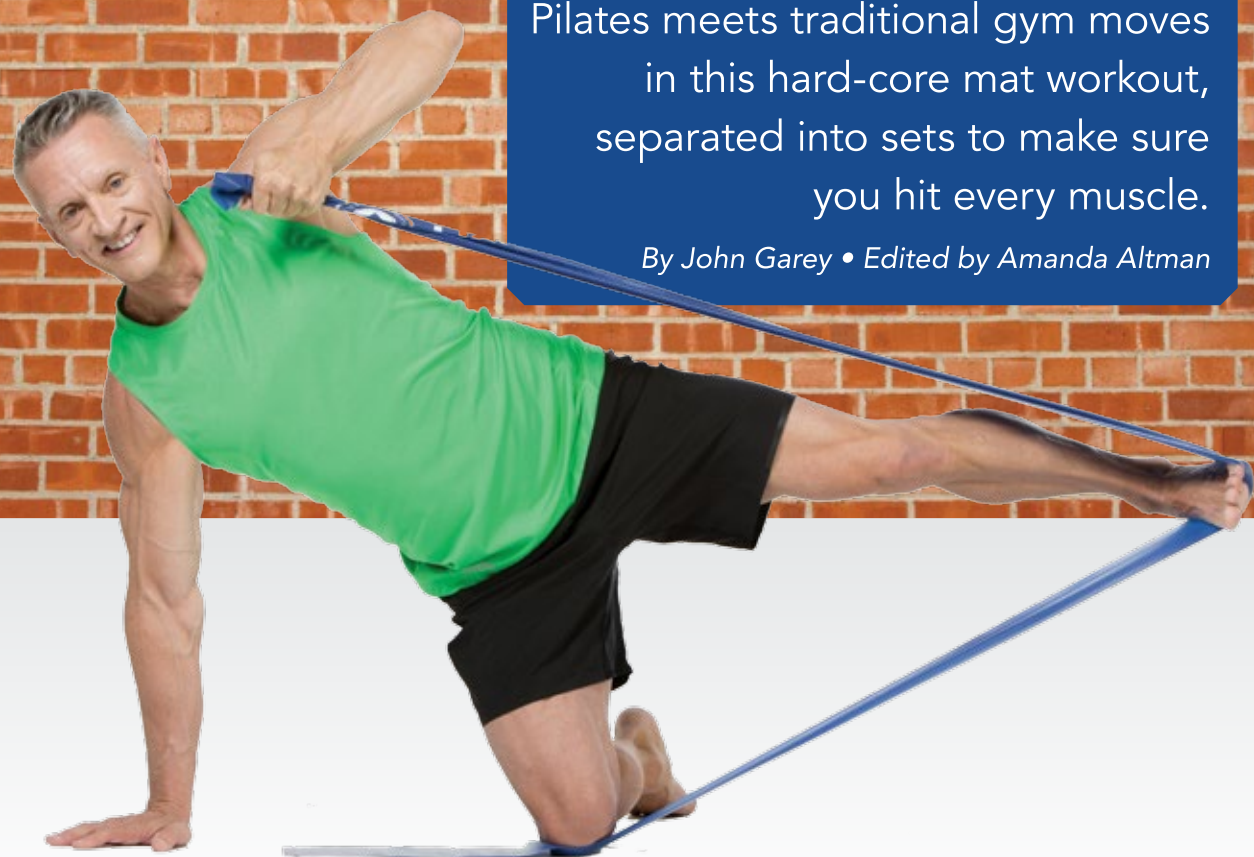


Ready, SET, Go!

Pilates meets traditional gym moves in this hard-core mat workout, separated into sets to make sure you hit every muscle.

By John Garey • Edited by Amanda Altman



I'm a self-professed fitness and Pilates addict. I've been involved in fitness for as long as I can remember. It started when I was about six or seven years old. My dad, a Marine, would train me every night with body-weight exercises, which he called calisthenics. I would do sit-ups, push-ups, pull-ups and more. He was very particular about proper form—and wouldn't count a repetition if I didn't do it correctly. It made for some really long sets, and I loved them. That early influence gave me a passion for fitness that's with me to this day.

In the early '90s, I found Pilates. The focus on proper form and the uniqueness of the discipline intrigued me. After a short period of learning and practicing Pilates, everything else I

did improved. I was stronger and more flexible. I was hooked. I spent many years studying the Pilates method from some of the greatest teachers. I've since become a master trainer and had my own studio for 15 years.

