

Contrology Pilates Physical Culture

Volume III

THE CADILLAC

Esperanza Aparicio Romero - Javier Pérez Pont





Colección Controllogy Pilates Physical Culture (7 Volumes)

Volume 3: The Cadillac

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CONTENTS

Prologue	13
A foreword	15
Nose breathing	
Training in special conditions	19
Weak or sensitive neck	
Shoulders, elbows, wrists	
Back	
Hips	
Knees	
Ankles	
Pregnancy	
To Bear in Mind	23
Hyper-extension of the joints	
Positions of the feet	
Quality / Quantity	
Positive attitude / perseverance	
The Six Basic Principles	27
Centre	
Concentration	
Control	
Precision	

Breathing	
Flow of movement	
Key Concepts	31
“V” Feet position	
Central line and “box”	
Navel to spine: “inwards and upwards”	
Chin to chest	
Spine articulation vertebra by vertebra	
“C”-Curve	
EXERCISES ON THE CADILLAC	37
COMPONENTS OF THE CADILLAC	39
EXERCISES ON THE CADILLAC: LIST OF FREQUENT EXERCISES	39
OTHER EXERCISES	41
I – PUSH THROUGH SERIES	
Tower	
Monkey	
II – PUSH THROUGH SERIES	
Hip stretch	
Teaser	
Reverse push through	
Press down	
Mermaid	
Push through on the stomach	
Shoulder roll down	
Push through	
III – LEG SPRING SERIES	
Legs circles	
Walking	
Beats	
Bicycle	
Little circles	
Frog in six counts	
IV – SIDE BICYCLE	
V – LEGS SPRINGS SERIES UP IN THE AIR	
Airplane	

VI – ARMS SERIES

Circles

Triceps

VII – FLYING EAGLE

VIII – EXERCISES WITH THE ROLL BACK BAR

Rolling back

Rolling back with one arm

Chest expansion

Thigh stretch

Long back stretch arms

Rolling in/out

Rolling stomach massage

IX – TRADITIONAL ENDING SERIES

Breathing

Spread eagle

Pull ups

Hanging pull ups

Half hanging

Hanging

X – STANDING ARM SPRINGS SERIES WITH ROLL BACK BAR

Chest expansion

Side arm

Shaving

Squats

XI – STANDING ARM SPRING SERIES

Boxing

Shaving the head

The hug

The butterfly

Side arm

Fencing

Dedicated to Esperanza,
an impressive being in so many ways.
Javier Pérez Pont

PROLOGUE

The apparatus commonly known as Cadillac has a long story that has led to its current form. First an exercise bed invented by Joe Pilates in the early nineteen thirties, it was continually modified, and its structure extended, till it crystallized into the final form that is used today. At the beginning, it was simply called “Bed”, later “Table” (because it is flat and has a height similar to that of a table), then -at being added a number of poles and a rear structure- it was also known as “Trapeze Table”. But the name that has remained is “Cadillac” (as in the American automobile trademark).

This apparatus was conceived primarily to round up Contrology sessions. This is why each practitioner should choose to perform on the Cadillac those exercises most suitable to his or her needs and level of achievement and development.

Progress on this apparatus must be gradual and practitioners should choose carefully what to perform on it, since it can be a gentle piece of equipment, but it can also be very demanding, not to say risky, in some exercises. This is why a sensible choice of exercises is crucial.

This apparatus is designed so that elderly or injured practitioners do not need to lie on the floor to perform Mat

exercises. It has an adequate height to favor the development of such practitioners.

The exercises listed here follow no specific order. Choose among them according to your needs, always applying common sense and the adequate prevention and safety measures. Nevertheless, a technical level is given to each exercise as a guideline.

Some exercises are better done first on the "Table" before being introduced into Universal Reformer systems, such as the Chest Expansion, the Teaser, the Thigh Stretch, etc.

A FOREWORD

Our purpose for this book is to provide you with a directory of exercises, a specific order, and detailed recommendations and tips that allow you to enjoy Contrology as a tool of body development at home, in case you cannot attend a studio or wish to complement your private sessions. It is always highly advisable to have a teacher following your individual program.

The key to Contrology lies in developing and strengthening the “powerhouse”. You should start on this adventure with a predisposition for improvement, a positive attitude and an unwavering will.

The importance of the instructions and details given for each exercise could be summarized in this sentence by Pilates himself: “the development of the small muscles has an effect on the development of the bigger ones. As small bricks are used to build great buildings, thus each muscle has a role in the development of the muscle system as a whole”.

Find time to be alone, exercise is more pleasant and beneficial when mind and body are connected. Concentrating for some moments on centre, control, precision, flow and breathing is much more effective to reach a feeling of well-being and an increase in our self-esteem through practice than trying to achieve a specific result.

Take each movement to the limit of your ability, but not beyond, use your common sense and remember you must be in control at all times.

