

# HardCore

Core-focused Pilates brings your game a new edge

by Emily Romm | illustration by Kelli Glancey



t  
e  
n  
n  
i  
s



« Andy Roddick,  
generating power from his  
torso

If you envy Roddick's rock solid middle, or you've dreamed of sporting a 6-pack like Serena's, Pilates will take you there, and bring your game to the next level. Lesa Salvani, owner of In Balance Pilates Studio in Sag Harbor points players toward five classic moves that build confidence in the backhand as well as the bathing suit.

Pilates exercises develop a strong and stable center, or "powerhouse," which takes pressure off limbs while improving power, flexibility, and alignment. The following moves enhance the all-important abs, lengthen trunk rotation and improve shoulder stabilization. Each exercise requires only a few reps—Pilates emphasizes quality not quantity—so make sure you are moving slowly and mindfully in each position for the full benefit.

## Core Strength

### 1. Single Leg Stretch

Lie on a yoga mat with knees bent. Take hold of your right leg and pull it into your chest with your inside hand on the knee and your outside hand on the ankle. Extend your left leg out in front of you and hold it above the mat at an angle that allows your back to remain flat. Exhale and switch legs. Do not lift forward from the neck. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

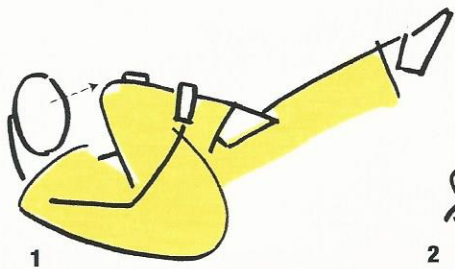
### 2. Criss Cross

Lie on your back, hands behind head, and knees bent. Concentrate on keeping your belly button anchored to the mat. Curl up, lifting the upper body. Extend your right leg long and at a 45

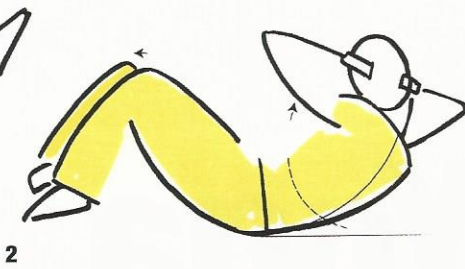
degree angle with the mat. Twist the upper body to the right as your left elbow touches your right knee. Inhale as you lift and twist. Exhale as you hold and stretch. Switch sides. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

## Rotation

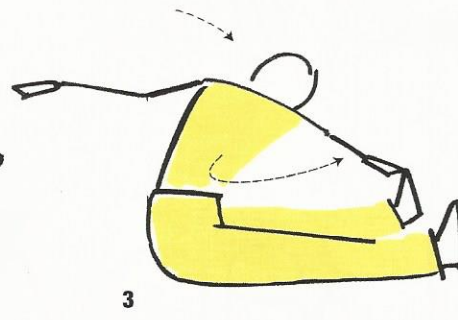
"A forehand or backhand demands that the trunk rotate," says Chris Numbers, Head Pro at East Hampton Indoor Tennis. The pro players are virtual twist-and-turn machines, from returning an impossibly out-of-reach drop shot to shooting the racquet back in perfect position while on the run. Encourage further range of motion in your midsection with the following moves.



1



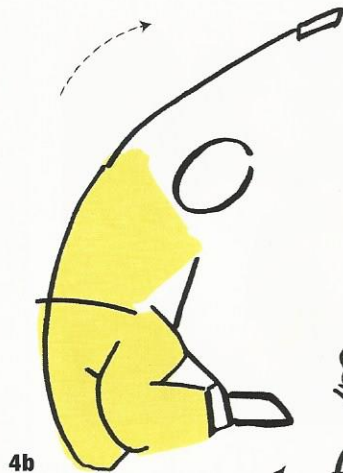
2



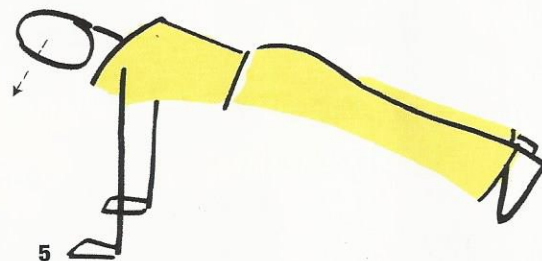
3



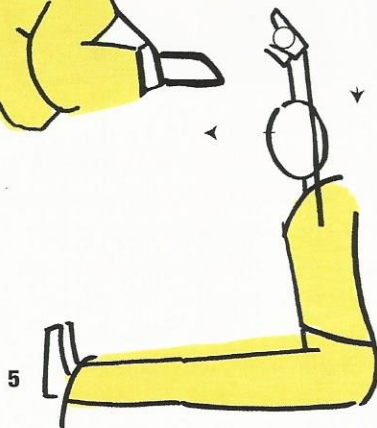
4a



4b



5



5

### Court Core-hounds

Not just for women in leotards anymore, Pilates has stretched and strengthened the following players on the pro tour:

Mark Philippoussis  
Venus and Serena Williams  
Jennifer Capriati  
Martina Navratilova

After spending 3 hours on the court, Andy Roddick heads to a soccer field to work on 20, 30 and 40 yard sprints.

Tommy Haas does 200 crunches a day in the off-season.

### 3. Spine Twist

Sit tall with arms out. Extend legs straight, feet flexed and inner thighs squeezed together. Inhale, pulling your

belly button in and up. Sit as tall as you can. Exhale and twist your torso to the left, keeping your hip anchored. Make several pulsing movements towards your ankle. Inhale returning to the starting position and repeat on other side. Repeat 5 to 10 times.

### 4. Mermaid

Sit to one side, with knees bent and ankles together. Right hand holds right ankle. Reach your left arm straight up by your ears, and slowly bend towards your right side. Keep the left hip anchored. Repeat 3 times on each side.

### Shoulder Stabilization

"To prevent injury, tennis players need to implement general shoulder exercises into their routine. Playing tennis puts considerable stress on the shoulder and surrounding muscles, especially for those who try to hit with extreme power," advises Numbers.

### 5. Shave a Head

Sit tall with legs extended. Keep shoulders pulled down away from the ears as you stretch arms up behind your head holding a light weight. Inhale as you extend arms and exhale as they return, creating resistance. Repeat 3 to 6 times with a 1 lb. weight.