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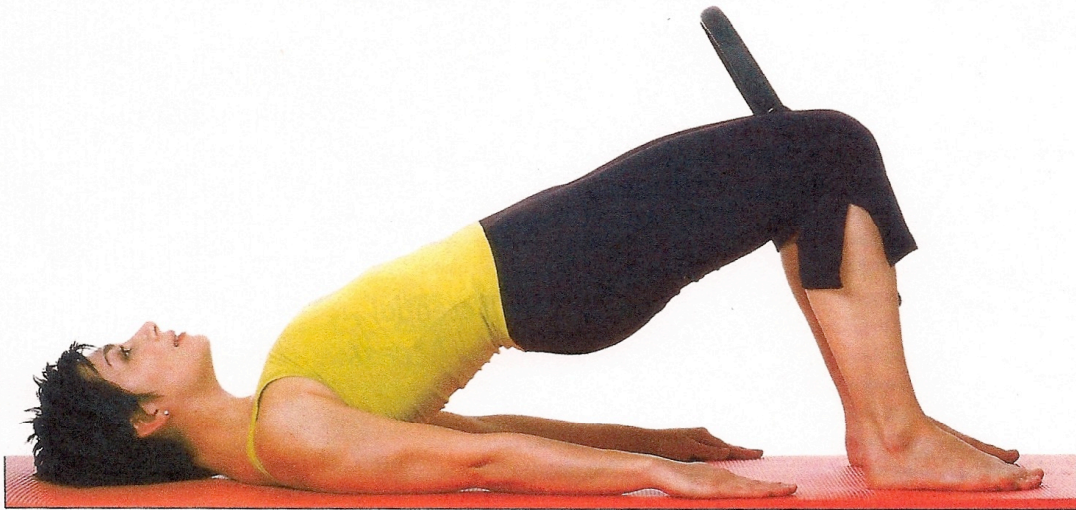
lower-body

Squeeze your legs and tush into shape with these five Magic Circle moves

W

Want to sculpt your butt and streamline those thighs? Doing the same old moves may not work after a while. Vary your routine with these eight lower-body-focused Magic Circle moves, compiled and demonstrated by Pilates instructor Kim Gibilisco. "You always want to change your basic routine every four to six weeks, or your body starts to plateau," says Gibilisco, a former dancer who recently gave up her New York Pilates studio to teach dance and Pilates at Shenandoah

University in Winchester, Virginia. The added resistance of the Magic Circle can help you gain strength faster, which means more muscle mass and more calorie burn. Modify the program below by changing the number of repetitions or the order in which you do the exercises. Stick with it and you'll be rewarded with a toned core and thighs and greater overall flexibility. *For a look at some of the Magic Circles on the market, see "Squeeze Please" on page 20. — Fiona Kirk*



PHOTOGRAPH BY EDUARDO PATINO; TANK TOP BY FREEBORN; PANTS BY MARNI; FOR BUYING INFORMATION, SEE PAGE 84.

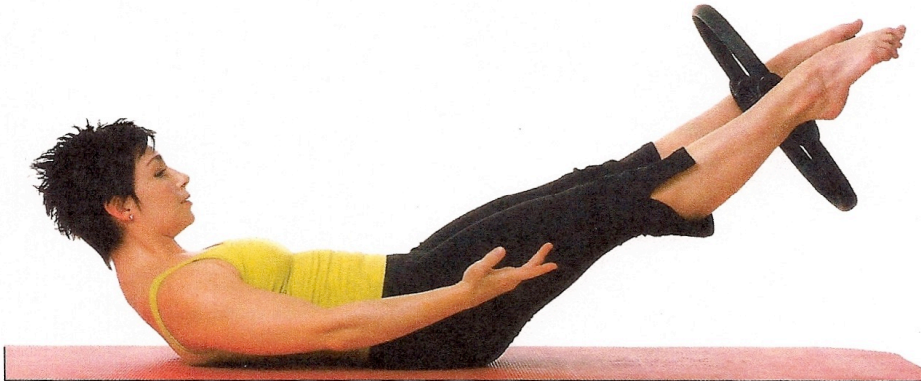
1 Lie down with your knees bent and the feet pressed into the ground, heels in line with the sitz bones. Place the Magic Circle between your knees. Press your palms down, hands near the hips. Inhale to prepare.

