



STRETCH-EZE PILATES MAT CERTIFICATION MANUAL



SENSE THE EASE

Stretch-eze[®]
BY *zifa* BREATHERS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page Numbers

- 2. Introduction
- 6. Wraps
- 15. Stretch-eze Anatomy
- 28. Warm-Ups
- 39. Fascia & Biotensegrity
- 44. Level 1
- 55. Myofascial Slings
- 63. Level 2
- 72. Moving in Spirals
- 77. Level 3
- 86. The Nervous System
- 90. Congratulations!

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INTRODUCTION

The Stretch-eze® Pilates Mat Certification is a program grounded in the original teachings of Joseph Pilates, enriched with modern movement science, creative exploration, and sensory integration.

Meet the Stretch-eze®

The Stretch-eze is a closed loop resistance band made of soft, stretchy fabric, originally developed by movement therapist Kimberly Dye. Widely used in somatic movement and rehabilitation, it has been embraced by Pilates and Yoga instructors around the world for its invitation to feel proper alignment from the inside out and its ability to provide deep somatic feedback when you meet the resistance of the fabric.

Meet the Creator

Over 30 years ago, Kimberly Dye designed the Stretch-eze as a teaching aid for her Pilates mat and stretch classes. As class sizes grew, it became increasingly difficult to provide every participant with the tactile cues essential for proper technique—a gentle press on the foot, a sweeping touch to relax the shoulders, or a nudge to lengthen the neck.

Kimberly sought a way to deliver that same support to everyone in the room, regardless of level or experience. At the time, she had already created several stretchy fabric tools used for calming children and supporting group therapy. She knew firsthand how powerful these fabrics could be—both physically and emotionally. This experience sparked an idea: what if there were a way to design something that could give every participant essential tactile feedback, support, and sensory input?

Kimberly began experimenting by looping fabric around shoulders and feet to facilitate smoother roll-downs. As students pressed into the resistance, they were able to adjust their own tension, engage their deep core, and release strain in the shoulders and hip flexors. The results were immediate—students moved better, felt better, and progressed more quickly...Cont...

Meet the Creator cont...

Finding the right fabric, however, was no easy task. It took eight years of testing—working with materials that were too stiff, too stretchy, lost their shape, or didn't breathe. The process felt much like Goldilocks searching for the option that was “just right.”

Eventually, Kimberly discovered a fabric with the perfect balance of compression and stretch—one that expanded with the body and then gently guided it back.

This became the foundation of the Stretch-eze. While the tool may look simple, the sensory experience it creates is profound. It functions as more than a prop—it becomes a partner in movement, a way to touch, teach, and transform, often without the need for words.

Today, the Stretch-eze continues to enhance movement and teaching practices around the world. This certification course offers dynamic practice and anatomy-informed learning to support instructors and practitioners on their journey.

Introducing Pilates EnergetiX

Pilates EnergetiX is our trusted exclusive Pilates education partner, bringing a fresh approach to movement by blending science and sensory tools to create innovative workouts that build strength, connection and ease. Founder, Nigel Sampson has trained over 45,000 clients over the course of a 30 year career in Pilates and fitness.



Left - Kimberly: Creator of Stretch-eze®,
Middle - Zila: Owner of Stretch-eze,
Right - Nigel: Founder of Pilates EnergetiX



Choosing the Correct Size of Stretch-eze®

CLIENT HEIGHT	RECOMMENDED SIZE
3' 6" - 4' 7"	X-Small
4' 8" - 5' 3"	Small
5' 4" - 5' 11"	Medium
6' 0" - 6' 4"	Large

Additional Guidelines:

If a client's height is on the border between two sizes, choose the larger size, as the band can be shortened with a boot wrap or diagonal X.

Body type and range of motion can also influence size choice; this chart is a guideline, not a strict rule.



WRAPS

At the heart of the brilliance of the Stretch-eze® is its versatility—there are countless wrap configurations that offer support and provide valuable sensory feedback to the body. In this section, we'll walk through the fifteen Stretch-eze wraps used throughout this course so you can feel into the support and connection they provide.

FULL-BODY INTEGRATION WRAPS

1. Shoulder Foot Wrap

Begin standing. Place the Stretch-eze over your head and settle it flat across your shoulder blades like a cape, ensuring it's not twisted or bunched near the neck.

Pull it down, essentially bringing the Stretch-eze closer to your feet, and step inside, making sure the fabric is flat against the soles of your feet. Notice how the Stretch-eze gently guides the shoulders down the back. Now press the elbows into the fabric and sense into the resistance and feedback that the fabric provides. Also, notice the sense of grounding and uplifting at the same time.



2. Head Foot Wrap

Begin in a seated version of the Shoulder Foot Wrap. so again drape the shoulders first, then the feet.

From there, press your elbows into the fabric and slide your hands up to guide the Stretch-eze behind the head, cradling it gently. Lean back, bring your hands to your sides and just relax here. This configuration offers deep integration from the feet to the skull. Try lifting the head and notice the neck support that this wrap allows.



RIB CAGE ACTIVATION WRAPS

3. Rib Wrap

In a standing position, bring the Stretch-eze over the head again but this time down to just under the armpits so the width of the band hugs your rib cage. Try extending the arms and feel the back support this provides.

Exercises will be started in this position and sometimes you'll cross the band in front of you to hug into the midline. This configuration provides feedback for breath expansion in the front and back of the body.



4. Rib Foot Wrap

Keep the Stretch-eze around the ribs and come to a seated position with legs bent, bring the other end of the band flat against the soles of your feet. Begin straightening the legs.

This wrap encourages an upright position with sitbones grounded, and gives you the sense of lengthening through the entire back body. The arms are also free here to extend and rotate.



RIB CAGE ACTIVATION WRAPS CONT...

5. Rib-X Foot Wrap

From this Rib Foot Wrap, remove your feet, cross the fabric in front of the body to shorten the band and create diagonal tension. Reinsert your feet about hip distance.

To increase the resistance you could cross it in front of you one more time. Now the Stretch-eze is mimicking the oblique slings and that feeling of the midline being hugged is quite comforting.



6. Infinity Wrap

Lay the Stretch-eze in front of you in an infinity shape (a sideways figure 8), and then fold the two halves together to make a smaller loop. Place this smaller circle over your head and down to your waist. Pull one of the loops forward to create abdominal compression, or you could pull each loop forward.



The infinity wrap will be used as a starting position for many of the exercises in this course – It's a wrap that's excellent for dynamic work and expansive breathing.

LEG-FOCUSED WRAPS

7. Inside Reins

Hold the Stretch-eze loop in front of you. With knees bent, just drape the Stretch-eze over the knees and wrap the fabric closest to the feet flat around the soles of the feet. Now as you widen the legs, grab all the fabric between the legs, allowing the feet to slide into the loops.

This wrap draws awareness to the inner line of the legs and deepens foot-to-center connection. Try pulling on the reins and flexing the feet - a beautiful calf stretch right there...



8. Outside Reins

Double-fold the Stretch-eze and place it beneath the soles of your feet. Now you can use the loops on either side of the body as handles.

This straightforward configuration gives a lot of resistance for the feet because the fabric is doubled. It also encourages lengthening out of the sit bones and supports a deep hamstring stretch.



LEG-FOCUSED WRAPS CONT...

9. Double Back Knee Wrap

Now keep the Stretch-eze double folded and bring it behind you. With knees bent into the chest, pull the Stretch-eze loops around each knee.

This wrap supports pelvic stabilization, and leg containment.



10. Double Back X-Knee Wrap

From the Double Back Knee Wrap, remove the knees from the loops, cross the Stretch-eze in front of your body, and place the loops over the opposite knees.

This tighter, cross-patterned wrap activates deep slings and promotes even greater stability for the legs. Keep in mind that this wrap may not suit all body types or flexibility levels.

CERVICAL SUPPORT

11. Head Hammocks



The Traditional Head Hammock is actually better with a smaller Stretch-eze so the hands can be closer together. Double-fold the Stretch-eze with the hands flat in the loops to cradle the back of the head, and gently press back with the head to offload neck strain and bring awareness to head-spine alignment.

If you only have a larger size, that is fine – your arms will extend further to provide that head support.

Contemporary: Loop the Stretch-eze around the body and place the fabric in front of you behind the head...and again your hands are flat against the fabric. Now you can begin extending the arms so you feel the support of the head hammock and also feel the Stretch-eze supporting you across the shoulder blades.



DIAGONAL WRAPS

12. Sari Wrap

The simplest of the diagonal wraps is the sari wrap. Place the Stretch-eze over your head and drape it over one shoulder, placing the opposite foot into the loop at the other end.

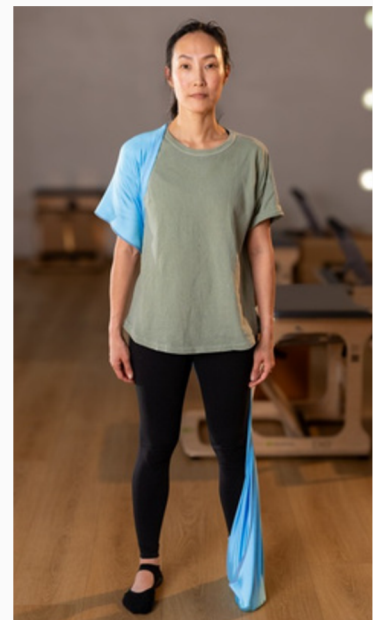
This wrap establishes a strong cross-body connection and is fantastic for twisting and coordination across the midline.



13. Twist Wrap

Let's do this wrap standing. Place one foot in the Stretch-eze and hold it with the hand of the same side. Bring the Stretch-eze behind your back, pass it to the other hand and onto the opposite shoulder as if putting on a backpack. Spread out the fabric to encase that shoulder.

Try twisting towards the free shoulder to feel the full-body contralateral engagement.



14. Spiral Wrap

Make your way into the mermaid position with the right leg forward. Wrap the Stretch-eze around the shin of the back leg and spread the fabric out. Bring it across the front of the torso and around the back, hooking the other end over the same-side shoulder. Spread out the fabric in front of the torso.

Try twisting towards the free side - This wrap guides a spiralling sensation deep in the body and supports expressive rotation.

SPECIALTY WRAP

15. Boot Wrap

The boot can be created with any of the wraps you've learned, for greater resistance, more feedback across the foot and ankle, and to keep the Stretch-eze snug and in place while you move.

Wrap the fabric securely from the outside to the inner foot. You can either wrap the entire foot or leave the toes exposed and have the fabric bunched at the transverse arch.



Either way, begin articulating the ankle—pointing, flexing, and rotating—to feel the Stretch-eze's support and resistance.





STRETCH-EZE® ANATOMY: EMBODIED ALIGNMENT

STRETCH-EZE ANATOMY- EMBODIED ALIGNMENT

Assumption: Participants already have a basic understanding of anatomy. This course builds on that foundation to explore deeper, dynamic concepts using the Stretch-eze. This is embodied anatomy—focusing on how the body moves and how the Stretch-eze interacts with muscles, fascia, balance, and forces that support movement.

