



Video Transcript

Pilates For Pelvic Floor Strength

Hi, I'm Melissa and I'm here to show you how you can strengthen your pelvic floor in ways that go beyond what you may have heard of. Now, I'm 42 years old and I have gone through enough in my life medically, physically, emotionally. That my pelvic floor and my function has been affected and that's normal, but you do not have to live with that.

So if you're like me and you have like sneeze or cough and pee moments all at the same time, even when you don't want to, this is something that can be handled. I want you to remember that your pelvic floor is just like the muscle of your bicep in that you can use it to strengthen it. The next time you feel any kind of dysfunction that you're not okay with, no need to lament.

Just put on this video. And the more you do this kind of work, the better. But I also want you to see that I have this equipment here, like the Pilates ring and this band, because it's not just about sitting and breathing or lying down and squeezing or KE goals. It's way more than that. And I'm gonna eliminate that for you.

So let's start by tuning in because this is a very deep part of yourself and it's intimate. So I want you to feel truly connected when we use it. And the best way to connect to your pelvic floor externally, we're not doing internal practices today, so the way to connect. Externally is to breath and touch.

I am touching to the soft tissue below my belly button,

and I'm looking to feel expansion here. As I inhale. I'm also looking to feel a pulling away muscularly as I exhale.

You might be wondering why I don't put both hands here. You can. There's nothing better about putting your hand on your heart. I like to put my hand on my heart when I'm touching this part of myself at first to connect in a total body sense. 'cause the breath has to pass through, right? The lungs, and then the movement of the diaphragm.

The movement of organs is what you feel pushing into the pelvic floor.

I also just like to bring a heart connected moment to myself when I'm touching a part of me that's so sacred. Can you feel this expansion I'm talking about here as well as behind you, and you're allowed to put your hand behind you if you need to. I.

This can be a little hard to access when you're standing up, but it's worth a try.

I want you to actually imagine now that you're rooting your feet into the ground, that you're center to the earth, and that your feet are diving deep into the earth. And that on your inhale you can feel that push into the pelvic floor and on your exhale you can draw that earth energy up through the feet, up through the legs, and into the pelvis.

This is when metaphor is excellent for body work. We know that I'm not actually inhaling. Into my pelvis. I don't have a lung there and I can't pull up and exhale through my lungs here, but I can actually start to feel like I am creating that energetically, and I don't want you to question the reality of that for yourself.

If it feels real to you and it feels beneficial, go with it. Okay, so I'm gonna take my hands lower to my space 'cause I wanna feel that I can feel my breaths there.

Again, conscious awareness of these parts of your body are just useful when you're trying to like PT it or work it out,

and I'm still drawing up that earth energy because I'm gonna be using this Pilates ring in this band and I'm gonna really feel it.

Great. Let's begin. I also want you to understand that when I show you everything I show you today, again, it's not about isolating your pelvic floor, it's about using it as a part of you, a totality in the system of your core. Therefore. We're gonna combine it with standing work. You don't totally, you don't typically see, excuse me, I'm gonna use a Pilates ring for this.

You can use another prop. You can use a yoga brick or maybe a Gertie ball if you're familiar with that kind of PT language for pelvic floor work. And I am going to put this Pilates ring in between my knees. Give it a good squeeze. I wanna be able to hold it here, and I'm gonna end up adjusting it throughout my workout.

I'm not gonna use it the whole time. I'm not always a big fan of this because it can be difficult to manipulate, but I, and it can be a little uncomfortable on the inner thighs, but I'm using it to feel my inner thighs activate and to press my feet into the floor. As I inhale and bring my arms up, I'm tapping into that sky energy and I'm drawing, and I'm feeling my glute squeezed

and I'm getting taller without my shoulders coming up to my ears.

Now, you might have done that with a break. Or something else. I would like you to feel for that same activity without the prop. You felt the squeeze. Can you feel like you're doing that? You're not gonna have anything to squeeze into. You are gonna feel like you're doing it. I want you to step to the back of your mat, connect the feet to the earth, connect the arms of the sky.

