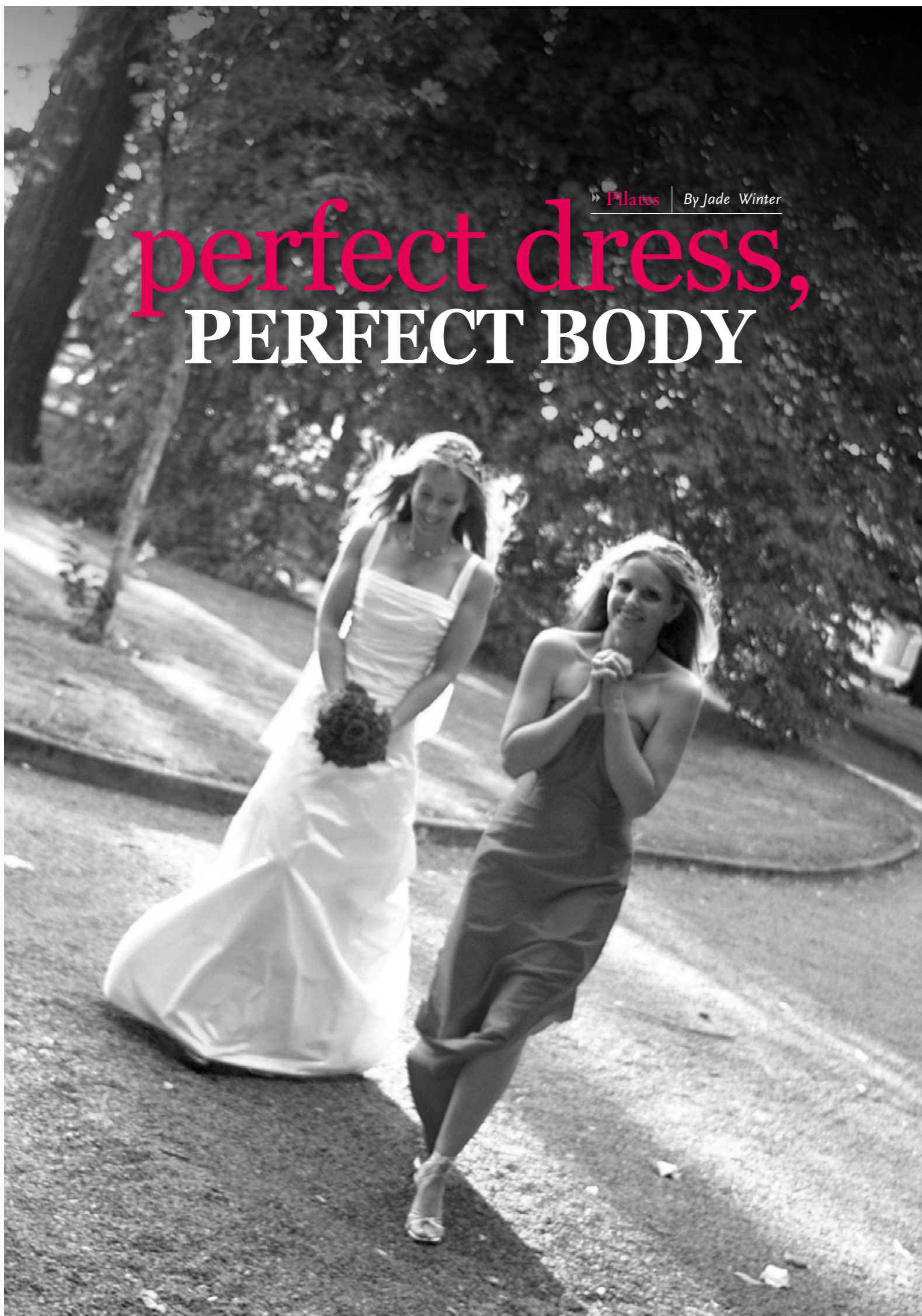


» Pilates | By Jade Winter

# perfect dress, PERFECT BODY



Renowned fitness expert, former Olympian and Studio Pilates International® co-founder Jade Winter tells how Pilates can get your body into peak physical condition, so that you look stunning for your wedding day

