

C-Curve

C-curve is the set up for many Pilates mat and equipment exercises. You will find that being able to create good scoop of the abdominals is essential for creating the C-curve shape of the spine that we use a lot in Pilates.

C-curve also shows up dramatically in rolling exercises such as rolling like a ball, seal and open leg rocker. Rolling exercises can be strengthening for your abs, but they can be frustrating if you haven't mastered the C-curve

Here is a step by step description of how to get into perfect position for rolling and other deep flexion exercises.

Here's How:

1. Sit with your knees bent and your feet flat on the floor. Get a good position perched on your sit bones (those bony parts that you feel under you). Make sure your feet are far enough away from your hips that you can sit up straight. The top of your head is reaching for the sky and your shoulders relaxed. Place your hands behind your knees with your elbows at your sides.
2. Take a few deep breaths. Breathe deeply down your spine into the pelvic bowl, allowing the breath to spread across your back and lower ribs. As you release the breath, feel the "closing in" of the ribs in the front. Leave your chest open and shoulders down.
3. Take another inhale and on the exhale, pull your abs in so that they form a deep scoop. Pretend that someone has a string attached to your bellybutton and they are pulling your bellybutton up and back toward the top of the wall behind you.

As your abs deepen in toward your spine, keep your neck long, shoulders relaxed and let the base of your sternum move toward the top of your pubic bone.

Remember, this is not a collapsing move. It is about length in the front and the back, supported by the abdominals.

4. Feel the C-curve. Ideally, your shoulders are over or just in front of your hips. Your back is in a long C shape responding the scoop of the abs and the lengthening of the spine. You are gazing at your navel as your neck curves gracefully as an extension of your spine.
5. To return to sitting, inhale to press down through your sit bones letting the in-breath unroll your spine and bring you up to sitting.
6. Practice moving in and out of the C-curve shape a few times, in coordination with the breath.

Tips:

C-curve is part of spine stretch, supported roll back and roll up as well as many other mat and equipment exercises.

You will want to understand C-curve before you start any of the rolling exercises such as rolling like a ball, open leg rocker or seal.



The *Lumbar C Curve* movement is always initiated by your lower abdominals. This is the most difficult spinal movement to initiate because the lumbar spine has thick vertebrae that are meant to stabilize and hold the weight of the body. When you're standing or lying, the natural curve of your lumbar spine is in slight extension (like Neutral Spine), so when performing a Lumbar C Curve, you must pay much attention to pulling in your abdominals from the lowest part of your abdomen and attempting to reverse the natural curve of your low spine. You can accomplish this only by deep and strong low abdominal engagement.