I believe that Pilates and traditional fitness training are perfect complements. I enjoy doing them separately, but I also love combining the two disciplines. The mat-based workout here is an example of how I mix some of the principles of Pilates with gym moves. The program is intermediate level, but modifications can be made to make the exercises easier and in some cases, more difficult.

There are nine exercises in total, put together in three sets of three exercises, which complement one

another in terms of muscular emphasis and movement patterns. So as you perform one exercise, you're getting an active recovery from the other two exercises in the set. You can repeat each complete set two or three times for a full workout.

I've chosen the Magic Circle as a prop for the first set, the resistance band for the second and no props for the third. The props add resistance and help challenge muscles that are otherwise difficult to hit when performing body-weight-only workouts. Not every workout is for every person, but I hope my program will inspire you, challenge you, and most of all, I hope you have fun with it. **PS**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROD FOSTER; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY TIFFANY LEE; JOHN'S OWN CLOTHES

SET 1

KNEELING SQUAT THROW

PROP: Magic Circle

PURPOSE: promotes full-body strength and mobility; warms the joints
SETUP: Kneel as tall as possible, with your knees hip-width apart, and hips and spine neutral. Hold the Circle in your hands, and reach your arms toward the ceiling, slightly in front of you, with your elbows soft.

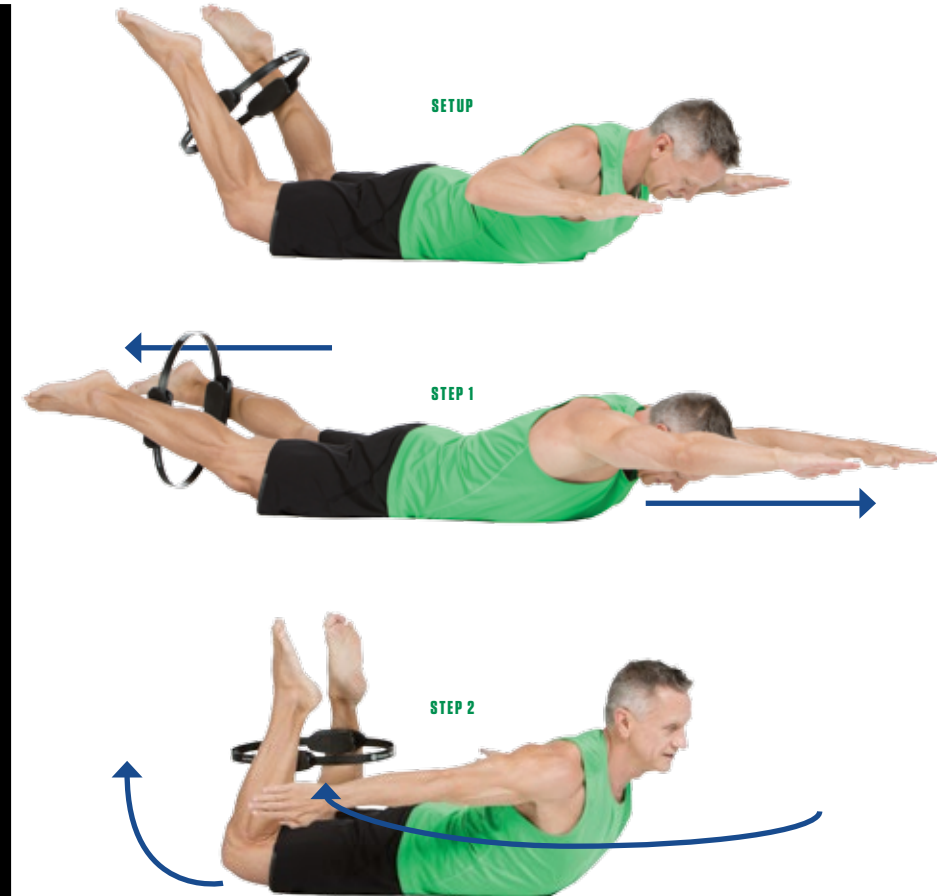
1. Exhale, lowering your arms toward the floor and pressing into the pads of the Circle while you round your spine into a C curve, allowing your hips and knees to flex.

2. Inhale, reversing the movement, straightening your hips and spine, and then pulling on the pads of the Circle as you extend your upper back. Do 8–10 reps of steps 1–2, then return to the starting position.

TIPS: Avoid excessive movement forward and backward with your hips. Allow your elbows to slightly bend when you push and pull against the Circle. Tuck your toes under for more control, and keep your feet long to challenge balance.