Introduction

- Learn how the Stretch-eze connects to the body in motion.
- Move beyond bones to understand functional alignment and movement patterns.

Key Takeaways:

- Embodied anatomy emphasizes functional movement, not just structure.
- The Stretch-eze helps integrate awareness from bones, muscles, and fascia.

Practice Tips:

- Approach each exercise mindfully, noticing subtle changes in posture and movement.
- Reflect on how your body responds to different alignments.

1. Uplift: Aligning the Body Naturally

Overview: Uplift is a natural and intelligent way of aligning the body from pelvis to head.

A. Pelvis: The Foundation Key Structures:

Ilium – large, flared upper portion

Ischium – the sitting bones

Pubis – joins at the front

Sacrum – articulates with L5 vertebra

Sacroiliac joints – transfer weight from spine to legs

Coccyx – base articulation with sacrum

Alignment Principle:

- Posterior pelvis carries most axial weight when upright or sitting.
- Slight backward tilt shifts weight to sacrum and sit bones, supporting stability.

Practical Exercise:

- Lift the pubic bone gently upward while sensing the sacrum lengthening downward.
- This creates an uplift from the front of the pelvis.

Key Takeaways:

- Proper pelvic alignment supports spinal decompression and natural organization.
- Forward pelvic tilt (excessive lordosis) can cause spinal compression.

Practice Tips:

- Check alignment in seated and standing positions.
- Use breath to feel the sacrum and sit bones grounding

B. Head: The Top of the Alignment System Key Structures:

Occiput – base of skull, rests on C1

Frontal lobe – front brain behind forehead

Infraorbital margin – lower edge of eye sockets

Mandible – influences neck tension and rib positioning

Alignment Principle:

- Place the head in an uplifted position.
- Allow the base of the skull to roll slightly in the atlanto-occipital joint.
- Heavier frontal lobe lowers naturally while occiput floats upward.

Result:

- Spine lengthens and tension releases.
- Collapsed head posture compresses the spine.

Key Takeaways:

- The head and pelvis work together to maintain spinal balance.
- Proper head alignment prevents tension and misalignment throughout the spine.

Practice Tips:

- Notice how slight adjustments in head position affect your spine.
- Practice gentle lifts of the skull while keeping the jaw relaxed.



C. Pelvis-Head Relationship

- The pelvis and head have a mirrored, interdependent relationship.
- Proper alignment at both ends allows the spine to organize naturally.
- Stretch-eze wraps enhance sensation along this axis, encouraging true uplift from sacrum to skull.

Key Takeaways:

- Alignment from pelvis to head is essential for natural spinal organization.
- The Stretch-eze helps reinforce awareness and uplift throughout the body.

Practice Tips:

- Begin each session with mindful attention to pelvis and head alignment.
 - Use Stretch-eze wraps to feel the connection from sacrum to skull.
- 

2. Dynamic Balance: Harmonizing Structural and Functional Opposites

Overview:

Dynamic balance is the rhythmic, balanced interchange between structural and functional opposites within the body. These opposites do not work against each other—they form a dynamic partnership that supports alignment, movement, and stability.

Core Principle:

- Structure provides stability.
- Function invites orientation and fluid movement.

Key Structural and Functional Opposites

Structural (Stability)	Functional (Fluidity)	Relationship
Sacrum	Occiput	Grounding vs. guiding the spine
Pelvic Floor	Diaphragm	Supports organs vs. regulates breath and internal pressure
Scapulae	Anterior Ribcage	Base for arms/shoulders vs. facilitates movement, breath, and protection
Heels	Eyes	Stabilize vs. orient and direct movement

Key Takeaways:

- Dynamic balance is the interaction of opposites, not a conflict.
- Opposition creates equilibrium throughout the body.
- Recognizing these relationships enhances alignment, coordination, and movement efficiency.

Practice Exercise:

- Basic Shoulder-Foot Wrap
- Step into the Stretch-eze. Wrap it around the shoulders and feet. Sense the shoulders yielding into gravity as the body melts downward.
- Simultaneously, notice the inner lift through the feet. Extend this lift through the eyes, allowing the body to intuitively align.

Key Takeaways:

- Dynamic balance becomes intuitive when you sense both grounding and lift.
- Oppositional relationships can be felt throughout the body—supporting, organizing, and balancing motion.

Practice Tips:

- Begin each session by noticing structural anchors (sacrum, pelvic floor, scapulae, heels).
- Explore the functional opposites (occiput, diaphragm, ribcage, eyes) and feel how they guide movement.
- Use the Stretch-eze to reinforce the connection between these opposites.
- Move slowly and mindfully, noticing how lift and grounding co-exist.

3. Five Domes of the Body: Supporting Uplift and Alignment

Overview:

There are five key domes in the body that assist in creating uplift. These domes are suspended within a continuous fascial network, and using the Stretch-eze, they can be awakened with awareness, supporting alignment, breath, and dynamic movement.

1. Foot Dome

Structure:

- Formed by three points: 1st metatarsal head, 5th metatarsal head, and calcaneus (heel).
- Supports the medial and lateral arches, and the transverse arch across the midfoot, shaping the dome of the foot.

Function:

- Rebounds upward to initiate lift through the entire body.
- Engaging the foot dome with the Stretch-eze activates the body from the ground up.

Key Takeaways:

- Foot domes provide foundational stability and energy transfer.
- Activation begins movement and lift throughout the body.

Practice Tips:

- Stand or step into the Stretch-eze, sensing grounding through the three points of the foot dome.
- Explore gentle recoil and lift through the arches with every step or movement.

2. Pelvic Diaphragm / Floor

Structure:

Formed by pelvic floor muscles and fascia, spanning pubic bone to coccyx and side to side between sit bones.

Function:

- Acts as a suspension hammock, balancing the spine over the legs.
- Activation emerges through spiral alignment of feet, legs, pelvis, and spine.

Key Alignment Cues:

- External rotation of femurs
- Grounding through the foot domes
- Uplift of the pubic bone with release of the sacrum toward sit bones

Breath Integration:

- Inhale: Thoracic diaphragm descends; pelvic diaphragm widens and lengthens downward.
- Exhale: Pelvic diaphragm rebounds upward, creating inner lift and dynamic spinal elongation.

Key Takeaways:

- Pelvic dome activation supports spinal alignment and internal lift.
- Breath coordinates with movement to enhance dynamic support.

Practice Tips:

- Focus on spiral alignment from feet through pelvis before initiating movement.
- Coordinate inhalation and exhalation to sense the pelvic dome's natural lift and responsiveness.

3. Thoracic Diaphragm

Structure:

- Primary muscle of respiration, attaching to sternum, ribs 6–12, and lumbar spine.
- Forms a central dome that suspends and supports the spine and ribcage.

Function:

- Drives breath and allows ribs to rotate, expand, and recoil.
- Movement with the Stretch-eze teaches the diaphragm to respond dynamically, providing three-dimensional feedback for lift and support.

Key Takeaways:

- Thoracic diaphragm supports breath, spinal suspension, and postural organization.
- Feedback from the Stretch-eze enhances body awareness and internal lift.

Practice Tips:

Focus on expanding ribs and feeling three-dimensional movement with each breath.

Coordinate Stretch-eze resistance with inhalation and exhalation to deepen engagement.

4. Cervical Dome

Structure:

- Spans from the top of the thoracic spine to the base of the skull.
- Includes cervical vertebrae, hyoid bone, and deep cervical fascia of trapezius and sternocleidomastoid.

Function:

- Supports the head and balances the spine.
- Influences posture, breathing, balance, and overall spinal alignment.

Key Takeaways:

- Cervical dome alignment maintains neutral head carriage and postural balance.
- Proper activation supports fluid movement from neck to spine.

Practice Tips:

- Sense lengthening from the thoracic spine to the base of the skull.
- Maintain neutral head position and soft jaw during movement and Stretch-eze exercises.

5. Cranial Dome

Structure:

- Includes the vault of the skull, occiput, soft palate, and connections to jaw, tongue, and eyes.
- Bones move subtly in rhythm with breath, linked to cerebrospinal fluid flow.

Function:

- Floating cranial dome lifts the spine below and promotes overall alignment.

Practical Cue:

- Let the tongue rest softly on the roof of the mouth.
- Soften the eyes and sense the occiput floating slightly back and up while the crown rises.

Key Takeaways:

- Cranial dome motion influences spinal alignment and overall body lift.
- Subtle awareness of tongue, eyes, and occiput enhances dynamic alignment.

Practice Tips:

- Begin each session by sensing cranial lift and connection to the spine.
- Integrate gentle breath awareness to reinforce the cranial dome's movement.



Conclusion: Integrating Uplift, Dynamic Balance, and the Five Domes

Coordinating the anatomical principles of Uplift, Dynamic Balance, and the Five Domes elevates Pilates matwork using the Stretch-eze. Mindful engagement with each dome supports alignment, breath, and fluid movement. Begin with basic movement patterns to integrate these concepts gradually, building awareness and comfort with the Stretch-eze.

ANATOMY REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the alignment principle that supports spinal decompression?

2. Name three oppositional relationships that create dynamic balance?

3. What are the five domes of the body?

4. The occiput floats in which direction to allow uplifting?

5. Which dome coordinates with the breath to allow dynamic support?



WARM-UPS

EXERCISE CONSIDERTIONS

Before we begin the movement sections of the course, we encourage you to create a safe exercise environment for both yourself and your clients. Because Pilates involves more spinal articulation than many other forms of exercise, it's essential to be mindful of each client's limitations and modify movements as needed. For example, be aware of spinal degeneration (e.g. bulging disks, osteoarthritis or pinched nerves).

1. NECK CRADLE (HEAD HAMMOCK)

Set-Up:

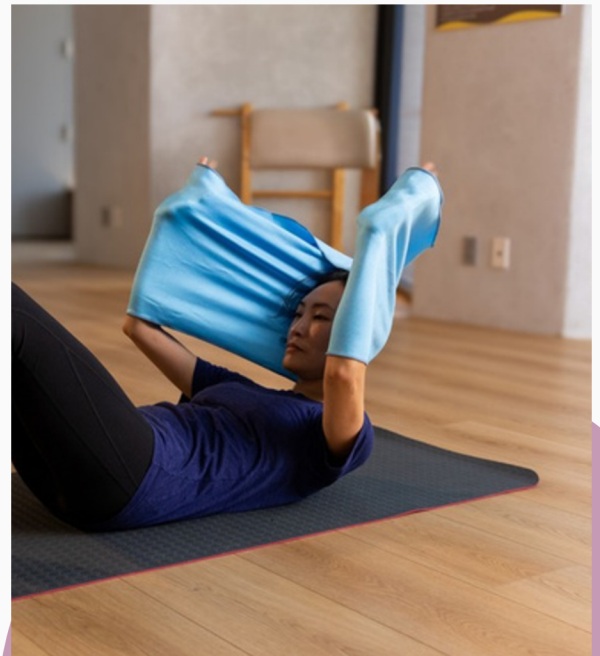
Place the Stretch-eze behind your head in the traditional head hammock wrap. Lie on your back with knees bent, allowing the band to cradle the base of the skull.

