

The Pilates Rest Position

In the rest position your muscles are relaxed and your joints are in neutral alignment. You should try to incorporate the key points of the rest position into all postures throughout your day.

- Lie on your back with your knees bent up and your head supported on a small cushion or folded towel
- Relax the weight of your head into the support
- Lengthen the back of the neck by reaching the crown of the head towards the wall behind you
- Gently draw your shoulder blades down towards your waist to relax the neck and shoulders
- Soften the ribcage into the mat to connect the back of the ribcage on the mat
- Place your feet and knees hip distance apart
- Make sure that your weight rests on the six key points of the feet: the base of each big toes, each little toe and the centre of the heel on each foot
- Imagine your pelvis is a bucket of water. Tip it backwards to spill some water out the back of the bucket and you will feel your back gently flatten onto the mat. Now tip it forwards to spill some water out of the front of the bucket and you will feel your lower back arch slightly. Find your 'neutral spine' position by resting the bucket halfway between these two movements. There should be a small space between your back and the mat, and your pubic and hip bones should form a small flat triangle
- Maintaining the neutral spine position, INHALE wide into the sides and back of the ribcage and then EXHALE. At the end of your exhale, slowly draw up through the pelvic floor muscles to engage these and your deep abdominal muscles. Hold this gently contraction and keep breathing for up to ten breaths