Exhale and press your hips up into a bridge, rolling up through your spine. Hold this position as you inhale. On exhalation, squeeze the Magic Circle three times. Hold the last squeeze and inhale. Exhale as you thrust the hips up to the ceiling three times. Hold the last thrust and inhale. Exhale and roll the spine down to the start position. Perform 4 sets.

BRIDGING WITH SQUEEZE AND THRUST VARIATION

makeover

WORKOUT BY
KIM GIBILISCO



THE HUNDRED WITH LEG ARCS AND SQUEEZES

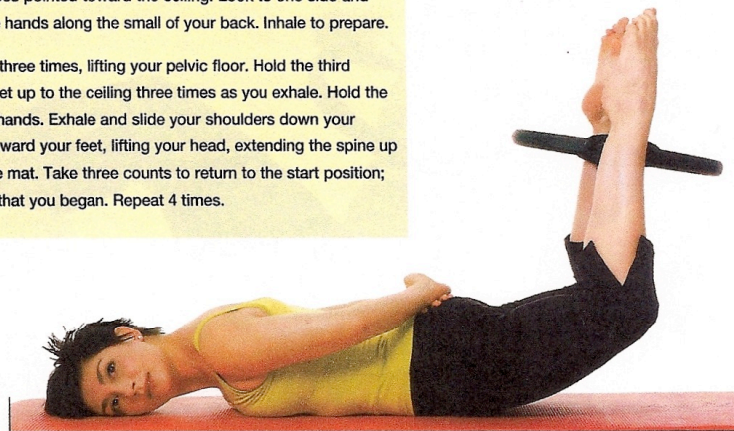
2 Begin lying with the legs in a tabletop position (knees in the air over the hips, calves parallel to the ground) with the Magic Circle between your ankles. Inhale to prepare.

Exhale and lift your head and shoulders off the mat, so that the tips of the shoulder blades are grazing the mat. Reach your arms a few inches off the mat and past your hips; straighten your knees and lower your legs as much as possible without straining the lower back. Inhale through the nose as you quickly pulse the arms up and down 5 times with palms up. Exhale and slowly squeeze the Magic Circle in while doing 5 arm pulses with palms down. Continue pulsing and alternating hand positions and squeezes for 10 slow, full breaths, or 100 counts.

3 Lie on your side and place the Magic Circle between your ankles. Roll to your abdomen and bend knees to 90 degrees, toes pointed toward the ceiling. Look to one side and rest your cheek on the mat. Drape the hands along the small of your back. Inhale to prepare.

Exhale and squeeze the Magic Circle three times, lifting your pelvic floor. Hold the third squeeze and inhale, then thrust the feet up to the ceiling three times as you exhale. Hold the third thrust and inhale, clasping your hands. Exhale and slide your shoulders down your back, reaching your clasped hands toward your feet, lifting your head, extending the spine up and keeping the thighs lifted off of the mat. Take three counts to return to the start position; end looking in the opposite direction that you began. Repeat 4 times.