Movement:

1. Gently lift your head about two inches off the floor.
2. Soften the chin and lightly draw upward on the Stretch-eze.
3. Press the back of your head gently into the fabric.
4. Float the head slightly higher—just an inch or two—lifting from ease, not effort.
5. Breathe into the back of your neck.
6. Allow the chin to subtly drop forward, lengthening through the spine.

Cueing Language:

- Let your head feel cradled, supported — like it's being held by gentle hands.
- Sense the fabric lifting the cervical and cranial domes to free the neck.



2. PELVIC TILTS (SHOULDER FOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

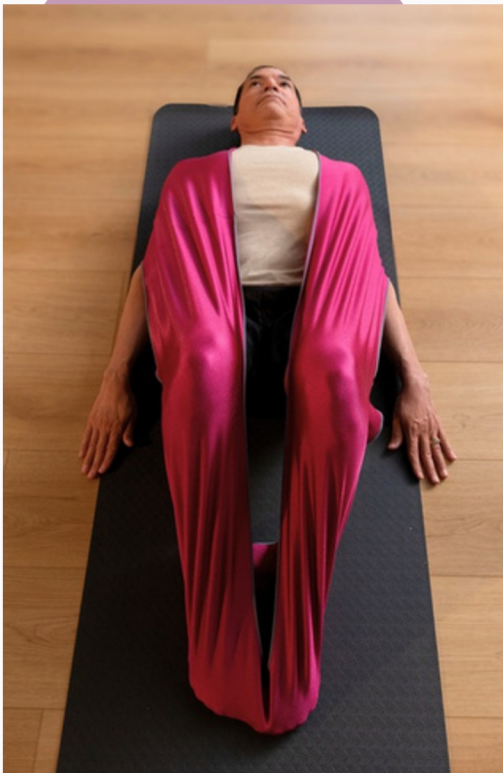
Using the shoulder/foot wrap, lie on your back with knees bent. Place the Stretch-eze over the tops of your knees, creating light tension.

Movement:

1. Begin in a grounded position, sensing the weight of your sacrum on the mat.
2. Gently tilt the pelvis forward, creating a small arch in your lower back.
3. Reverse the direction, scooping the pelvis under and lengthening the sacrum toward your heels.
4. Continue to rock gently between these two positions, flowing back and forth 5 times.
5. To finish, find a centered, neutral position between the two—balanced and supported.

Cueing Language:

- Let the tension in the Stretch-eze guide your awareness.
- As you move, feel the band respond—gently leading your pelvis forward and back, like the ebb and flow of an ocean tide.
- Notice the subtle shift between the tailbone reaching under and the sacrum releasing back, awakening awareness through the front and back of the body.



3. PELVIC WAVE (SHOULDER FOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Same setup as above: Lie on your back with knees bent and the Stretch-eze in the shoulder/foot wrap, secured over the tops of the knees.

Movement:

1. Press through the feet and allow the pelvis to float upward.
2. Roll the spine down onto the mat, one vertebra at a time. Repeat 2x.
3. Tilt the pelvis to the right, rolling up through the right side of the ribs.
4. Shift the pelvis to the left, rolling down through the left side of the ribs, feeling the spiral of the movement.
5. Reverse the direction: roll up through the left side, and down through the right. Repeat 2x.

Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-Eze become a partner in the movement—supporting length, guiding rotation, and enhancing the wave-like flow of the spine.
- Let the pelvis and thoracic dome move in harmony, carried by the breath.



4. HIP SPIRAL (DOUBLE BACK KNEE WRAP)

Set-Up:

Lie on your back with legs in tabletop position. Use the Double Back Knee Wrap with the Stretch-eze secured around both knees to provide gentle support and resistance.

Movement:

1. Slowly rotate one knee outward into external rotation, allowing the pelvis to open with the movement.
2. Reach the foot under the opposite tabletop leg and pause in the spiral.
3. Return to center.
4. Repeat 2x, then switch sides.

Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze guide your exploration of pelvic rotation.
- Notice how the spiral, support and opposition of the band engages the abdominals and deepens awareness in the pelvic container.



5. BUTTERFLY (TWIST BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Wrap the Stretch-eze around your right foot and left shoulder. Lie on your right side with your bottom leg extended (to maintain light tension) and your top leg bent. Support your head with a towel or small ball. Reach both arms forward, stacking the palms.

Movement:

1. Gently reach the top hand forward, allowing the scapula to glide along the ribs.
2. Begin to rotate the torso as the top hand arcs open, reaching toward the opposite side.
3. Soften the elbow and spiral the hand back to the starting position.
4. Repeat slowly and fluidly, allowing the breath to guide the pace.

Cueing Language:

- Feel the twist deepen with the support of the Stretch-eze. Let your upper body ripple like seaweed moving through water—fluid, effortless, and connected.
- Sense how the opposition between the lengthened leg and the crown of the head creates spaciousness through the entire line of the body.



6. CAT/COW (DOUBLE BACK KNEE OR RIB WRAP)

Set-Up:

This is our first example using two different wrap options for one exercise—showcasing the versatility of the Stretch-eze.



Double Back Knee Wrap: Set up the Stretch-eze in the double back knee wrap, then turn over into a hands-and-knees position.

Rib Wrap: Place the Stretch-eze around the rib cage, holding the ends with your hands to create gentle resistance across the back. Come into a hands-and-knees position.

Movement:

1. Draw the sacrum and forehead gently toward each other, letting the Stretch-eze lift and support you into the back body.
2. Lead from the sternum, allowing the chest and head to extend forward together as the spine lengthens and the pelvis tips back.
3. Repeat slowly and rhythmically 4x, flowing with your breath.

Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze guide the buoyancy of your ribs, deepening the connection through the mid-body fascia. Move with your breath—rising into uplift, then curling into a C-shape.
- Allow the spine to undulate like a wave, fluid and continuous, from tail to crown.



7. THREAD THE NEEDLE (DOUBLE BACK KNEE OR RIB WRAP)

Set-Up:

Same setup as above. Begin in a hands-and-knees position, using either the Rib Wrap (holding the ends of the Stretch-eze) or the Double Back Knee Wrap.

Movement:

1. From your Cat/Cow position, thread the right arm underneath the body, initiating the spiral from the first rib.
2. If using the Rib Wrap, maintain a light hold on the fabric, allowing it to guide the glide around the ribs.
3. Continue rotating, looking underneath the arm as you settle into the twist.
4. Return to center. Repeat 2x on the right side.
5. Switch sides and repeat 2x on the left.

Cueing Language:

- Let the spiral begin at the first rib, like gently descending a spiral staircase—smooth, intentional, and connected.
- The twist isn't forced; it's received by the body's natural tensegrity.



8. ROTATOR CUFF (INFINITY WRAP)

Set-Up:

Stand tall and set up the Infinity Wrap by making a figure 8, joining the ends together and circling it around your waist. Hold the two separate loops of the Stretch-eze in each hand.

Movement:

1. Bend your elbows to 90 degrees, keeping the upper arms close to your sides.
2. Gently externally rotate the arms, pressing outward into the resistance of the band.
3. Maintain scapular glide down the back as you engage the infraspinatus and teres minor
4. Repeat with control, focusing on smooth, balanced activation.

Cueing Language:

- Invite awareness into the shoulder girdle, especially the infraspinatus and teres minor, wrapping around the back of the shoulder like a soft sling.
- As you move, sense the shoulder blade gliding and the head of the arm bone gently centering creating a sense of rotation, and ease deep within the joint.



9. BREATHING (RIB-X WRAP)

Set-Up:

Place the Stretch-Eze around your rib cage in an X-pattern, ensuring the band is open across the back for optimal feedback. Hold the front ends of the band with both hands.

Movement:

Inhale: Gently press the band forward, expanding the breath wide into the sides and back ribs.

Exhale: Allow the ribs to glide inward like an accordion softening.

Repeat slowly, maintaining smooth, full breaths.

Cueing Language:

- Feel the feedback traveling diagonally across your body. Let the fabric heighten your sensory awareness of a full, 3-dimensional breath.
- Let your ribcage expand like an accordion—opening in all directions as you inhale, and gently recoiling as you exhale.
- Sense the breath moving through your sides, back, and belly, supported and guided by the tension of the fabric.



JOURNAL QUESTIONS

When considering your own body or your clients, what specific limitations or vulnerabilities do you need to keep in mind before beginning movement?

As you practiced these foundational Stretch-eze movements, what sensations or awareness stood out most to you, and how might that guide your cueing in future sessions?



FASCIA & BIOTENSEGRITY IN MOTION

Introduction

Joseph Pilates' original mat work trained strength, breath, and control — using only the body. To guide clients toward deeper, more integrated movement, we need to go beyond muscles and bones. Understanding fascia and applying the theory of biotensegrity gives us a lens to see the body as a connected, dynamic system.

FASCIA

Fascia is a type of connective tissue that forms a continuous, three-dimensional web throughout the body. It wraps around muscles, bones, nerves, and organs — essentially, everything.

Characteristics:

- Strong, elastic, fluid-rich, and highly adaptable.
- Functions as a bodysuit beneath the skin — supporting and connecting all internal structures

Key Takeaways:

- Fascia connects every part of the body, not just muscles and bones
- It is both supportive and dynamic, capable of transmitting force and guiding movement

Practice Tips:

- Encourage clients to notice tension and release patterns in movement
- Use the gentle resistance of the stretch-eze® to highlight fascial engagement

Why Is Fascia Important?

Fascia is more than passive packaging; it is a sensory-rich, dynamic system.

Functions:

- Supports structure: Maintains alignment of bones and joints
- Transfers force: Distributes movement efficiently across the body
- Coordinates movement: Allows smooth, integrated motion
- Communicates: Rich in nerve endings, enhancing body awareness

Applying Fascia Awareness To Mat Work

The band's gentle resistance mirrors the elastic nature of the fascial web. When moving with the Stretch-eze, tension and release follow natural patterns of diagonals and spirals, highlighting areas of ease, restriction, and potential. It's not just stretching muscle

BIOTENSEGRITY

Definition:

Biotensegrity is a way of understanding how the body supports itself and moves. Rather than seeing the body as a stack of levers and isolated parts, it is viewed as a continuous web of tension and compression — distributing force and supporting movement as a whole.

Analogy:

- Like a tent, which holds its shape not just by poles, but by the tension of ropes suspending the structure in space

Key Insight:

When you move, walk, or breathe, the system reorganizes itself. Everything is connected.