{ Organising any wedding involves much planning, decision-making, stress and pressure. Another thing they all have in common is that all brides want to look their very best in their special dress. With your day forever immortalised in photographs, forever etched in the minds of your husband and guests, you don't want those lasting memories to include flabby arms and fat rolls hanging over your frock. This means that careful planning and

a little discipline is needed to make sure your body is in the best shape it's ever been in for your big day. And it's important not to leave starting a focussed exercise routine to the last minute. Physical changes can take some time to occur and you must be patient. Allow at least three to four months – that's only 12-16 weeks – of regular training to hone your body into the form you want. What's more, like an athlete training for a big

event, you'll need to allow for setbacks such as increased and unscheduled work commitments, possible injury or muscle strain, and other underestimated time constraints to do with the upcoming wedding. There are four main areas you will need to focus on in order to look absolutely amazing walking down the aisle. Posture, resistance training, cardio and eating well all need to be addressed.

## Posture

No one wants to look like the Hunchback of Notre Dame in their photos. This is one component of creating the perfect body that is

hardly ever addressed, yet is so easy to fix. Better posture is easy to achieve, but these exercises and stretches need to be worked on for many weeks

beforehand to ensure you look natural, so you can relax and enjoy your day without having to think about standing up straight.

## Resistance training

You don't want to look muscled up for the big day, and that's why Pilates – not the gym – is the best possible approach. Pilates creates long, lean, supple muscles, giving a toned, but not bulky appearance. It is also much less pressure

on the body, which means far less chance of a strain or injury that will set back your careful planning, create stress, and leave you resorting to 'crash dieting' before the wedding.

Seek out a studio for work-outs using

Pilates equipment or purchase a DVD to use at home. Pilates is considered resistance or strength training, so just like any other well-rounded exercise programme, you will also need to focus on cardio and eating right to ensure you shed any extra unwanted kilos.

## Cardio

A regular cardio programme will complement your Pilates and your healthy eating plan. The most effective way to strip away the fat is to do interval training. This means that instead of doing a long, slow, easy jog, you're better to do short bursts

of high-intensity exercise, followed by low-intensity activity, and repeat that numerous times. For example, instead of doing 5km on the treadmill, go to your local park and do 10 x 100m sprints at maximum pace, with each one followed by a one-minute slow jog.

When undertaking interval training, make sure you are thoroughly warmed up, as you don't want any strains. If you don't like running, then you can apply interval training to any form of cardio activity, such as swimming, cycling, rowing...

### Healthy eating

As the big day approaches, you tend to get really busy. And the first thing that is often sacrificed, in order to fit everything in, is eating well. However, you will need your energy, so stay focussed on eating right. Keep your food simple and healthy, and try to limit refined and processed foods. Instead, go for lean meats

and vegetables whenever possible – these should make up 70 percent of your diet. If you follow this simple rule, your guests will gasp at how amazing you look.

### Stay focussed

It's important to stay focussed on your body, on eating well and training over the sometimes turbulent and

stressful time of planning a wedding. You don't want to look back on your wedding photos and wish you'd done more. There are many things that will be out of your control on the day – those black clouds or whether your guests will have a good time. You can't change any of that so just focus on the elements you can control, such as how you're going to look.

## Jade's top 5 quick training tips for brides

**1 Try to do resistance training most days.** This is the best way to make sure you look totally toned on your big day. Even if it's just a quick 20-minute work-out, it's how often you do it that's the most important thing.

**2 Rest when you need it.** It's important not to overdo it. With the increased pressure and stress, you don't want to feel worn out on your wedding day or run out of energy before it. If you are feeling tired, make sure you get some good sleep.