Introduce new exercises gradually, without rushing, don't forget that Contrology, as presented in these books, is the result of a lifetime of research and for it to have sense and to reach optimal results, the book's guidelines must be followed. Perform each exercise slowly but diligently, learning each one thoroughly before proceeding to the next one, until you can do the whole Basic System series of exercises to the smallest detail, and without having to look at the book. Doing an exercise without understanding the required conditions is ineffectual. At the beginning, it is normal to forget some small details. Even when you believe you know how to perform an exercise, there is still room for improvement if you review the instructions.

It will then be the moment to settle on doing all the Basic System series three times a week, day in, day out. When you can do this with a certain ease and flow, it will be the time to start introducing new exercises, one by one and in the proper order, no more than two new exercises per day and never doing more repetitions than indicated.

If you are a beginner, you should start on the mat, at home, for no more than fifteen minutes a day; and then gradually introduce longer mat exercises, never exercising for more than 45 or, at the most, 60 minutes.

You can check on your progress in two ways: doing a longer session on the mat with added exercises, or improving your rhythm and pace without losing control and knowledge by doing a system in less time.

PRECAUTIONS BEFORE GETTING STARTED - WARNINGS TO THE READER

- » Do the exercises on a mat to protect your spine.
- » If you need it, because when you lie on your back your head hangs too much and it feels uncomfortable, you can use a small pillow or a rolled towel under your nape.

- » It is advisable to wear comfortable clothes for training. Remember you also breathe through your skin. Go barefoot or use socks.
- » Avoid rich meals for at least an hour before the session.
- » Patience, perseverance and constancy will be the best companions for your progress.
- » It must be born in mind that doing the exercises of the advanced system requires you to have a “strong powerhouse” and NOT to suffer from any acute pain or injure.
- » Work in silence so you can listen to your needs, difficulties and progress.

• NOSE BREATHING

The nose filters, hydrates and directs the air towards the lungs, it warms the air, gives us the sense of smell, brings oxygen, creates mucus, drains the sinuses and affects the nervous system. Breathing and mind are interrelated; if you hold your breath, your mind will be alerted, if breathing is irregular, your mind loses focus. Being in command of our breathing makes our minds stronger and enhances concentration.

Joe Pilates used to say that “to breathe correctly, one must inhale deeply and then exhale all the air from the lungs as if wringing a soaked towel”.

EXERCISES ON

THE CADILLAC



COMPONENTS OF THE CADILLAC

- » Push bar
- » Roll back bar
- » Hanging straps (2)
- » 2 arm springs
- » 2 leg springs
- » 2 leg spring straps
- » Mat strap
- » 1 or 2 lower springs for the push bar
- » 1 or 2 upper springs for the push bar
- » 2 safety chains
- » 4 poles (one at each corner of the apparatus)

- » 4 crossbars on the upper metallic structure
- » 2 leg spring hooks
- » 2 outer hooks in the arm spring section
- » 2 outer hooks for arm or leg springs in the lower section
- » 4 hooks for the push bar (2 upper + 2 lower)
- » Trapeze
- » Trapeze strap
- » Double hooks
- » Blocking screws for the trapeze
- » Apparatus framework
- » Bar for the Spread Eagle exercise

• **EXERCISES ON THE CADILLAC: LIST OF FREQUENT EXERCISES**

- » EXERCISES WITH THE ROLL BACK BAR
- » Rolling Back 3-5 x
- » Rolling Back with One Arm 1 x (weak-strong-weak)
- » LEG SPRINGS SERIES
- » Legs Circles 5 x in each direction
- » Walking 3 series of 5-8 x
- » Beats 3 series of 8-10 x
- » PUSH THROUGH SERIES
- » Push Through 3 x
- » Monkey 3 x
- » ARMS SERIES
- » Circles 3-5 x in each direction
- » Triceps 3-5 x
- » TRADITIONAL ENDING SERIES
- » Breathing 3 x

- » Spread Eagle 3 x
- » Pull Ups 1-3 series of 3 x
- » Hanging Pull Ups 2 series of 3 x
- » Half Hanging
- » Hanging

• **OTHER EXERCISES**

» LEG SPRINGS SERIES

- * Frog in Six Counts 3 x in each direction
- * Bicycle 3 series in each direction
- * Little Circles 5 x in each direction

» SIDE BICYCLE 2-3 x in each direction

» LEGS SPRINGS SERIES UP IN THE AIR (whole Leg Spring Series except the Frog)

- * Airplane 3 x in each direction

» FLYING EAGLE 3 x in each direction

» PUSH BAR SERIES

- * Teaser 3 series of 3
- * Reverse Push Through maximum 3 x in each wrist position
- * Press Down / Mermaid 3 x / 3 x
- * Tower 3 x
- * Push Through on the Stomach 2 series
- * Hip Stretch 3 x with each leg
- * Shoulder Roll Down 2 series