Formula:

- Compression (bones) + Tension (fascia, muscles) = Biotensegrity

Key Takeaways:

- The body functions as an integrated system rather than isolated parts
- Movement in one area affects the entire structure
- Proper engagement of tension and compression reduces strain and increases efficiency

Practice Tips:

- Observe how tension in one area redistributes through the body during exercises
- Cue clients to focus on whole-body alignment and integration, not isolated muscle effort
- Use gentle resistance or props to feel connected movement patterns



Applying Biotensegrity to Pilates Mat Exercises

Exercise Focus: The Teaser

- Without the Stretch-eze: Over-recruitment of the psoas and gripping the hips; effort is isolated and disconnected, causing tension in the jaw, neck, or low back.
- With the Stretch-eze: The band connects the upper and lower body, providing immediate sensory feedback. The lift emerges from the whole body, rather than from the psoas alone.
- Thus, adding the Stretch-eze to the teaser results in less strain and more ease as the whole body integrates. This is a practical demonstration of biotensegrity in motion.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What are 3 characteristics of fascia?

2. List 2 primary functions of fascia.

3. How might you sense or notice a fascial restriction in the body?

4. With the theory of biotensegrity, the body is viewed as a continuous web of _____ and _____.

5. The Stretch-eze acts as a biotensegrity system by redistributing tension in the body. List one Pilates exercise where this quality is especially noticeable.



LEVEL 1

In Level 1, you'll learn a foundational sequence that can stand alone or be woven into any Pilates mat class. Whether you're refining or refreshing your classical roots or reimagining how you teach movement, the Stretch-eze® offers a unique pathway to elevate your practice and transform how your clients feel in their bodies.

1. HUNDREDS (SHOULDER FOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

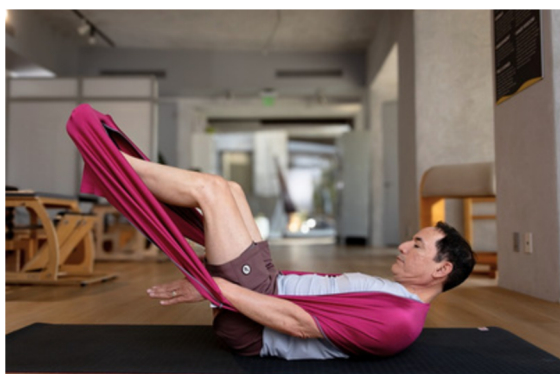
Wrap the Stretch-Eze around your shoulders like a cape, then loop it securely around your feet. Lie on your back with knees bent, bringing the legs into tabletop position. Thread your arms from the outside to the inside of the fabric, reaching them long toward the end of the mat.

Movement:

1. Slowly press the arms up and down, keeping the legs stable and the spine in neutral. Repeat 3x
2. Then, extend the legs into the full Hundreds position. Pulse the arms with control—5 counts on the inhale, 5 counts on the exhale—for the full cycle between 50-100.

Cueing Language:

- Press your hands into the Stretch-eze as if compressing two springs.
- Feel the oppositional pull between your hands and feet—energy reaching in both directions.
- Breathe wide into your ribs, letting the tensional feedback of the Stretch-eze guide a deeper, fuller breath.
- Sense the connection between the pelvic and cervical domes—uplifting through the spine as your breath moves through the center.



2. ROLL-UP (DOUBLE BACK KNEE OR INFINITY WRAP)

Set-Up:

Infinity Wrap: Sitting up with bent knees and feet on the floor. Set up Infinity wrap and drape the circle around the waist. Next, hold onto one loop with both hands and press the arms forward.

Double back Knee Wrap: Sitting up with bent knees and feet on the floor. Wrap the band behind the back and over both knees. Spread the fabric across the back for support. Optional: Place a ball between the knees OR behind the back for added support and feedback.

Movement:

1. Draw the sacrum underneath you and roll down slowly, one vertebra at a time. Pause halfway or at the bottom, then exhale to roll back up. Repeat 2x. Lower the arms to rest.
2. Then add a twist: roll down while opening one arm to the side, rotate the torso, and return to center. Alternate sides 2x.

Cueing Language:

- Imagine your spine as a gentle wave, flowing from your tailbone up through each vertebra, reaching all the way to the crown of your head.
- Feel how this wave provides feedback across your back, knees, obliques and arms.
- Use the twist to awaken the deep oblique myofascial slings and sense movement from the inside out.



3. ALTERNATE ARM/LEG LIFT (INFINITY BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Starting with the Infinity wrap, place the Stretch-eze around the ribs. Loop one end around the right foot and add a boot wrap. Lie on your back with the left knee bent, right leg lifted to the ceiling, and left arm extended upward to the ceiling.



Movement:

1. Lower the right leg and left arm away from each other on a diagonal. Repeat 2x.
2. Then lower the arm and leg toward the floor, circle outward and bring back to center. Repeat 2x
3. Circle the arm and leg outward, downward and then back to center. Repeat 2x.

Cueing Language:

- Feel your arms and legs floating as if in water, gently supported by the buoyancy of the Stretch-eze.
- Rather than gripping in the psoas, allow for a balanced relationship between the psoas and QL—that's biotensegrity in motion.
- Let the band guide an oppositional reach, sensing movement from deep within—muscle, bone, and fascia—not just the limbs.
- Move with ease, as if the body is suspended in a fluid field of support.



4. MERMAID (SPIRAL WRAP)

Setup:

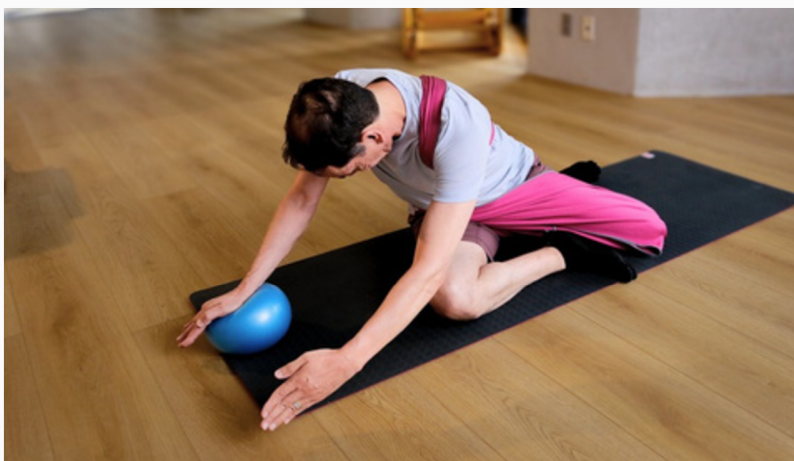
Sit in Mermaid position with the right leg forward. Wrap the Stretch-Eze around the back of the left thigh, across the front of the body, around the torso, and over the left shoulder. Spread the band evenly across the torso for comfortable tension. Place a ball to your right side. Rest one hand on the ball and extend the other arm out to the side.

Movement:

1. From an upright position, side bend to the right, keeping the left sit bone grounded.
2. Return to tall with the arm extended to the side. Repeat 2x.
3. From upright, side bend to the right, then spiral the left arm and torso toward the ball, diving forward. Lift back to tall with the arm out to the side. Repeat 2x
4. Finish with a deep forward stretch over the front knee, allowing length through the side body.

Cueing Language:

- Explore how the Stretch-eze creates space through the lateral arc of your body.
- Feel how the wrap partners with you through rotation and return.
- Notice how the band provides a tactile map, guiding your movement with
- awareness.



5. ROLLING LIKE A BALL (DOUBLE BACK KNEE OR DOUBLE BACK X-KNEE WRAP)

Set-Up:

Double Back Knee - Wrap the Stretch-eze behind your back and over your knees. Sit upright with a ball supporting your lower back to begin. Find your balance between the sit bones and sacrum. The ball can be removed to allow for the full rolling motion.

Double Back X-Knee Wrap - Place the right loop over the left knee, and left loop over the right knee. You'll feel the Stretch-eze tighten around your waist, as you move the knees apart, offering deep support and feedback through your center.

Movement:

1. Inhale to lengthen the sacrum and gently rock backward.
2. Exhale to return to your balance point.
3. Repeat this rocking motion 10 times.
4. Then, lie back with your head resting on the ball. Gently sway your knees side to side.

Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze help organize your shape.
- Explore the rounding of your spine, like a sail gently filling up with wind.
- Notice how the band invites forward rocking, creating fluid motion centered through your core.



6. SPINE STRETCH (RIB-X FOOT OR SHOULDER FOOT BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Rib-X Foot Wrap: Wrap the Stretch-Eze around the waist, crossing once in front, then loop it around the feet. Sit tall with legs spread and toes pointed upward.

Shoulder Foot Boot Wrap: Wrap the Stretch-Eze around the shoulders, then loop it around each foot, creating a “boot” wrap.

Movement:

1. Inhale to lift and lengthen the spine, feeling an uplift through the pelvis and neck.
2. Exhale to round forward, reaching the arms toward the toes with control.
3. Inhale to roll back up, rotating the palms upward and lifting the chest.
4. Repeat this flow 4 times.

Cueing Language:

- Feel the Stretch-eze wrap like a supportive hug around your waist and feet, inviting you to elongate deeper with every exhale.
- Use the Stretch-eze as a feedback tool to deepen sensation and encourage breath-led alignment.
- Press down through the foot domes and lift into the soft palate, creating a sense of length from the feet up.



7. COBRA (SHOULDER FOOT WRAP OR RIB WRAP)

Set-Up:

Shoulder Foot Wrap: Lie on your back in the Shoulder Foot Wrap, with your arms resting outside the band. Roll onto your stomach. Position your forearms on the mat just ahead of your shoulders.

Rib Wrap: Lie on your stomach and wrap the band around your ribs. Hold both loops just forward of your shoulders.



Movement:

1. Inhale and press to lift through the ribs into a supported cobra. Keep the head and ribs moving together. Press through the heels and lift the knees off the mat.
2. Exhale to lower down. Repeat 2 times.
3. Next, inhale to lift and rotate the torso to the right, lifting the right forearm off the mat. Exhale to lower.
4. Repeat on the left side, lifting the left forearm.
5. Repeat 2 times on each side.



Cueing Language:

- Sense how the Stretch-eze offers tactile feedback, that invites you to lengthen and expand without strain.
- Find the opposition from shoulder to foot, lengthening vertebra by vertebra, as if a thread is gently lifting your head and chest upward.
- In rotation, sense the collarbones widening like a smile, with the band guiding the motion in a supported, spiraling lift.



8. SIDEKICKS 1 (SARI BOOT OR RIB WRAP)

Set-Up:

Sari Boot Wrap: Start with a Sari Wrap and place the fabric around the left foot (boot wrap). Lie on your right side with the bottom leg bent and the top leg extended long. Support your head with your hand or a ball. Place your top hand under the band, resting on your hip.