**3 If you have a blow out, make up for it the next day.** If you went out last night with

the girls and had a few drinks, make sure you exercise the next day. Alcohol is your enemy when trying to lose weight, as it changes how your body metabolises your food and is packed with unwanted calories.

**4 Do the type of exercise you love.** Forget whether the rowing machine is better than the treadmill, or whether running is better than swimming for burning calories – it really doesn't matter. Just do something you enjoy. Otherwise, you won't see it through – that's certain. The most important thing is that you are doing some kind of exercise and doing it almost every day.



### Criss-cross

Ideal for flattening the abs and drawing in the waist



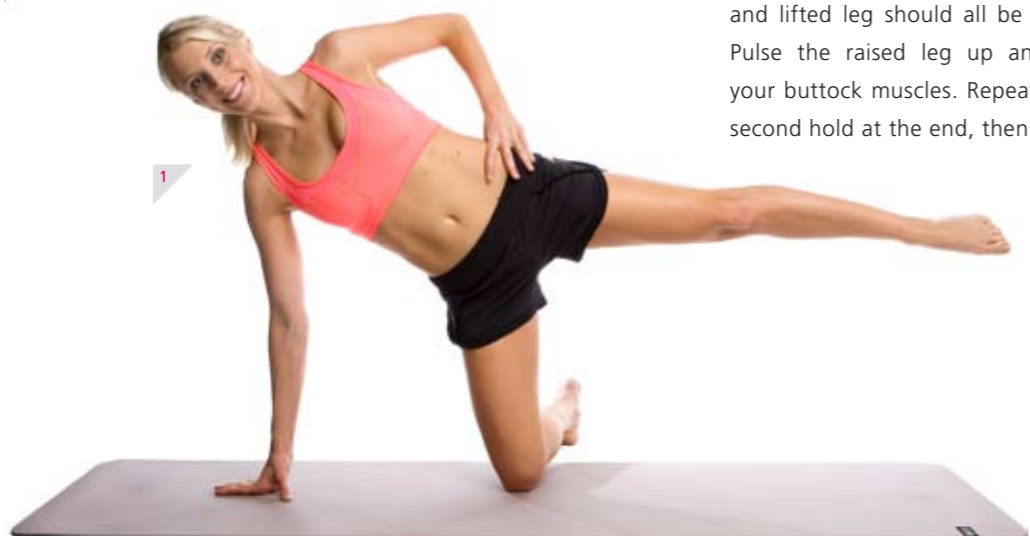
Lie on your back, with your legs bent up and held hip distance apart. You need your hands behind your head, with your elbows wide. Curl your ribs to your hips, lifting your head and shoulders. Rotate your upper body, drawing one side of your ribcage towards the opposite hipbone and extending the other leg out straight. Return to the centre, maintaining the curl, and swap to the other side. Repeat 50 times – 25 each side.

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**Kneeling side-kick**

This tones the buttocks and outer thighs

Kneel on one knee, with the other leg held out straight and lifted to hip height. Place one hand on your hip and the other on the mat, about 60cm from your knee. Your head, top hand, hip and lifted leg should all be in one straight line. Pulse the raised leg up and down, squeezing your buttock muscles. Repeat 50 times with a 10 second hold at the end, then change sides.



**Flight**

This improves your posture, works your shoulders and mid-back, and helps tone the back of your arms



Lie on your front, with your forehead on the floor. You need your shoulder blades squeezed down and back, and your arms stretched behind you, just off the floor. Rotate your arms, turning your palms up, then down. Keep your hands off the floor, reaching your fingers towards your feet.

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### Tricep circles

In most wedding dresses, your arms and shoulders are the only part of your body that are really exposed. Make sure they are looking fabulous with this great exercise



Kneel on your hands and knees, with your hands directly underneath your shoulders and your knees under your hips. Bend your elbows, lowering your body towards the ground. Move your body-weight forwards, keeping your elbows by your sides. Press up and backwards to your starting position.

For more ideas, visit the Studio Pilates International® website at: [www.studiopilates.com](http://www.studiopilates.com).