

Positioning On Your Back



Introduction

This handout is designed to help you with finding the best position for your back when exercising :)



Positioning is important as our muscles work best if they are in a position where they find it easier to work.

When we think of Positioning we want to think about the 6 things.

Our:

- ❖ Feet
- ❖ Knees
- ❖ Pelvis
- ❖ Ribs
- ❖ Collar Bones
- ❖ Neck

Six Things to Think About

1. Foot Position

The feet need to be about hip width apart.

To find this bring your feet together. Fan them out so the heels are together and the feet are in a “v” shape. Then bring the heels out so they are lined up with the front of the foot.

Adjust slightly so your heels are lined up with your sitting bones.



2. Knees

Knees are lined up with the hip joints so we have the same gap between the knees as is between the feet.

(So the knees don't roll inwards or outwards).

3. Pelvis

It is important that the pelvis is level and that you aren't pushing your back into the mat.



Or arching your back away from the mat.

You want to be in a neutral position, so your back is lengthened along the mat.

How to find a neutral position:

Neutral is what we call the position when your back is lengthened along the mat.

Find neutral position by gently allowing your back to roll into the mat and your tailbone to curl upwards towards the ceiling.

(Don't lift your bottom completely off the mat).

Then go the opposite way. Roll your pelvis forward so your back arches slightly away from the mat.

Do this a few times, in each direction to feel the movement, before coming to rest in the middle.

You should feel your back lengthened along the mat and be in a comfy position.

You may feel a bit of activity into the lower tummy muscles but you shouldn't feel like you're tensing.

4. Ribs

The rib cage needs to relax into the mat. Most of us have a tendency for the ribs to “flare” upwards towards the ceiling.

This causes the lower back to arch away from the mat.

Take a deep breath in, and as you breathe out allow your ribs to gently sink down into the mat. Breathe normally and relax into this position.



5. Collar Bones

Think about having a sense of width through the collar bones rather than rounding the shoulders.

Think about widening through the front of the shoulders and drawing the shoulder blades slightly downwards and inwards towards the spine.

Watch the ribs don't flare and the back is maintaining the neutral position.

6. Neck

Imagine you are sliding the back of the head along the mat towards the wall behind you. This is a very small movement so take care not to force it.

You should feel a slight sense of length through the spine as if you are growing longer along the mat.

This is the Pilates starting position for exercises on your back and ensures you're not overusing the lower back.

You shouldn't feel like you're tensing in this position.

I know this sounds like a lot but you'll be able to come into this position without even thinking about it in no time at all!

We also go through this in every class so don't worry :)