MODIFICATION: Perform the exercise seated.

ADVANCED: Perform the exercise standing.



BREASTSTROKE WITH CIRCLE BETWEEN ANKLES

PROP: Magic Circle

PURPOSE: works the muscles of the back body; focuses on the legs while toning the inner thighs

SETUP: Lie facedown, and place the Circle between your ankles, then comfortably bend your knees to about 90 degrees. Hover your head and arms above the floor, with a slight extension in your upper back. Bend your elbows at about 90 degrees to your sides.

1. Exhale, reaching your arms over your head, extending your elbows, as you simultaneously lengthen your knees until the Circle almost touches the ground.

2. Inhale, circling your arms toward your legs, lifting your chest as you simultaneously bend your knees and squeeze the Circle. Do 5–8 reps of steps 1–2, then return to the starting position.

TIPS: Avoid lifting your head too much—don't crease the back of your neck. Keep your abdominals gently engaged throughout to keep your lower spine supported. Focus on the upper-back movement, and avoid extending your lumbar spine (lower back).

MODIFICATION: Omit the arm movement—keep your hands stacked under your forehead.

ADVANCED: Add toning balls.

DOUBLE-LEG STRETCH WITH FITNESS CIRCLE

PROP: Magic Circle

PURPOSE: targets the front body; strengthens the biceps, front delts and pecs

SETUP: Lie on your back holding the Circle, with your legs in tabletop and head, neck and shoulders lifted. Reach the Circle over your legs, and press against the pads.

1. Exhale, straightening your legs as low as possible while reaching the Circle over your head as much as possible without changing the shape of your spine. Release the tension on the Circle.

2. Inhale, returning to the starting position. Do 8–10 reps.

TIPS: Keep your gaze focused on the horizon throughout, to help you maintain the proper neck and spine position.



Think of hollowing out your abdominals as you reach your arms over your head, to help maintain flat abs throughout.

MODIFICATION: Reach one leg out at a time.

ADVANCED: Do 2–3 sets.

SET 2

Feel free to perform each of these three exercises on one side, before repeating them all on your other side.

KNEELING SIDE-BEND WITH RESISTANCE BAND

PROP: medium-strength resistance band

PURPOSE: works the side body, particularly the obliques, lats and outer thighs

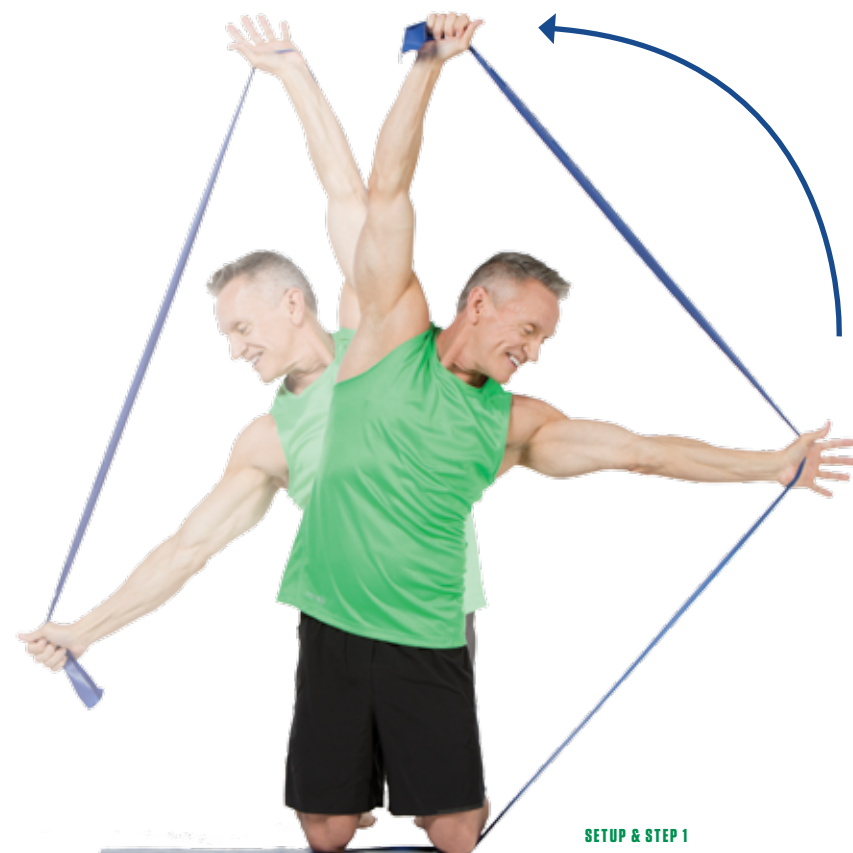
SETUP: Stretch the band out lengthwise on the floor, and kneel on one end. Hold the long end of the band over your head with your outside arm. Hook your inside thumb on the band, so that your arm is parallel to the floor, and focus your gaze on it. Your spine is in a slight side-bend toward your inside hand.

