



It may seem impossible to achieve toned abs, arms and thighs, but Tanya Winter of Studio Pilates International presents a recipe for success

{ We all want a toned body, but what does it take to get there? Read on to pick up a few simple tips and techniques to help you on your way.

A toned body would generally be considered to show a low level of fat and some muscle definition. So, for most people, this means reducing body fat and building lean muscle mass. There is, of course, the exception to the rule; that individual who needs to increase muscle mass only. If this is you, your job just got a little easier.

The first step is to do what most of us actually do on a regular occasion – in more ways than one – and pinch yourself! Not so hard that you leave a bruise, but just enough to get a fold of skin between the forefingers and thumb. I like to call this a ‘personal pinch test’. This fold of skin is essentially fat and represents your body’s spare or excess energy.

In gyms or with a personal trainer, this skin fold test is generally carried out using specially designed callipers. Most of the time, though, there is no need to go through this sometimes painful and often embarrassing procedure. You can feel yourself whether the distance between your fingers is growing, reducing, staying the same, or is just plain old personally unacceptable.

If you do this ‘personal pinch test’ on different parts of your body, you will find that it certain locations offer their

own particular results. This is normal, and unfortunately you can’t target one particular area, whilst keeping the other parts the same. This is called spot reducing and can’t be achieved, except under the surgeon’s knife. The problem area for males is generally the stomach, while for ladies it’s the hips and buttocks.

As a general guide when reducing your body fat, your own problem area is

detrimental to your long-term wellbeing. The trick is to get your personal pinch test to a level that is acceptable to you and shows the underlying muscle that you will develop, in order to give you a toned appearance.

And there is no secret to achieving a toned body. Combine a healthy, balanced eating plan with plenty of protein for muscle development; do regular cardio or interval training to burn excess fat stores;

It is important to have some stored body fat. Dropping your weight too low can be detrimental to your long-term wellbeing



unfortunately usually the last place you will manage to lose it from and the first place you will tend to put it on again. Be aware of this, and don’t get frustrated or give up too soon.

Also bear in mind that it is important to have some stored energy or body fat. If you drop your weight too low, you are at risk of health ramifications that can be vastly

and combine this all with daily strength or resistance training. That’s right – daily! Your exercise routine should be varied, to keep you motivated, and will require a bit of discipline. If you want a toned body you will have to work for it!

Here are some Pilates exercises that can be done each day to kick-start you on your way to toned abs, arms and thighs.

Tanya Winter is a physiotherapist and is co-founder of Studio Pilates International. For the better part of a decade, she has refining traditional Pilates exercises to deliver a safe, achievable and effective form of the discipline. This has included has co-running the most popular Pilates studio in Brisbane for more than eight years, taking in excess of 50,000 participants through body-changing workouts. The education arm of Studio Pilates International also trains and certifies Pilates instructors from around the world.



Kneeling sidekick

THIS WORKS THE BUTTOCKS, THIGHS AND ABDOMINALS.
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, so that your hand, head, hip and lifted leg are all in one straight line. Pulse the leg up and down, squeezing the buttock muscles.

1



2



Hinge

THIS WORKS THE FRONT OF YOUR THIGHS.

Kneel on the mat with your arms stretched out in front of you at shoulder height. Lean your whole body backwards in

one line, like a falling tree, hinging from the knees. Hold for a second and then return to vertical.

1



2



Flight

THIS WORKS YOUR SHOULDERS AND 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

1



2



Tricep circles

THIS WORKS YOUR CHEST AND BACK OF YOUR ARMS.

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 forward, keeping your elbows by your sides. Press up and backwards to your starting position.

1



2



3



4



Criss cross

THIS IS GREAT FOR DEFINING YOUR WAIST.

Lie on your back, with your legs bent up and held at hip distance apart, and your hands behind your head. Curl your ribs to your hips by lifting your head and shoulders. Then draw

one ribcage towards the opposite hipbone, rotating the body to one side as you curl up and extending the opposite leg out straight. Return back to the start position and swap to the other side.



Hundreds

THIS EXERCISE IS GREAT FOR FLATTENING YOUR STOMACH.

Lie on your back, with your knees bent and your arms reaching straight up towards the ceiling. Curl your ribs to your hips by lifting your head and shoulders. Bring your hands down

by your hips and simultaneously extend your legs straight up towards the ceiling. Draw your tummy button in towards your spine to flatten your abdominals. Hold this position for 10 breaths – breathe in for the count of five and breathe out for the count of five to get to 100 counts.