Rib Wrap: Wrap the Stretch-eze around your ribs. Lie on your right side and hold the fabric in front of your body with your left hand.

Movement:

1. Swing the top leg forward, maintaining a long, lengthened spine, then return the leg in line with the torso. Repeat 2 times.
2. Rotate the torso forward, aiming your nose toward the elbow or floor, while keeping the top leg stable.
3. Combine movements 1 and 2: Reach the top leg forward. As it returns, spiral the torso forward. The top leg can gently extend beyond the hip, emphasizing hip extension (not back extension) to create a full spiraling counter-rotation. Repeat 2 times.



Cueing Language:

- Pay attention to the fabric—the more length you create in the Stretch-eze, the more length you invite into your body.
- Explore the oppositional reach of the leg and the subtle spiral of the torso.
- Imagine your body as a flexible spiral staircase, each segment rotating in harmony.
- Feel how the Stretch-eze guides the ribs to rotate, especially with the Rib Wrap



9. CRADLE (INFINITY WRAP-KNEE OR HEAD HAMMOCK)

Set-Up:

Infinity Wrap - Lie on your back. Loop the Stretch-eze around both knees together and gently place one loop behind the head.

Head Hammock (Contemporary) - Place the Stretch-eze around the body. Take the front loop and place it behind the head. Lay down and wrap a loop around each knee.



Movement:

1. Gently rock the body side to side.
2. Then, alternate pressing the knees slightly forward and allow the head to respond with small rotations. Let the body soften and settle.

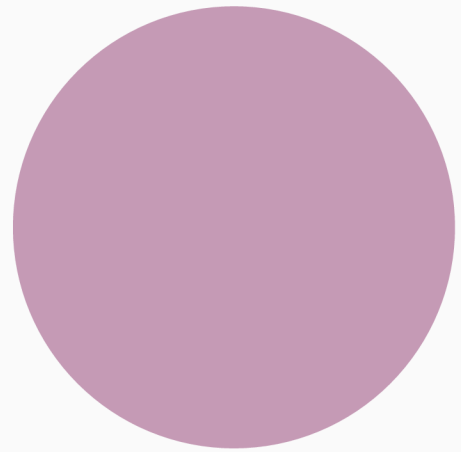
Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze cradle you—you are held. This gentle hammock supports the cervical and cranial domes, enhancing awareness and encouraging the flow of the cerebrospinal fluid for deep relaxation.
- Even the smallest movements can ripple through the whole body, shifting sensation and restoring balance."

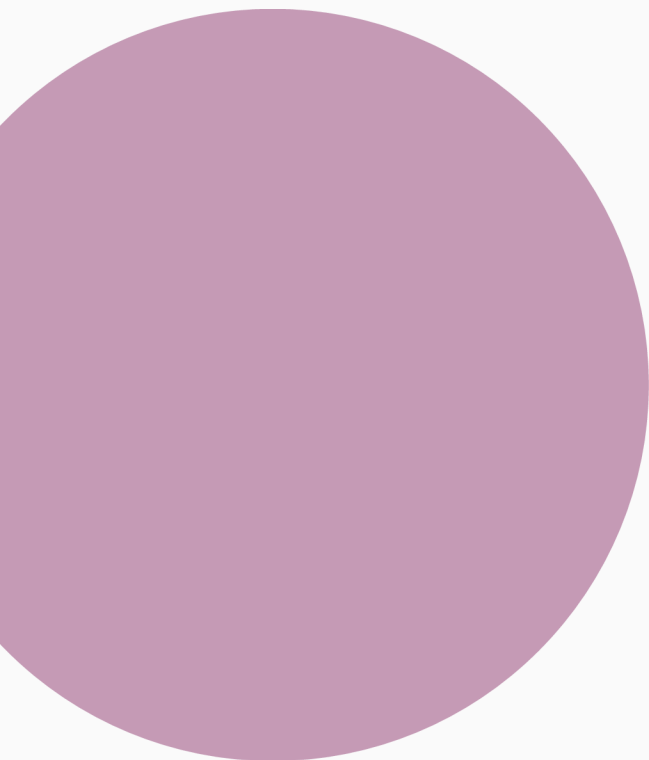


JOURNAL QUESTIONS

How does the feedback and support of the Stretch-eze in Level 1 change your awareness of Pilates movements?



Think of one client (past or present) who might benefit most from the Level 1 Stretch-eze work. What specific exercise or cue from this section could help them experience a breakthrough in movement, alignment, or body awareness— why?





MYOFASCIAL SLINGS

Definition:

Myo- (muscle) + Fascia (connective tissue webbing) = an interconnected system of muscles and fascia. Myofascial slings are networks that work together across the body to support movement, posture, and distribute force. These slings often run diagonally or spirally, linking different body regions (e.g., shoulder to opposite hip) and are essential for efficient movement—especially in walking, rotation, and lifting.

Principle:

There are five primary myofascial slings. Activating them requires functional, multi-directional movements rather than isolated, single-joint exercises.

1. ANTERIOR OBLIQUE SLING (AOS)

Description:

Connects the outer shoulder to the opposite inner thigh through:

- External & internal obliques
- Transverse abdominis
- Adductors
- Abdominal fascia
- Creates a diagonal pathway supporting core stability and rotation.

Example Exercise:

Saw: Wrapping a Stretch-eze from shoulder to opposite foot highlights diagonal tension.

Key Takeaways:

- Supports rotational strength and stability.
- Links upper and lower body diagonally.
- Important for walking, throwing, and rotational movements.

Practice Tips:

- Encourage clients to feel the stretch diagonally from shoulder to opposite hip.
- Avoid over-tensing the torso—focus on length and controlled engagement.

2. POSTERIOR OBLIQUE SLING (POS)

Description:

- Connects latissimus dorsi → thoracolumbar fascia → opposite gluteus maximus → fascia lata of the thigh.
- Forms a diagonal bridge across the back body, stabilizing the sacroiliac joint and supporting extension and contralateral movement.

Example Exercise:

Cross crawling with a Stretch-eze in a sari wrap to connect lat to opposite glute, promoting lift and coordination.

Key Takeaways:

- Enhances contralateral stability and coordination.
- Engages posterior chain for extension and rotation.
- Vital for walking, running, and lifting patterns.

Practice Tips:

- Focus on smooth, controlled cross-body movements.
- Encourage clients to feel lift from glute to opposite shoulder.

3. Lateral Sling (LS)

Description:

- Runs along the side of the body, linking:
 - Gluteus medius
 - Tensor fascia lata
 - IT band
 - Obliques
 - Quadratus lumborum (QL)
- Supports pelvic and lateral stability during asymmetrical movements.

Example Exercise:

- Sidebend with the Stretch-eze in a diagonal wrap to emphasize side-body elongation from foot to shoulder.

Key Takeaways:

- Critical for balance and lateral stability.
- Helps control asymmetrical movements like walking, lunging, and single-leg stance.

Practice Tips:

- Cue clients to lengthen the side body rather than collapsing into the bend.
- Integrate breathing to enhance engagement of obliques and QL.

4. DEEP BACK LONGITUDINAL SLING (DBLS)

Description:

- Runs along the posterior chain: lower leg → hamstrings → erector spinae → deep spinal fascia → cervical spine.
- Acts as the body's "shock absorber," supporting lift and spinal alignment.

Example Exercise:

Shoulder bridge: Use the Stretch-eze in an infinity boot wrap to cue connection from heels → hamstrings → spine.

Key Takeaways:

- Supports spinal extension and posterior chain coordination.
- Distributes force efficiently from foot to crown of the head.

Practice Tips:

- Encourage clients to initiate movement from heels and hamstrings rather than overusing the low back.
- Maintain a gentle lift along the entire spine.

5. DEEP FRONT LONGITUDINAL SLING (DFLS)

Description:

- Connects inner arches → inner thighs → pelvic floor → psoas → transverse abdominis → diaphragm → deep neck flexors.
- Provides internal “lift” and suspension, supporting posture and core stability.

Example Exercise:

Roll-Up: The Stretch-eze used with a double back knee wrap cues integration from arches → psoas → abdominals → neck.

Key Takeaways:

- Stabilizes the anterior chain and internal core structures.
- Enhances whole-body lift and coordinated movement.

Practice Tips:

- Focus on feeling the internal line from foot to skull.
- Coordinate breathing to assist engagement of deep core muscles.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What are myofascial slings?

List one primary function of the Anterior Oblique Sling.

Why is the correct functioning of the Lateral Sling important in walking?

When the Deep Back Longitudinal Sling is weak, what postural pattern may become visible?

How does using the Stretch-eze® enhance awareness of myofascial sling connections in the body?



LEVEL 2

As we move into Levels 2, you'll be empowered to select and sequence additional exercises to match the needs and abilities of your clients.

1. SAW (TWIST OR RIB-X FOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Twist Wrap: Wrap the Stretch-eze around the left foot and the right shoulder to create a diagonal twist. The legs are wide and reach both arms to the sides.

Rib-X Foot Wrap: Wrap the Stretch-Eze around the ribcage, cross it into an “X,” and loop it around both feet. Once wrapped, find the same starting position as above—legs wide, arms extended.

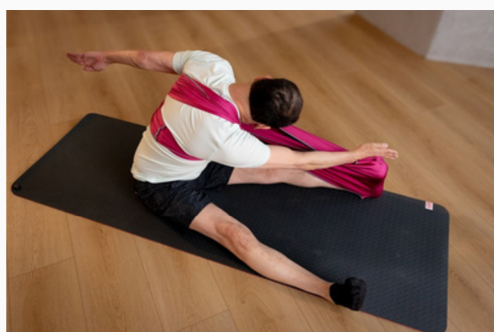
Movement:

1. Grow tall through the spine, sensing the support of the Stretch-Eze. Inhale and twist the torso to the left, maintaining outward rotation through the right hip.
2. Exhale and reach the right arm toward the left little toe while the left arm extends back, creating a spiral through the spine.
3. Inhale to return to center with a lifted, lengthened spine.
4. Repeat 3 times, then switch the wrap to the opposite foot (for Twist Wrap).

Note: In the Rib-Foot X Wrap variation, use the Stretch-Eze as traction to assist the reach - this is especially helpful if you have tight hamstrings.

Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze guide the twist through your body—like wringing out a sponge from shoulder to foot.
- As you reach forward, let the back arm counterbalance and lift the spine into the spiral. Return to center like a spring recoiling.
- The deep oblique slings are awakening and notice how the coil doesn't just twist you—it transports you forward.



2. CROSS CRAWL (SARI BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

From a seated position, wrap the Stretch-eze diagonally across the body—right shoulder to extended left foot. Make the boot from inside to out. (creates a stronger wrap)

Come into a quadruped (all fours) position with:

Hands directly under shoulders

Knees under hips

Spine long and neutral

Ribs gently lifted to support core engagement

Movement:

Inhale, slide the left leg back and reach the right arm forward, allowing them to gracefully lift off the floor in a controlled, lengthened line. Feel the bands diagonal tension.

Exhale to return to the quadruped position, maintaining connection and alignment.

Repeat 3 times on this side.

Switch the Stretch-eze to the left shoulder and right foot, and repeat the sequence 3 more times.

Cueing Language:

Feel the band drawing a diagonal connection—like an internal zipper linking shoulder to opposite hip. That's the posterior oblique slings waking up.

Let the Stretch-eze initiate the movement—don't force it.

Sense the oppositional reach rather than the lift. As you return, feel yourself being gently drawn back by the elastic recoil.



3. SINGLE STRAIGHT LEG STRETCH (INSIDE REINS)

Set-Up:

Set up in the Inside Reins Wrap:

Place the stretch-eze around the feet, and hold onto the reins. Lay on your back with the right palm facing in, left palm facing out—to create a gentle spiral through the arms and upper body. Maintain a neutral pelvis and lengthened spine.

Movement:

1. Extend both legs straight up toward the ceiling, anchoring through the sacrum. The feet are long and softly pointed.
2. On an exhale, lower the left leg two inches from the floor as you draw the right leg closer toward the head.
3. Inhale and exhale to switch legs, maintaining length and control.
4. Continue alternating legs in a smooth, fluid rhythm, allowing the band to guide the line of motion.
5. Repeat 6–10 times, staying connected to breath and spiral integrity.

Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze act as reins—responsive, not rigid. You're guiding, not gripping.
- Feel the subtle spiral created by the opposite rotation of the arms—as if your unwinding your fascia—this twist travels through your torso, energizing the legs with the bands elastic feedback.



4. Criss Cross (Head Foot or Double Back Knee Wrap)

Set-Up:

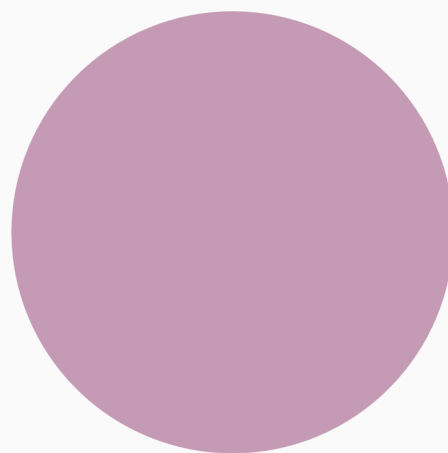
Head Foot Wrap: Begin in shoulder-foot position with the Stretch-Eze wrapped from the feet to the shoulders. Bend the knees, slide your hands up the body and place them behind the head, elbows wide and inside the Stretch-Eze loop.

Double Back Knee Wrap- Wrap the Stretch-eze behind the back and around both knees. Place a small ball behind the lower spine and sink back into the ball. The knees are bent and hands behind the head.

Movement:

1. Inhale to prepare in a centered, supported position.
2. Exhale and draw the right knee toward the chest, twisting the torso toward the bent knee as the left leg extends out at an angle (Head-Foot Wrap).
3. Inhale to transition.
4. Exhale to switch sides—draw the left knee in, twist the torso to the left, and extend the right leg.
5. Continue alternating sides in a fluid, breath-led rhythm.
6. Repeat 5–10 times, maintaining ease through the neck and spaciousness through the waist.

In the Double Back Knee Wrap variation, both knees remain bent throughout the sequence. Instead of knee extension, focus on pelvic and rib rotation with alternating oblique engagement.



Cueing Language:

Let the cocoon of the Stretch-eze amplify the internal space to move within—inviting a deeper, more integrated oppositional reach.

Use the band like a supportive sling, pressing the elbows back to open the chest and extend the twist with ease.

Just like the squishy toy, biotensegrity is being illuminated by the band. It holds you while you twist, creating space rather than strain.



Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze inform the rhythm and resistance of the counterotation—it's not just about strength, but connection.
- Use the feedback of the fabric to refine your alignment—allow it to slow you down and sharpen your control.
- Feel the twist through the torso with each circular pathway—your leg draws the spiral, but your solar plexus initiates it

5. SIDE KICK SERIES 2 (TWIST BOOT OR SARI BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Sari Boot Wrap: Wrap the Stretch-Eze from your right shoulder to left foot. Lie on your right side, with the right hand supporting the head in a kickstand position. The left (top) hand slides under the band to rest on the top hip, creating a stabilizing diagonal connection. The bottom leg is bent for support.

Twist Boot Wrap: Wrap the Stretch-Eze around the left foot, secure with a boot loop, and twist it diagonally around the back to the right shoulder. Lie on your right side in the same position as above: right hand in kickstand, left hand under the band to the top hip, bottom leg bent.

Movement:

1. Leg Lower & Lift: Extend the top leg long down the mat. Point the foot and lift the leg. Flex the foot and lower the leg with control. Repeat 3x
2. This time, flex the foot to lift the leg. Point the foot to lower it smoothly. Repeat 3x
3. Spiral Leg Circles – Forward Pattern- Swing the leg forward, allowing the trunk to spiral outward (away from the center). Lift the leg upward, then circle it back, letting the torso spiral inward (toward the center).
4. Repeat 3x
5. Spiral Leg Circles: Backward Pattern- Swing the leg back, engaging an inward spiral through the torso. Lift the leg upward, then swing it forward, returning through an outward spiral. Repeat 3x
6. Switch the stretch-eze to the opposite leg and repeat steps 1-4

6. SHOULDER BRIDGE (SHOULDER ONE FOOT BOOT)

Set-Up:

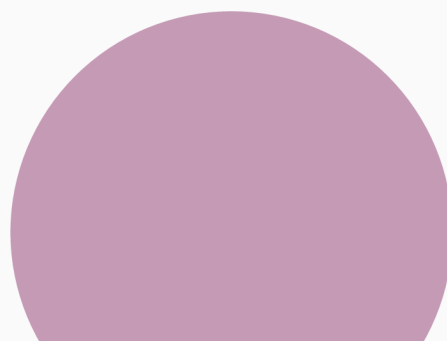
Wrap the Stretch-eze around the shoulders and then around the right foot, using a boot loop if desired. Lie on your back with knees bent, feet hip-width apart, and arms resting long by your sides.

Movement:

1. Lift the pelvis off the mat into a bridge position, maintaining length through the spine.
2. Bend the right knee into the body, then extend the leg straight up toward the ceiling.
3. Inhale, flex the foot, and lower the straight leg toward the floor, feeling a deep stretch through the hip flexors while maintaining lift through the pelvis.
4. Exhale, point the foot, and return the leg to vertical.
5. Repeat 3 times with breath and control.
6. Switch the wrap to the left foot and repeat 3 times on the other side.

Cueing Language:

- Sense how the Stretch-Eze creates an oppositional pull—from shoulder to foot—amplifying elongation through the entire front body.
- Let the fabric support the bridge, encouraging lift through the pelvis without gripping.
- Use the bent knee foot to create inner lift through the body.



7. TEASER (SHOULDER FOOT OR OUTSIDE REINS)

Set-Up:

Shoulder Foot Wrap: Lie on your back in tabletop position with the Stretch-Eze wrapped from the feet to the shoulders. Wrap your arms around the fabric and hold it securely.

Outside Reins: Wrap the band across the arches of both feet, holding onto it, from the outside of the legs. Lie on your back in table-top.

Movement:

1. From table-top, inhale to round forward
2. Exhale, uplifting through the pelvis and rolling up into a Teaser V position, leading from the deep myofascial core. Use the stretch-eze to invite the lift, extending the legs forward into the classic V shape, reaching long through the toes.
3. Inhale at the top to hold.
4. Exhale to roll back down slowly, articulating the spine one vertebra at a time into the mat.
5. Repeat 3–5 times, maintaining breath, control, and continuous flow.

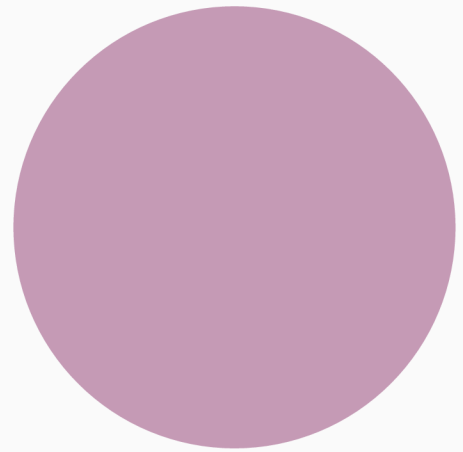
Cueing Language:

- Let the Stretch-eze guide you forward like a rising wave.
- Feel the diagonal relationship from shoulders to feet—this is your internal suspension bridge.

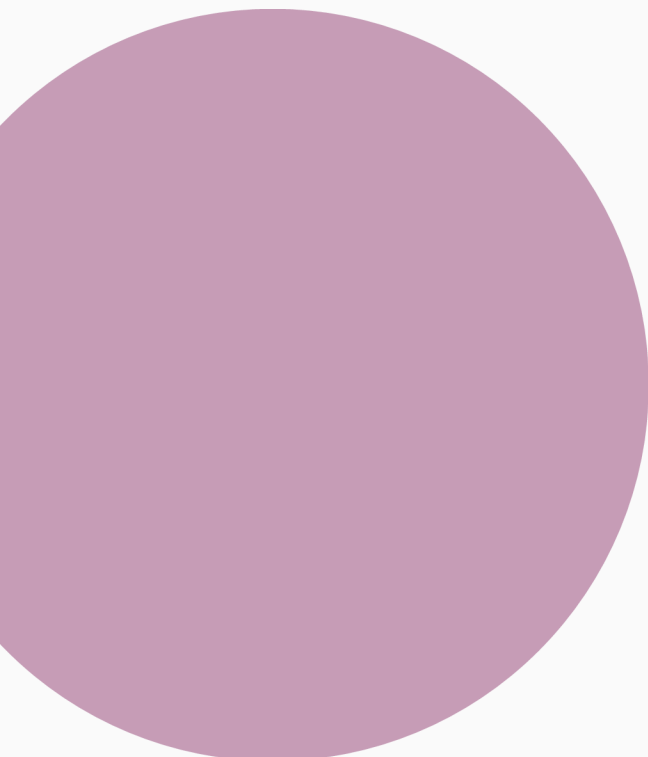


JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Which wrap or exercise in Level 2 helped you feel the deepest sense of diagonal or spiral connection through your body? How did the Stretch-eze support or challenge your awareness of those connections?



2. How do you feel about using the cuing language from Level 2 (spirals, oppositional reach, suspension, etc.) as you guide clients through complex movements?