1. Exhale, side-bending toward your outside hand, only going as far as you can while maintaining your pelvic position.

2. Inhale, side-bending all the way to your other side, taking your arms with you and turning your head to face the opposite direction. Do 5–8 reps of steps 1–2, then return to the starting position.

3. Repeat the entire sequence on your other side, kneeling on the other end of the band.

TIPS: As you side-bend, avoid rotation—the band should stay on the side of your body. Think up and over to help keep the length in your spine and avoid compression.



MODIFICATION: Stand and hold the band in your hands, to take the resistance out of your obliques and the pressure off your knees.

ADVANCED: Once you side-bend to the opposite side, hold the position, then bend and straighten your bottom elbow to work your triceps.

KNEELING SIDE LEG LIFT WITH RESISTANCE BAND

PROPS: medium-strength resistance band

PURPOSE: targets the outer thighs while working the side body; strengthens the shoulders and triceps

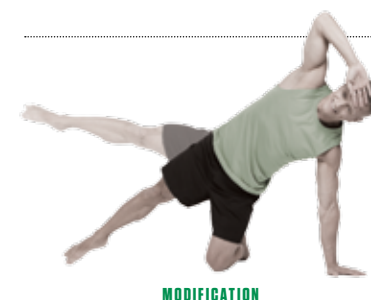
SETUP: Place the band lengthwise on the floor, and your left knee toward the left end of the band. Place your left hand on the floor, coming into a kneeling Side Plank. Hold the long end of the band in your right hand, and reach your arm over your head. Place your right foot against the band, with your knee extended.

1. Exhale, lifting your right leg as high as possible while keeping your top arm still.

2. Inhale, lowering your right leg, touching your foot back to the floor. Do 8–10 reps on each side.

TIPS: Make sure that the band is stretched out under your foot so you don't lose it. Keep your bottom elbow soft. Get your hips as far over your bottom knee as possible.

MODIFICATION: Omit the band, placing your top hand against your forehead.



GEAR GUIDE

MERRITHEW™ Fitness Circle Pro, 12 inch, and Flex Band (\$65 and \$6.99–\$10.99, respectively; www.merrithew.com)



SETUP



STEP 1



STEP 2



MODIFICATION

SIDE-KICK KNEELING WITH RESISTANCE BAND

PROP: medium-strength resistance band

PURPOSE: works the muscles around the hips as well as the shoulders and arms; promotes stability in the torso

SETUP: Same as in the previous exercise, but place your top hand by your shoulder, elbow bent, and extend your top leg parallel to the floor.

1. Inhale, bringing your top leg forward and top arm backward, straightening your elbow.

2. Exhale, bringing your top leg backward and reaching your top arm forward. Do 8–10 reps on each side.

TIPS: Make sure that the band is stretched over your foot to avoid losing it. Keep your bottom elbow soft. Try to keep your top leg parallel to the floor throughout.

MODIFICATION: Omit the band, placing your top hand against your forehead.

ADVANCED: Do 2–3 sets.

SET 3

PUSH-UP TO PIKE PUSH-UP

PROP: none

PURPOSE: tones the anterior and mid delts as well as the triceps and pecs; challenges the abs, hip flexors and quads; promotes body awareness

SETUP: Get into Plank, with your hands underneath your shoulders and legs together. Keep your spine as neutral as possible.

1. Inhale, bending your elbows to lower your body as close to the floor as possible.
2. Exhale, extending your elbows to return to Plank.
3. Inhale, piking your hips into an inverted V position.
4. Continue to inhale, bending your elbows to your sides and lowering your torso as one unit, aiming your head toward the floor right between your hands.
5. Exhale, extending your elbows to return to the inverted V position.
6. Inhale, returning to Plank. Do 3–5 reps.

TIPS: Spread your hands on the floor, and press into your fingers to help disperse the pressure in your wrists. Only go as low as you can while stabilizing your torso in the push-up.

MODIFICATION: Perform the exercise on your knees.

ADVANCED: Lift one leg throughout.