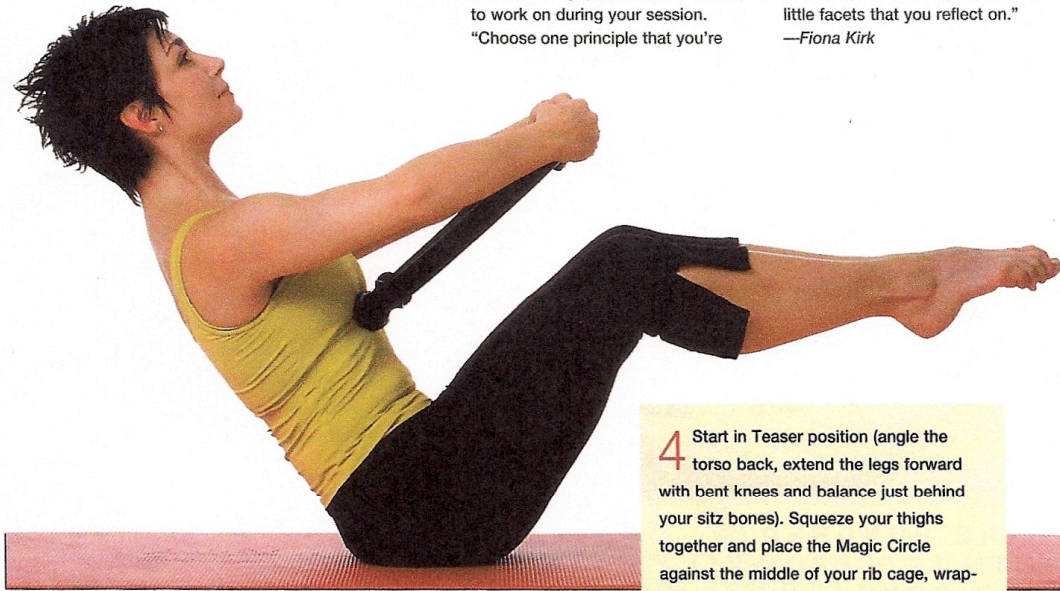
DOUBLE KICK IN 12 COUNTS



[Trainer Tip]

Pick one of Joseph Pilates' basic principles (concentration, control, center, fluidity, precision and breath) to work on during your session. "Choose one principle that you're

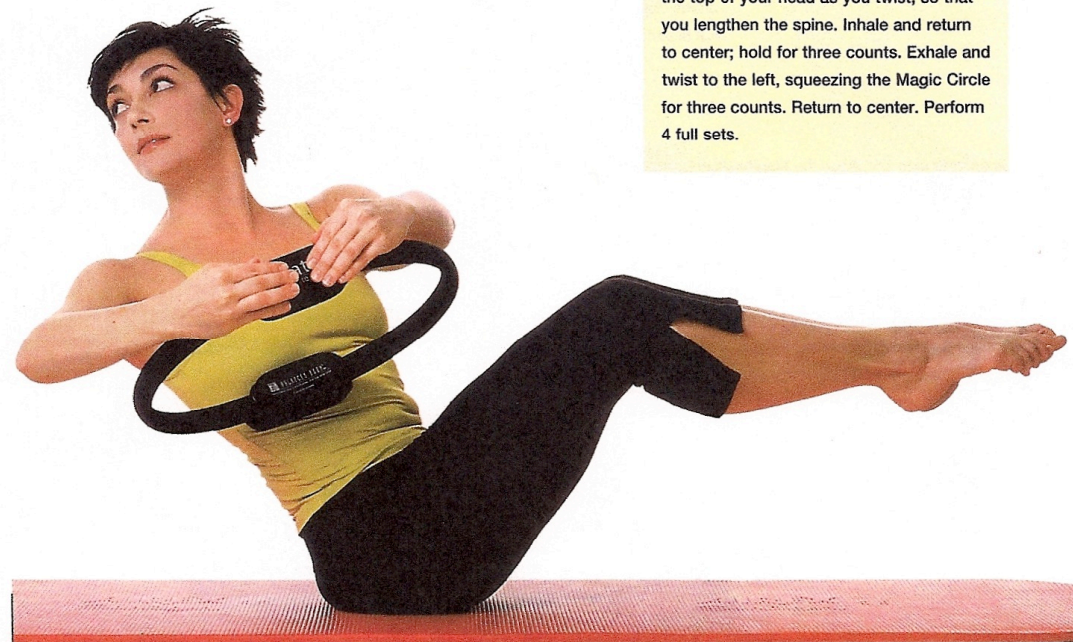
really going to focus on and target that," she says. "But always keep all six principles revolving around, like little facets that you reflect on."
—Fiona Kirk



**TWISTED TEASER
IN 6 COUNTS**

4 Start in Teaser position (angle the torso back, extend the legs forward with bent knees and balance just behind your sitz bones). Squeeze your thighs together and place the Magic Circle against the middle of your rib cage, wrapping your arms around the outside.

Inhale and hold the Teaser position for three counts. Exhale and twist to the right, squeezing the Magic Circle for three counts. Spiral your energy upward through the top of your head as you twist, so that you lengthen the spine. Inhale and return to center; hold for three counts. Exhale and twist to the left, squeezing the Magic Circle for three counts. Return to center. Perform 4 full sets.

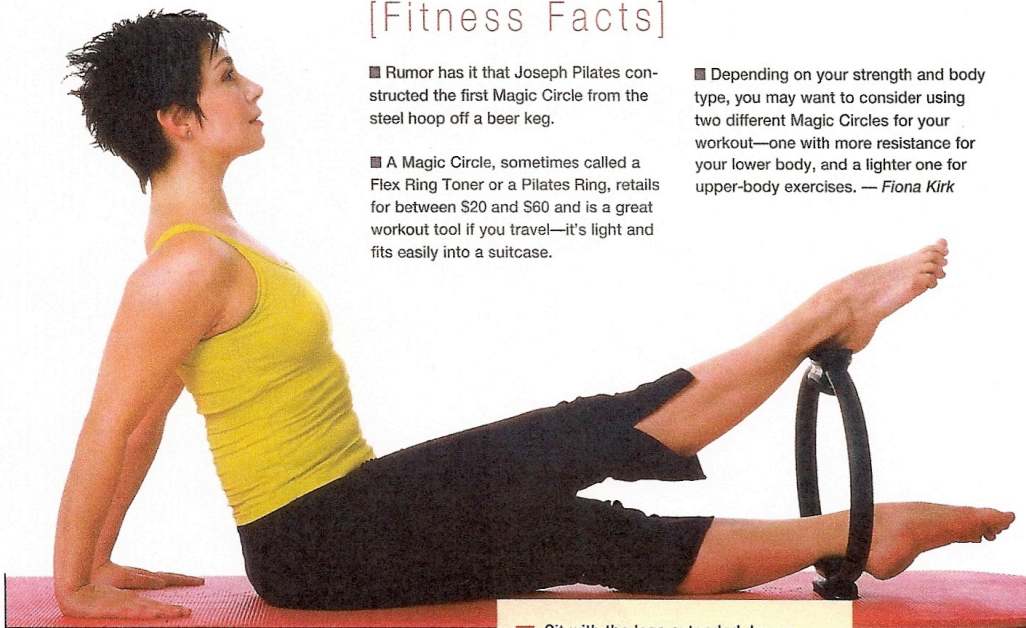


[Fitness Facts]

■ Rumor has it that Joseph Pilates constructed the first Magic Circle from the steel hoop off a beer keg.

■ A Magic Circle, sometimes called a Flex Ring Toner or a Pilates Ring, retails for between \$20 and \$60 and is a great workout tool if you travel—it's light and fits easily into a suitcase.

■ Depending on your strength and body type, you may want to consider using two different Magic Circles for your workout—one with more resistance for your lower body, and a lighter one for upper-body exercises. — *Fiona Kirk*



SEATED LEG PRESS DOWN

5 Sit with the legs extended, knees slightly bent. Place one leg inside the Magic Circle and the other leg on top of it. Angle the body back and gently lean on your hands, fingers pointed toward the hips. Inhale to prepare.

Exhale and squeeze the circle down for three counts as you lift the pelvic floor. Inhale, and allow the circle to expand for three counts. Perform with legs in parallel, turned-in and turned-out positions. Do 5 sets in each position, then switch sides. **PS**

