

# Pilates Work Sheet 01

## CORRECT POSTURE ALIGNMENT FOR STABILISATION

### Neutral Spine or Pelvis (NS)

"Neutral spine" or "neutral pelvis" is the term used when your back and, therefore, your spinal column is in its natural, neutral posture.

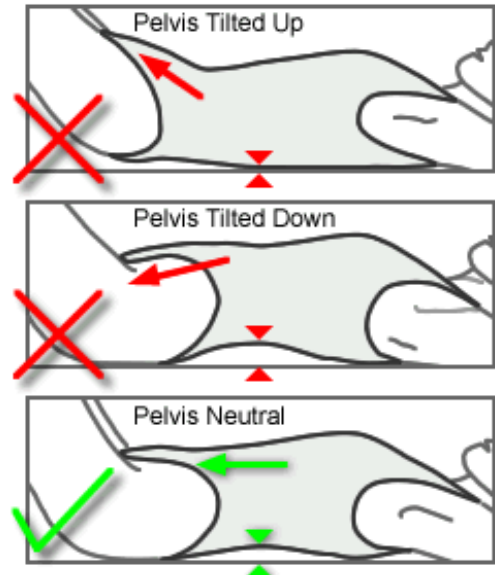
We need to obtain and maintain NS for all starting positions in Pilates eg: standing, lying on back or stomach, or on all fours. We need to position the spine and the pelvis correctly to achieve this posture.

The easiest way to practise this position for the first time is lying on the floor:

- Lying on back, knees bent, soles of feet on floor at hip distance apart, so that shoulders, hips, knees and feet are all in line.
- Hip bones & pelvic bone should be parallel to the floor which means they are all on the same plane.
- Try to prevent the pelvis tipping forwards or backwards.
- **Important:** NS should be retained throughout to strengthen abdominals & back effectively.

#### Practise:

- Sliding the flat of your hand underneath the small of the back
- Placing the palm of the other hand on lower tummy to feel that the hips are horizontal.



### Zip-Up & Hollow (ZUH)

Next step is to engage the abdominals, so that we isolate the deep stabilising muscles. These are called the transverse abdominals (TVA). These muscles are like a girdle that runs round the front of our lower tummies round the sides and into the lower back. It is these muscles that we want to control & work so that we can add strength and stability to our backs & stomachs, and ultimately achieve a flatter tummy.

- Draw up pelvic floor muscles (PF)
- Then flatten abdominals (ABS) towards the spine. Pull in as much as possible. Imagine your tummy shrinking into the spine and is if water is disappearing down a plughole! Also, you could imagine that you have a really tight pair of jeans that you're trying to zip up. I will call this "zip-up & hollow". Keep NS throughout.

### Regulate Breathing

So we have NS & ZUH. Finally, we need to work with "the breath":

- Inhale through nose and exhale through mouth. Practise this 5 times. Concentrate on feeling the ribs expanding to the side & back with each inhale and relaxing on each exhale.
- Maintain steady rhythm. There is no need to do very deep or strenuous breathing. Just focus on where you're breathing from.
- Practise ZUH as you breathe out.

### THE WHOLE SEQUENCE IS:

#### 1. MAINTAIN NS

#### 2. INHALE

#### 3. ZUH & EXHALE (these 2 actions should be done together)