REVERSE PLANK TO TENDON STRETCH

PROP: none

PURPOSE: combines Leg Pull on the mat with Tendon Stretch on the Reformer; targets the back extensors, glutes and hamstrings; works the lats, triceps and abs

SETUP: Sit with your torso hinged back, spine as straight as possible, and hands on the floor, fingers facing you, and arms straight. Keep your legs together, knees bent and feet flat on the floor.

1. Inhale, lifting your hips.
2. Exhale, pulling your hips back between your arms and rounding your spine.
3. Do 5–8 reps of steps 1–2 before returning to the starting position.

TIPS: Make sure to round your spine so that you can pull your hips through without dragging your bottom on the floor.

MODIFICATION: Perform the hip lift without the Tendon Stretch.

ADVANCED: When you pull your hips through to the Tendon Stretch, lift your feet off the floor.

SIDE PLANK LAT PULL

PROP: none

PURPOSE: focuses on the side body; preps the body for the Side Bend and Twist; strengthens the obliques and outer thighs

SETUP: Get into a Side Plank, with your bottom hand on the floor directly under your shoulder and your top hand resting on your top hip. Stagger your feet on the floor, so that your top foot is forward and bottom is behind. Keep your knees, hips and spine as straight as possible.

1. Inhale, bending your knees, sending your hips toward your feet.
2. Exhale, pushing with your legs and pulling with your arm to return to the starting position. Do 5–8 reps on each side.

TIP: Use your legs as much as your arm, and you'll find that the exercise is a bit easier to perform.

MODIFICATION: Start with your knees and hips on the floor, and lift your hips and lower them to get stronger.



TUNE IN TO JOHN GAREY TV!

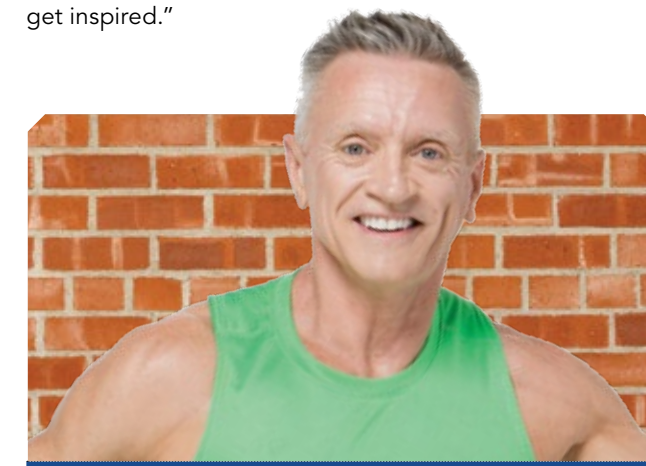
Garey's spirit and love for Pilates and fitness is contagious—it's easy to see why he's often referred to as the Jack LaLanne of our time. Here, he fills us in on his latest undertaking. Our verdict: Run, don't walk, to sign up for the free 14-day trial.

WHAT IT IS: "A creative, fun and inspiring online resource for Pilates and fitness instructors and enthusiasts."

WHY I DECIDED TO LAUNCH IT: "I believe that it's time to bring fun back to Pilates and fitness, and I wanted a way to connect with people around the world to share my brand of exercise."

SPECIAL FEATURES: "We offer a variety of content including: Move of the Day (daily exercise demos; use our awesome search function to find the perfect exercise for your next class or workout); Go Deeper (an in-depth look at exercises with everything from the biomechanics to programming tips); Connect the Dots (master classes and workshops with notes you can download and take right into your next class); and The John Garey Show (a fun and energetic talk show specifically for Pilates and fitness enthusiasts, featuring the stars of the industry)."

WHY YOU SHOULD TUNE IN: "You'll learn, laugh and get inspired."



JOHN GAREY is the creator of John Garey TV. He is also the founder of John Garey Fitness & Pilates in Long Beach, CA, with an MS in physical education from New York University. He is a master instructor trainer for Merrithew™, specializing in their premiere brand, STOTT PILATES®, as well as CORE™ Athletic Conditioning and Performance Training. Garey is certified by the Pilates Method Alliance, as a personal trainer from the American Council on Exercise and as a strength and conditioning specialist through NSCA. He has starred in hundreds of fitness and Pilates videos, and is an international Pilates and fitness presenter, teaching instructors in more than 14 countries and counting, as well as throughout the U.S. He has contributed to and appeared in many international publications. For more information, visit www.johngarey.com.