Feel like you're drawing in, not just through the legs. But through the front and back and the sides of your body, and you're getting that kind of Pilate zip up hollow body, dead bug, but you're getting it really from the base of your pelvis. And then I wanna be able to do a walkout into down dog that way.

I wanna feel that now. Sure, you could. Use the Pilates ring or a brick here, but I need you to tap into it without it being there.

You are really just resourcing that movement for the work with the bands.

Now that we've done this, can you drop the arms

and feel like you're still energetically engaging this part of you?

I want you to feel as if you can even pull through the vaginal canal and your anus as if you could shorten and tighten the canal and the back, squeeze your glutes, and don't want you to rely on that as a totality of your pelvic floor function, but it's a big part of it. Okay. Now let it go. I'm squeezing my inner thighs.

I'm squeezing everything and I'm gonna let it go. Now that's pretty visible. I want you to see that from the side. And then I'm gonna show you from the front. 'cause I want you to be able to do this anywhere. Do you know why? Because when I developed this connection. There were many times where I would be like, oh, I gotta sneeze.

I'm nervous about it. I'm gonna sneeze and pee, and I'm not wearing the kind of outfit I really want that to happen in. And when I develop this connection without props, like in real life, I can brace properly to sneeze and nothing happens. Is that the gold standard? It's not where I wanna live in terms of what I want my body to be able to do, but in a moment I'll take it.

So over time you won't have to always do that, but the conscious connection you're developing here is gonna help you in other scenarios. So let's do this again. Let's squeeze as if you have a

pro. I am not gonna add the down dog or the challenge of movement. It was just to help you feel. Can I do that while moving?

But what I want you to do is go back to the breath where you tap into the earth. We feel it drawing up the legs, where now I'm front and back sides and I'm going deep, squeezing glutes, drawing up to the vaginal canal and anus. And I can hold that while I'm breathing and talking. It doesn't make me have to talk like this.

I can actually segment pieces of myself and I can really draw that energy up using my arms to the ceiling.

Stay here with me and breathe. Keep activating. Keep connecting.

Squeezing. Squeezing up. And then slowly releasing the arms, not releasing the activity in the pelvic region. And then notice there's an immediate softening through my legs, my glutes, my quads. Great. Let's use that in conjunction with a resistance band. Because this is gonna get you to do a few things at once.

A, we're gonna work biceps, who doesn't love to work biceps. Um, B, we're connecting it to the pelvic floor work. This is gonna illuminate for you how the next time you go to like. Pick up a box, open a door that you don't always have to be conscious of it. There's gonna be a time where it won't be an explicit effort, but you'll work out enough that it'll just be like, I'm not just opening the door from here.

My arm, I can pull with my whole body. Similar to when we did strikes in another video where you learn how to punch using all of you as opposed to just part of you. Your limbs are extensions of your core in the most functional sense. Okay? So you're gonna see that here. Regular bicep, curl setup, nothing too fancy.

Find a resistance that works not too bad. Right now, this band, it's not a. Crazy strong band. So I, I like that it has handles. So I like that I can use my grip. By the way, you can use weights. I do prefer a cable machine or a band for this. The free weights, um, don't necessarily give the same delineated line of pull as you would with a cable or a band.

And I do think it's important. So as I bring my elbows to my side, because I'm not just gonna do this, elbows are gonna clamp into the side. I'm going to exhale and then I'm gonna inhale. Do you see how my shoulders are back and I get taller as I do this?

Good. Now do something else with me. When I exhale to pull up on the band, I want you to also exhale and pull up through the pelvic floor the way we just practiced. As so

slowly release, you can release in between every rep. In fact, you should so that your pelvic floor has a sense of elasticity. You don't want it to get inhibited in any one particular way. We've already done four. Let's go for 10.

Yeah, again. Six. I really enjoy when I feel a big challenge in the arm work. I'll squeeze my butt a lot, and again, it's not the totality of my pelvic floor work, but it's very useful and you'll see that in a moment. Go for three more. Three,

two.

One.

Yes. Good. Hey, take a moment. Put that down. Breathe. Return your breath to a normal functioning breath. You don't need to stay stuck and restricted. That's training. We come out of that. Okay.

I am releasing my head and neck from any of that tension. That's normal. I'm playing with all this pulling action. I might feel it at some point in my head and neck. That's normal whenever you do intense core work. Let it go. Now we're gonna use this band to create that connection to the sky that we did earlier.

And this is gonna get more intense. So if it starts to feel too hard, you'll just lessen the resistance of your band by bringing the feet closer together or just stepping on it with one foot. I'm gonna experiment. I actually don't know how this is gonna feel, so I may have to adjust it in real time with you.

I want you to see that so that you know how to modify for yourself. Anytime you're confronted with using a prop in a way that's not quite working, you can figure it out. So I'm gonna exhale, but now I'm gonna open up my arms and I'm gonna continue to recruit from my pelvic floor. Well, that's a good amount of pull back.

Give it a little rest. Yes. Let's go again. We're gonna go for 10.

Hey, arm work, shoulder work, and core work. Yes. Let it go. When you're ready, you Now I'm gonna show you the rhythm I like to use when I'm at the gym doing this. I let go of my pelvic floor, but I did not untuck my pelvis. Okay? So I'm keeping it tucked down the whole time. I'm gonna do the last six.

I take deep breaths when I'm done at the end of the rep so I can teach myself to let go and then recruit. Because guess what? If you don't let go, you can't recruit. So don't just stay stuck there

three more.

When you learn to lift heavy, you have to do all this anyways. That's why I love when women get into strength training, takes care of so much of what they're worried about. One more.

Can you hold, hold it with me. Oh. Let it come from the deep core and then

amazing. Did you hear my, my knee pop there? That is not surprising. I was drawing up so much that even my quads were getting recruited. There are plenty of women, including myself, that when they have their periods, their needs hurt. That's because the quads tighten up in response to pelvic floor tension.

And in fact, for my runners, whenever your knees hurt, I want you to think, have I been breathing deeply enough in between runs or even during my run? Phone, roll your quads, get into deep breath, and you'll notice a humongous difference with your knees, if that's where the issue's coming from. It's really pretty enlightening.

I'm coming to the ground now because I'm gonna release the work I've just done.

Again, none of this is done so that you remain in this really. Constricted place. I want you to relax and I know, I know the frustration that comes with feeling like a part of you isn't working. I know. The fear, the stress, the humiliation, the embarrassment, the shame when you feel like a part of your body isn't working.

Particularly when you live in a society that says you shouldn't talk about it or you're broken or it's just what happens as you age and to all of that. I say we work harder. Okay, you, this is your body. You claim it, and you work with it the best you can. Let's thank it. Look at how I'm breathing really deeply.

You can see the movement here. I like to bend my knees to do this and keep my feet on the ground. As opposed to elongating my legs because it just makes it easier to be able to manipulate my pelvis and I can, I can do that and soothe myself here.

I want you to thank your body. I want you to celebrate your body. 'cause even if, let's say you came to this video and you were like, I can't handle this. I gotta stop with this pelvic floor. Pee and sneeze business. I'm, I'm just making something up, right? A reason you could be here, even if that never changed.

You're still worthy just as you are of everything you've ever desired. You are perfect. You are whole because no one, no one is. Perfect in the way we see or we dream about in real life. It's just, trust me, take it from me. As a professional movement educator for the last 15 plus years,

no one's working with a perfect body.

Thank you. Thank you. Smile. Celebrate yourself for trying, celebrate any potential for change, including your own perspective and relationship with yourself. Well done. I'm really proud of you. You did a lot of good work today. Take care, and I'll see you again soon.