MOVING IN SPIRALS



Spirals are a core design principle of nature—seen in galaxies, flowers, seashells, and in the human body itself. Spirals are not only beautiful; they create functional intelligence in how we move, stabilize, and self-organize. When we integrate spiral-based movement, we awaken:

- Fluid coordination
- Deep core activation
- Natural balance and ease

The Stretch-eze amplifies the body's natural spirals, offering both resistance and feedback to enhance awareness of rotational and coiling patterns.

1. SKELETAL SPIRALS: VERTEBRAL COLUMN

Description:

The spine expresses a subtle spiral from the sacrum to the occiput. In the thoracic region especially, each vertebra rotates slightly relative to the one below, creating three-dimensional motion across all planes.

Key Takeaways:

- Spirals in the spine provide mobility and adaptability.
- Rotation is distributed, not isolated, protecting joints from strain.

Practice Tips:

- Cue clients to explore rotation gently, sensing the “wave” through the spine.
- Avoid forcing the twist—think of elongation first, rotation second.

2. RIB CAGE

Description:

The ribs wrap around the torso in a spiral pattern, angled downward and forward.

This design supports rotation while dynamically expanding breath volume.

Key Takeaways:

- Rib spirals enhance breathing and thoracic mobility.
- Healthy rib motion integrates breath with rotation.

Practice Tips:

- Use imagery: “Let the ribs uncoil like a spring with each inhale.”
- Encourage awareness of rib movement during spiral-based exercises.



3. PELVIS + FEMUR RELATIONSHIP

Description:

The femurs spiral as they articulate in the hip sockets, moving into external and internal rotation through the adductors. The sacrum counter-rotates naturally with each step, part of the pelvic torsion spiral that underlies walking and gait.

Key Takeaways:

- Spiral relationships in pelvis and femurs support efficient gait.
- Sacral counter-rotation stabilizes and balances movement.

Practice Tips:

- Cue clients to sense hip rotation as fluid, not rigid.
- In lunges or gait-pattern exercises, highlight the gentle counter-rotation of pelvis and spine.





Integration with Stretch-eze

The Stretch-eze magnifies spiral movement by:

- Offering resistance that clarifies rotational pathways.
- Providing feedback for balance and contralateral coordination.
- Encouraging clients to feel the body's natural coiling and uncoiling.

Practice Tip:

Invite clients to imagine spirals as “nature’s design code” within their body—alive in every breath, step, and rotation.

4. FOOT-TO-HEAD SPIRAL LINE

Description:

This spiral pathway begins in the arches of the feet, travels up the inner legs, weaves through the psoas and diaphragm, and extends up to the tongue and cranial base. It underpins balance, contralateral coordination, and proprioceptive awareness.

Key Takeaways:

- The body organizes as one continuous spiral from ground to crown.
- Contralateral spirals (foot to opposite shoulder/head) create efficiency and fluidity.

Practice Tips:

- In standing exercises, cue clients to feel the spiral rising from arches to the crown of the head.
- Use Stretch-eze bands to magnify contralateral engagement (e.g., foot-to-opposite-hand patterns).



REVIEW QUESTIONS

Name one benefit of awakening spiral based movement?

What is one function of spirals in the spine?

Counter-rotation is a spiral function in the body. List one bony area where this occurs?

Rotation protects the joints from

_____.

How does the Stretch-eze magnify spiral movement?



LEVEL 3

In this final Level, the wraps get even more innovative! We encourage you to find your own creative ways to use the Stretch-eze in Pilates matwork.

1. TIK TOK TWIST (HEAD FOOT REVERSE DOUBLE BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Start with the Stretch-eze around the shoulders. Place legs hip-distance apart and wrap the Stretch-eze in a reverse boot wrap: across the tops of the feet, under the outer edges.

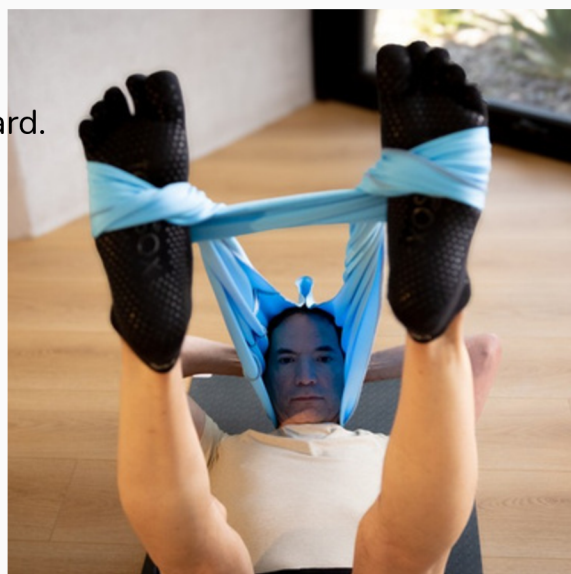
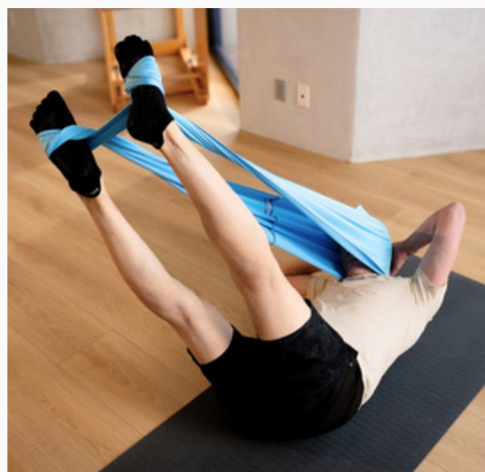
Lay down and wrap the Stretch-eze around the head, extend the legs to the ceiling, and support the head with hands, elbows wide. Press the legs apart to activate the outer hips.

Movement:

1. Press the legs outward and rotate them in a half-circle toward the left, letting the right leg draw closer to the torso.
2. Tip the torso to the left, catching the weight on the ribs and left elbow.
3. Reverse the movement: rotate the legs to the right and tip the body to the right, catching the weight on the ribs and right elbow.
4. Repeat 3x in each direction.

Cueing Language:

- Feel the resistance of the band responding in all directions.
- Let the hip rotation activate the deep oblique slings by pressing the feet outward.



2. JACKKNIFE (RIB X–BOTH FEET BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Using the Rib X Foot Wrap, bring the feet together and wrap the Stretch-eze around both feet. Lie on your back and extend both legs to the ceiling.

Movement:

1. Press the feet into the band, gently lifting the legs overhead at a 45 degree angle, letting the band guide the path.
2. From there, lift into a jackknife, elongating the body
3. Slowly roll the spine back down to 45°.
4. Repeat 5x.

Cueing Language:

- As you rise into the jackknife, imagine the Stretch-eze elongating your back line—creating a sling-like sensation.
- Let the fascia “zip” through the centerline—feet, inner thighs, pelvic floor, and deep abdominals moving as one responsive line.
- Use the rebound of the band to stay lifted and supported—find buoyancy, not compression.



3. SWAN (FOREHEAD FOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

From a shoulder-foot wrap, turn over onto your stomach.

Place the fabric over your forehead and reach the arms long down the Stretch-eze, holding onto the fabric.

Movement:

1. Inhale, pressing into the band with the crown of the head and heels of the feet to create lift in the torso.
2. Exhale as the chest softens to lower the body
3. Repeat 5x.

Cueing Language:

- Sense an elastic rebound that lifts the spine into extension, to wake up the posterior slings.
- Feel a wave of support lifting your spine.
- On the lowering, let the body return into the band—like floating down into a hammock.



4. SIDEBEND (SPIRAL/SARI BOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Spiral Wrap: Sit in Mermaid position, right knee forward, left leg folded behind.

Wrap the Stretch-eze from the left foot, across the front of the body, and over the left shoulder.

Ensure tension supports without restricting.

Sari Wrap: Drape the Stretch-eze from the right shoulder to the left foot like a silk sash. Let the sit bones settle. Gently gather the inner thighs and pelvic floor to support your base.



Movement:

1. Inhale, reaching the legs long (with Stretch-eze leg forward), lift into a long sidebend—feel the lengthening from the arch to the crown.
2. Exhale into a long bow, with the arm stretching over the head. Feel the tension line from foot to shoulder as a diagonal support line—encouraging lift and length through the side body. Lower and repeat 2x.
3. On the 3rd lift, reach the arm overhead, then spiral it underneath the ribs into a deep twist, gathering support from the stretch-eze.
4. Repeat 2x.
5. Switch sides and repeat for a total of 4x.

Cueing Language:

Sense the fascia unfurling as you arc into the sidebend—don't push, let the fabric invite the curve.

When you spiral the arm underneath, allow the band's pull to help you twist from the deep core—not just the shoulders.

Let the fabric organize the body in space—offering feedback that stabilizes the base while freeing the spine.



5. SPINE TWIST (TWIST WRAP)

Set-Up:

Sit tall with the Stretch-eze wrapped from the left foot to the right shoulder and the arms extended in a T-position.

Extend legs forward, feet flexed, spine upright. Feel the left foot and right shoulder connection.

Movement:

1. Exhale, press gently into the band with the foot, twisting the torso to the left. Allow the band to draw the twist, not force it.
2. As you inhale, use the rebound of the band to lengthen back to center, taller and more connected.
3. Repeat 3x, then switch the wrap to the opposite side and repeat.

Cueing Language:

- As you twist, sense the spiral initiating from the solar plexus—and radiating through the spine to the pelvic floor, obliques and ribs.
- Let the band provide elastic feedback—it's not just holding you, it's informing you.
- Let the twist feel like an internal dance between grounded stability and rotational lift, all supported by the band's gentle pull.



6. PUSH-UPS (SARI OR SHOULDER FOOT WRAP)

Set-Up:

Sari Wrap: Thread Stretch-eze from left shoulder to right foot. Come into quadruped position, right leg extended long.

Shoulder-Foot Wrap: Have the feet wide to keep the Stretch-eze in place. Come into a quadruped position, right leg extended long.

Movement:

1. Lift into a push-up position, pressing into the band through the shoulder and foot. Hold for 5 seconds, then lower the knees to the mat.
2. Shoulder-Foot Wrap: Return to the push-up position and perform 2 full push-ups, maintaining a continuous plank with elbows grazing the ribs.
3. Sari Wrap: Raise the right leg off the mat and perform 2 leg lift push-ups.
4. Sari Wrap: Switch wrap to opposite leg and repeat.

Cueing Language:

- The Stretch-eze helps gather the front body and elongate the back body—like being lifted from your center while anchored at both ends.
- Sense the band pulling you into your midline—using the feedback to resist collapsing.
- In the Sari Wrap, feel the diagonal tension on one leg, letting the Stretch-eze become your elastic support system.



7. HIP OPENER (SHOULDER FOOT WRAP OVER OPPOSITE KNEES)

Set-Up:

Wrap the Stretch-eze over the shoulders and under the feet.

