
Postnatal Pilates

A 6-Week Mat Course Workbook

With Natasha · The Light of You

Reconnect · Rebuild · Return to yourself

Welcome

This workbook is your companion through the 6-week Postnatal Pilates Mat Course. Each week builds gently on the last, developing the Pilates principles alongside real postnatal strength, breath, posture and pelvic floor awareness.

Move only as far as you can stay connected to your breath. There is no race. Some weeks you'll fly; some weeks you'll repeat. Both are progress.

Before you begin

- Wait until your 6-week postnatal check (or 10–12 weeks for c-section).
- Stop if you feel any doming, heaviness or pain.
- Honour your sleep, your feeding and your healing.

Week 1 — Reconnect & Restore

Breath · Pelvic floor · Deep core awareness

Goal: Awareness and activation.

Duration: ~30 minutes · **Principles:** Breath, Concentration, Awareness

Begin where every postnatal body needs to begin — with breath. We awaken the diaphragm, lift and fully release the pelvic floor, and gently re-introduce the deep core. Slow, supported, mostly lying down.

Exercises

Exercise	Cue	Reps
Lateral Rib Breathing	Breathe wide into the back of the ribs — let the belly soften, don't push.	5 mins
Pelvic Floor Lift & Release	Imagine drawing a blueberry up the centre line — then let it fully drop.	10 slow reps
Pelvic Tilts	Gentle rocking — exhale to tilt, inhale to release. Spine stays soft.	10 each way
Heel Slides	Slide one heel away as you exhale — keep the lower back quiet.	8 per side
Arm Raises (supine)	Float the arms overhead — ribs stay heavy on the mat.	8 reps
Gentle Thoracic Rotations	Knees fall side to side — lengthen through the crown.	6 per side

Watch-outs

- Only progress if you can maintain breath connection.
- No doming or bulging through the midline.
- No heaviness in the pelvic floor.

Notes & reflections

Week 2 — Stability Foundations

Neutral spine · Limb dissociation · Posture

Goal: Build control without strain.

Duration: ~35 minutes · **Principles:** Control, Alignment, Breath

Now we add gentle limb movement layered over the breath and core engagement you built last week. Neutral spine becomes your home. Coordination is the work — not effort.

Exercises

Exercise	Cue	Reps
Modified Dead Bug	One arm + opposite leg. Ribs stay heavy. Move only as far as you keep connection.	6 per side
Glute Bridges	Press through the heels — exhale to lift, inhale to lower one vertebra at a time.	10 reps
Side-Lying Leg Lifts	Long line head to heel. Lift on the exhale — small range, total control.	10 per side
Seated Posture Reset	Sit tall on sit bones, ribs stack over hips. This is your feeding posture.	5 mins
Cat-Cow	Spine moves segment by segment — feel each vertebra.	8 cycles

Watch-outs

- If the lower back arches — make the range smaller.
- Keep the abdominal wall flat — never doming up.

Notes & reflections

Week 3 — Strength & Endurance

Time under tension · Light load · Endurance

Goal: Hold stability for longer.

Duration: ~40 minutes · **Principles:** Precision, Control, Concentration

Your nervous system is starting to trust you again. We hold positions longer, add a touch of light resistance and begin building real postnatal strength — without ever forcing.

Exercises

Exercise	Cue	Reps
Bridge with Hold	Lift, hold for 5 breaths, then lower with intention.	8 reps
Bird Dog (controlled)	Opposite arm and leg — pause at the top, no twist in the pelvis.	6 per side
Clamshells	Knees open like a book — heels stay glued. Feel the side seat.	12 per side
Wall-Supported Squat	Slide down the wall, knees track over toes, exhale to rise.	10 reps
Side-Lying Hip Abduction Holds	Lift the top leg — hold 10 seconds — slow lower.	5 per side

Watch-outs

- Only progress reps if breath stays smooth.
- Stop if there is any pressure or heaviness in the pelvic floor.

Notes & reflections

Week 4 — Dynamic Movement

Standing work · Flowing sequences · Functional patterns

Goal: Controlled movement through range.

Duration: ~40 minutes · **Principles:** Flow, Control, Alignment

We come up off the floor. Standing patterns and flowing sequences build the strength you actually need — for lifting baby, carrying car seats, and getting up off the floor a hundred times a day.

Exercises

Exercise	Cue	Reps
Squat Pattern	Sit back into the heels, chest open — exhale to rise, lift the pelvic floor.	12 reps
Supported Reverse Lunge	Hand on a wall or chair — step back, drop the back knee with control.	8 per side
Standing Arm + Core Integration	Reach one arm overhead — feel the opposite oblique support you.	8 per side
Modified Plank Prep (knees down)	Shoulders over wrists — long line knees to crown. Hold 20 sec.	3 holds
Standing Roll-Down	Slow articulation through the spine — exhale down, exhale up.	5 reps

Watch-outs

- Keep the abdominal wall flat throughout — no doming.
- If standing feels too much, return to seated variations.

Notes & reflections

Week 5 — Integrated Strength

Upper + lower body · Mild instability · Resistance

Goal: Whole-body coordination.

Duration: ~45 minutes · **Principles:** Flow, Precision, Control

Everything starts to come together. Upper and lower body work in concert. We add a little instability — and resistance bands if you have them — to challenge the deep stabilisers in a real-world way.

Exercises

Exercise	Cue	Reps
Full Bird Dog	Reach long through opposite arm and leg — square hips, square shoulders.	8 per side
Resistance Band Pull-Apart	Open the chest, draw shoulder blades down the back.	12 reps
Standing Balance + Rotation	Stand on one leg — gentle rotation through the ribcage. Eyes soft.	6 per side
Glute Bridge with March	Hold the bridge — lift one foot a few inches at a time. Hips stay level.	8 marches
Side Plank Prep (knees down)	Stack the hips — lift, hold for 3 breaths, lower.	4 per side

Watch-outs

- Coordination should feel challenging, not chaotic — slow down if needed.
- Pelvic floor should feel supported, never pushed down on.

Notes & reflections

Week 6 — Confidence & Return to Fitness

Continuous flow · Endurance · Confidence

Goal: Prepare for life beyond the course.

Duration: ~50 minutes · **Principles:** All six principles, Flow, Control, Precision

The final week. A little more intensity, more flow, more sustained work. You'll leave the course knowing how your body wants to move — and ready to step back into regular practice with confidence.

Exercises

Exercise	Cue	Reps
Full Modified Plank	Long line — hold 30 seconds, breathe wide into the back ribs.	3 holds
Squat-to-Press	Squat down, exhale to rise and press the arms overhead — one fluid line.	12 reps
Dynamic Sequence Flow	Lunge → reach → squat → roll-down — moving with breath.	5 rounds
Core Endurance Series	Dead bug → bird dog → side plank prep — 8 reps each, no pause.	2 rounds
Standing Spinal Wave	Roll down, roll up, breathe deep — your closing ritual.	5 reps

Watch-outs

- Celebrate what you've built. Strength returns slowly, then suddenly.
- Continue to honour rest days and listen to your body.

Notes & reflections

After the 6 weeks

Strength returns slowly, then suddenly. Continue with weekly mat practice, honour rest days, and keep listening. Your body has carried life — treat it with reverence.

With love, Natasha · www.thelightofyou.uk