, which is offered by Autism Speaks.

Larkin is the author of AthleticKinetics: Pilates and Performing Arts Aesthetic DVD and Companion AthleticKinetics Manual for Reformer/Chair/Cadillac (Larkinetics System®, 2013; winner, Pilates Style DVD Awards 2013); Practical Centering (Quest Books, 2012; winner, Nautilus Book Award); Practical Pilates Using Imagery (with Miami City Ballet; Lorenz Educational Press, 2009, AthleticKinetics Mat), Pilates and Calisthenics for Children (Lorenz Educational Press, 2010); Creative Yoga for Children (Lorenz Educational Press, 2010); and On a Lark: Creative Movement for Children (Lorenz Educational Press, 2008). For more information on Larkin's resources, layperson workshops, or to complete an application to earn 60 PMA CEU's for certification in her AthleticKinetics System, check out her website (www.larkinbarnett.com) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/larkinbarnettpilates) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/larkinbarnett) pages.