

May Exercise of the Month Contralateral Arm/Leg Lifts (Pilates Swimmers)

Purpose: To stretch, strengthen and tone the muscles in the back, glutes/hips, and shoulders

Primary Muscles: Trapezius, Erector Spinae, Deltoids, Glutes

Secondary Muscles: Quadriceps, Hamstrings

Equipment Needed: None (exercise mat optional)

Starting position:

- ❖ Begin in a prone position, lying on the floor
- ❖ Legs are stretched behind you with the toes pointing towards the wall
- ❖ Arms are stretched overhead, palms down
- ❖ Keep the head aligned with the spine

Prep:

- ❖ Exhale, contract the abdominals to stabilize the spine
- ❖ Slowly lift the arms a few inches off the floor, try not to rotate the arms or shoulders
- ❖ While lifting the arms, slowly stretch the legs out and up off the ground keeping the hips in contact with the floor
- ❖ Head and torso should stay aligned to help avoid over-arching the back

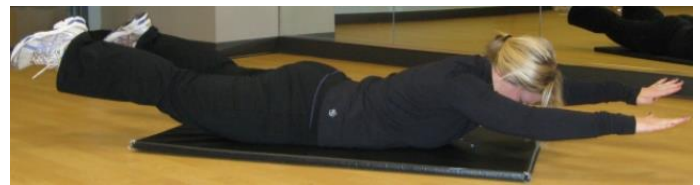
Movement:

- ❖ Lower one arm to the floor along with the opposite leg for one count and then bring back to prep position, switch arm and leg (ex. right arm-left leg; left arm-right leg)
- ❖ This alternating of opposite arm-to-leg lifts creates a 'swim' like motion
- ❖ Head and torso should not move during the movement, avoid any arching in the back
- ❖ Inhale and exhale while alternating arm-leg lift for one count each; 1-1, 2-2, 3-3...
- ❖ Aim to complete a minimum 2-3 sets of 12-15 repetitions

Start position:



Prep:



Movement:

