

ACE IT WITH PILATES

with Rhonda Scott

Tennis is a high speed, high impact game requiring mobility, flexibility and power. Pilates is a great way to boost your performance by improving spinal rotation and extension, abdominal control and muscle strength. Here are Flex's 4 favourite exercises to help you with your tennis game. Perform them regularly for a better range of motion, a more powerful swing and an improved performance on the court.

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1 – SIDE LIFTS

Muscle focus: External obliques

START POSITION Begin by resting on your side with a ball placed just above your waist, hands behind your head.

MOVEMENT SEQUENCE Inhale- Keep your chest open and elbows wide and exhale to lift your upper body off the floor by engaging your oblique muscles. Be sure to keep your upper body facing forward rather than twisting. Inhale to return to start position. Repeat 10x on both sides.



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2 – CROSS STRETCH

Muscle focus: Pecs, lower back and glutes

START POSITION: Lie on your side with knees and hips flexed and arms reaching forward at shoulder height with palms facing each other. Shoulders, hips, knees and feet are stacked.

MOVEMENT SEQUENCE Inhale- Reach top arm to the ceiling. Exhale- Begin opening the top arm to the back while rotating the upper body to face the ceiling. Keep hips stacked. Take a deep inhale and exhale to stay in position keeping the shoulders stabilized. Inhale to reach the arm back to the ceiling while rotating the torso back with control. Exhale to return to start position. Repeat 3x on both sides.

Variation: Keep top leg extended for a deeper glute stretch

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3 – THE TWIST

Muscle focus: Shoulder girdle stability and obliques

START POSITION: Sit on your left hip with your left leg flat on the floor, knee bent 90 degrees, and left palm on the floor. Bend your right knee toward the ceiling and place your right foot flat on the floor in front of your left foot; rest your right arm on your right knee.

MOVEMENT SEQUENCE: Inhale- Shift your weight onto your left arm and straighten both legs to raise your hips toward the ceiling while extending your right arm up towards the ceiling. Exhale- Twist your torso down and to the left, reaching your right arm underneath your body. Inhale to untwist and exhale to return to start position. Repeat 3x on both sides.

4 – SWING PRACTICE

Muscle focus: Thoracic rotation, shoulder girdle organization, lower extremity stabilization

START POSITION: Start in a side lunge, one end of Theraband placed under front foot, other end of band held loosely in both hands, arms towards the floor.

MOVEMENT SEQUENCE: Holding the legs still, reach the arms diagonally upwards on an inhale, stretching the Theraband, rotating the trunk from the navel up. Be sure to keep the hips square, bent knee tracking over foot (do not internally rotate). Exhale and slowly release the position. Control the "uncoiling" action in the core. Repeat 6x on each side.

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Flex's Pilates classes can be personalised to whatever sport, physical issue or lifestyle activity you like, especially when taking private lessons, or booking a trio. Check out the options on our website.

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