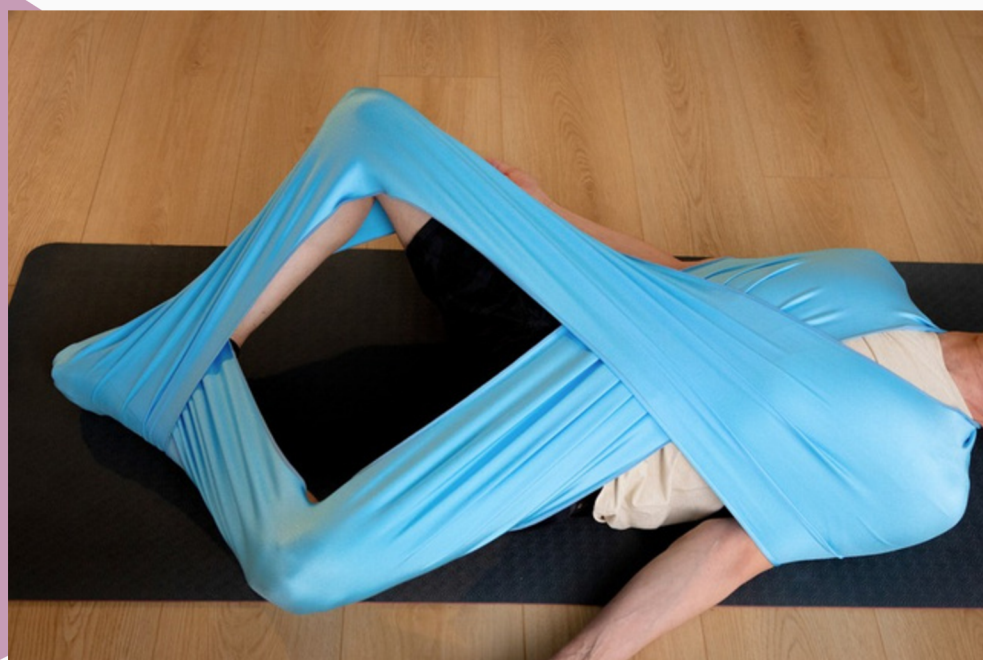
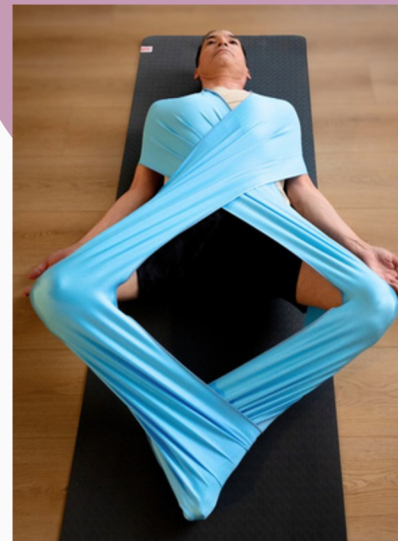
Cross the right side of the band over the left knee, and the left side over the right knee.

Movement:

1. Open the hips outward into a supported butterfly stretch.
2. Settle in, breathe and let go. You made it. Take a moment to soak it all in.

Cueing Language:

- Let the diagonal lines of the Stretch-eze draw the thighs outward, like a web gently pulling from opposite corners.
- Feel the pelvis drop and widen into the support of the fabric, like melting into a hammock of resistance and release.
- Stay passive in the legs and let the band do the work—this is about surrender, not stretch.



JOURNAL QUESTIONS

1. Which Level 3 exercise challenged you most? How did the elastic feedback of the Stretch-eze either support or expose where you tend to collapse, grip, or overwork?

2. How could the sensations and imagery from Level 3 (e.g., buoyancy, fascia “zipping,” hammock-like support) shift the way you cue clients—or even the way you experience advanced Pilates work in your own body?



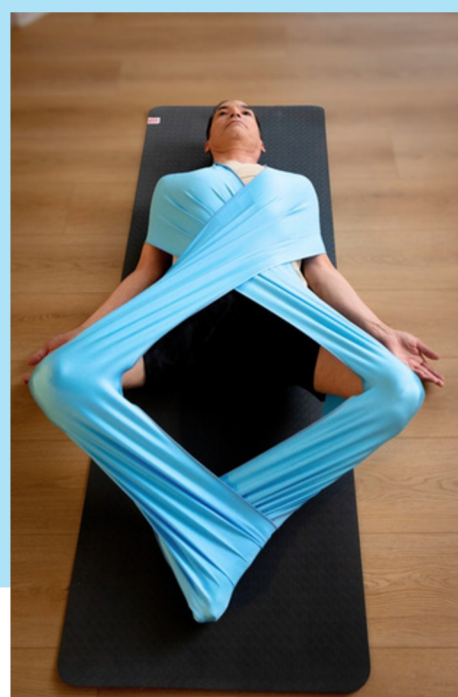
THE NERVOUS SYSTEM



All of this underscores that the Stretch-eze is far more than a Pilates prop—it is a powerful nervous system regulation tool that supports emotional balance and resilience. This is why it has become especially valuable in the special needs community, particularly for children with autism. The combination of soft fabric, gentle resistance, and cozy compression creates a sense of grounding and security.

The Stretch-eze offers more than just structural feedback—it creates a calming, organizing container for the nervous system. When the body yields into the elastic resistance of the band, it receives consistent tactile input, which soothes the sympathetic nervous system (our “fight or flight” response) and shifts us toward a parasympathetic state of rest and repair. This soft compression mimics the sensation of being hugged, stimulating the release of oxytocin (“the hug hormone”). Oxytocin enhances trust, safety, and connection—conditions that downregulate stress responses. In this state, the vagus nerve is supported and toned through rhythmic breath, grounded movement, and the felt sense of containment.

Additionally, the playful, flowing quality of movement with Stretch-eze can boost dopamine (“the excitement and motivation hormone”), which is linked to curiosity, engagement, and learning. As participants explore dynamic patterns within the container of the band, they often experience lightness, freedom, and joy.



Key Takeaways:

- **Calming Effect:** Consistent tactile input helps regulate the nervous system.
- **Neurochemistry:** Oxytocin and dopamine release foster safety, connection, and motivation.
- **Vagus Nerve Support:** Rhythmic movement and breath tone the vagal system.
- **Beyond Fitness:** Useful for Pilates, therapy, rehab, and special populations.

Practice Tips:

- Encourage clients to notice the calming sensation of soft compression—“like being hugged.”
- Integrate breathwork with band use to amplify parasympathetic activation.
- Use gentle rocking or spiraling in the Stretch-eze for vagus nerve support.
- For special needs or anxious clients, begin with grounding movements (seated or supine) before progressing to dynamic exercises.
- Invite play and curiosity—dopamine rises when movement feels enjoyable and novel.

**Clinical / Professional Applications:**

The Stretch-eze is increasingly used by practitioners outside traditional fitness for its regulatory benefits:

- **Occupational Therapy (OT):** Supporting children with autism, ADHD, or sensory processing challenges by providing grounding and safe compression.
- **Physical Therapy / Rehab:** Aiding recovery by reducing tension, improving proprioception, and calming the nervous system.
- **Trauma-Sensitive Yoga & Somatic Therapy:** Offering clients a safe “container” for movement that reduces hypervigilance and builds trust in the body.

Elder Care / Fall Prevention:

- Encouraging gentle movement, balance, and breath while reducing anxiety around mobility.
- The Stretch-eze extends beyond the Pilates mat—it is a versatile tool for supporting nervous system health and overall well-being.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

Which nervous system activates the “flight or fight” response?

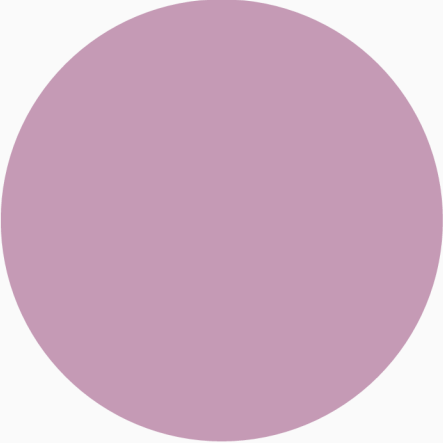
How is the vagus nerve supported and toned?

Being in the Stretch-eze® can offer feelings of curiosity and joy. Which hormone is related to these feelings?

Which nervous systems shift us into a state of “rest and repair”?

Beyond Pilates, in which setting could the Stretch-eze be particularly useful in?

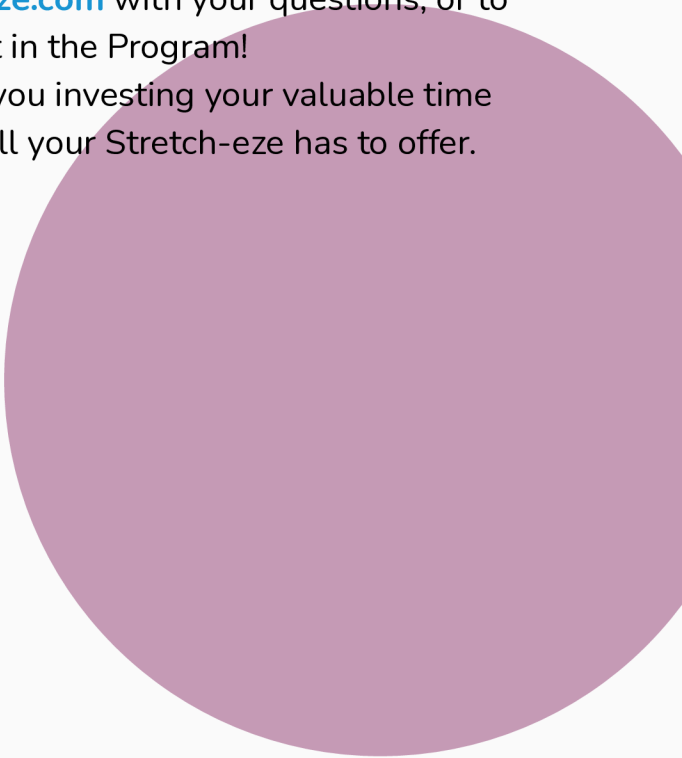
CONGRATULATIONS!



You've officially completed the content for the Stretch-eze® Pilates Mat Certification Course. Thank you for your commitment to growing and innovating as an instructor by incorporating the Stretch-eze into your teaching. Continue exploring the Stretch-eze in your own practice to deepen your understanding of its sensory feedback.

Your next step is to take a 40-question test. A passing score of 70% earns you your official Stretch-eze® training certificate. Don't worry—if needed, you'll have the opportunity to retake the test.

Head to <https://stretch-eze.com> for in-person and on-line classes, workshops and other events. You can also apply to become a Stretch-eze training affiliate. To learn more about the affiliate program, download the document entitled "Stretch-eze Training Affiliate Program" from the portal and contact us at info@stretch-eze.com with your questions, or to express interest in the Program! We appreciate you investing your valuable time with us. Enjoy all your Stretch-eze has to offer.





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