

Side Kicks, Up/Down

By Jocelyn Paoli, Stott Certified Pilates Instructor

Starting Position:

Lie on your side and align your body against the back edge of the mat. Prop your head up on one hand and place the palm of the other hand on the mat in front of you. Position your legs in a 45 degree angle in front of your body. Feet are slightly turned out slightly in a Pilates V.

1. Inhale, lift your top leg straight up to the ceiling and point your toe. Lift your leg only as high as you can manage with it remaining straight.
2. Exhale, resist gravity, flex your foot and bring it back down to starting position. Think of reaching and stretching your leg long out of your hip.
3. Repeat 5-8 times on each side. Bring your legs back together to prepare for the next exercise in the series: Small Circles.



Modifications:

If you experience discomfort in your shoulder, wrist or neck, lay your head down on your arm. You can also use a rolled up towel under your neck for added support.

Head to Toe Checklist:

Remain long and lifted in the upper body as you kick your leg up and lengthen it down. Don't roll your leg inward. Keep a slight turnout in the hip and thigh throughout the exercise. Stabilize your body with the powerhouse. Nothing moves but the kicking leg. Shoulder and hips remain stacked. Think of controlled movements.

Visualization:

By the end of the exercise your kicking leg should feel longer.