» EXERCISES WITH THE ROLL BACK BAR

- * Chest Expansion 2 series

- * Thigh Stretch 3-5 x
- * Long Back Stretch Arms 3 in each direction
- * Rolling In/Out 3 x in each direction
- * Rolling Stomach Massage 3 x in each direction

» STANDING ARM SPRINGS SERIES WITH ROLL BACK BAR

- * Chest Expansion 2 series
- * Side Arm 3 x
- * Shaving 3-4 x
- * Squats 2-3 series o 2x

» STANDING ARM SPRINGS SERIES

- * Boxing 3-5 series
- * Shaving the Head 3-5 x
- * The Hug 3 series
- * The Butterfly 2-3 series
- * Side Arm 3 x
- * Fencing 3 x

I – PUSH THROUGH SERIES

- » Tower
- » Monkey

- **TOWER**

SPRING POSITION: down with one safety chain

REPS: 3 x

LEVEL: Intermediate

OBJECTIVES: elongating and stretching the lumbar section of the spine and sacrum, articulating and massaging the spine, back stretching legs and buttocks, strengthening hips

Starting Position

Fasten one or two safety chains to the pushing bar and hook one of the lower springs to the bar.

Lie on your back in such a position that the bar is above your head and hold the poles that are closer to your head with your hands, with your arms outstretched. Hold the poles with your hands above shoulder level.

Place your toes (metatarsals) on the bar, keeping your feet parallel and apart to hip breadth.



Movement

1st Part

Relax your knees and stretch your legs, making sure your rump remains against the mat. Do this three times if you are only performing the first part.



2nd Part

Do the first part once and, using your “powerhouse”, stretch your legs. Keeping your rump on the mat, push the bar with your feet rolling up your spine until the bar is above your shoulders. Keeping your hips up, push your feet against the bar at the same time you roll your spine down with control onto the mat vertebra by vertebra. When your rump touches the mat, relax your knees taking them to your shoulders. Repeat this movement three times.



Progression

Once your hips are above your shoulders, you can also flex your knees and take them on a parallel line with your ears to later, once stretched, roll down your spine onto the mat.



To Bear in Mind

- » Never forget to fasten the safety chains, and always do it before hooking the lower spring.
- » Practitioners with a weak spine must not learn this exercise.
- » Practitioners with a sharp lumbar curve or very rigid types are advised to start the first part of this exercise without stretching the arms on the poles. It is better to keep the arms flexed with the elbows pointing up (vertically). This position is closer to the



poles, and therefore makes it easier to keep the lower back flat. Before proceeding onto the second part of the exercise with the arms stretched, practitioners must be able to keep their whole spine flat on the mat.

- » When flexing and stretching your knees, work on keeping your rump on the mat, as well as on the alignment of your feet, knees, hips and shoulders.
- » Do not do this exercise at a too slow pace.
- » It is not an advisable exercise if you suffer from a weak spine or hip or neck problems.

- **MONKEY**

SPRING POSITION: down with one safety chain

REPS: 3 x

LEVEL: Intermediate

OBJECTIVES: improving lower back opening, stretching back and of back side of legs

Starting Position

Fasten one or two safety chains to the pushing bar and hook one of the lower springs to the bar.

Lie on your back under the bar and hold the poles with your hands. Take your chin to your chest and slide to the pole until your buttocks are just behind the bar's edge. Rest your feet on the centre of the bar and place your hands also on the bar next to your feet. Keep your box against your thighs.



Movement

At the same time you inhale, push the bar up taking your nose to your knees and keeping your box against your thighs. Stretch your body, taking it towards your stretched legs. Exhale and flex your feet. Inhale and stretch your feet while you take your body closer to your legs. At the same time you flex your knees and take them to your chest, exhale relaxing your back downwards and working intensely on your lumbar vertebrae.

Modification/Progression

The monkey can be performed with only one leg. The other leg must remain lying on the mat on a line with the hip. You must always finish by repeating the movement with both legs.

There should always be a reason to work on one single leg, for example suffering sciatica or strengthening a leg that is weaker than the other.

To Bear in Mind

- » Never forget to fasten the safety chains, and always do it before hooking the lower spring.
- » In many cases, the Monkey is more advisable than the Tower.
- » Remember it is your body that should move towards your legs. Rise with your box against to your legs.
- » Do not let your head fall backwards.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Esperanza Aparicio Romero and Javier Pérez Pont have worked as professional dancers for more than fifteen years, as soloists and leading dancers in several European companies.

In 1995 they discover Contrology, after training as Contrology teachers with the legendary Romana Kryzanowska and Sari Mejía Santo in New York. They remain for some time with their two teachers with the aim of perfecting their knowledge, and they ultimately obtain a Level II as international trainers of the organization.

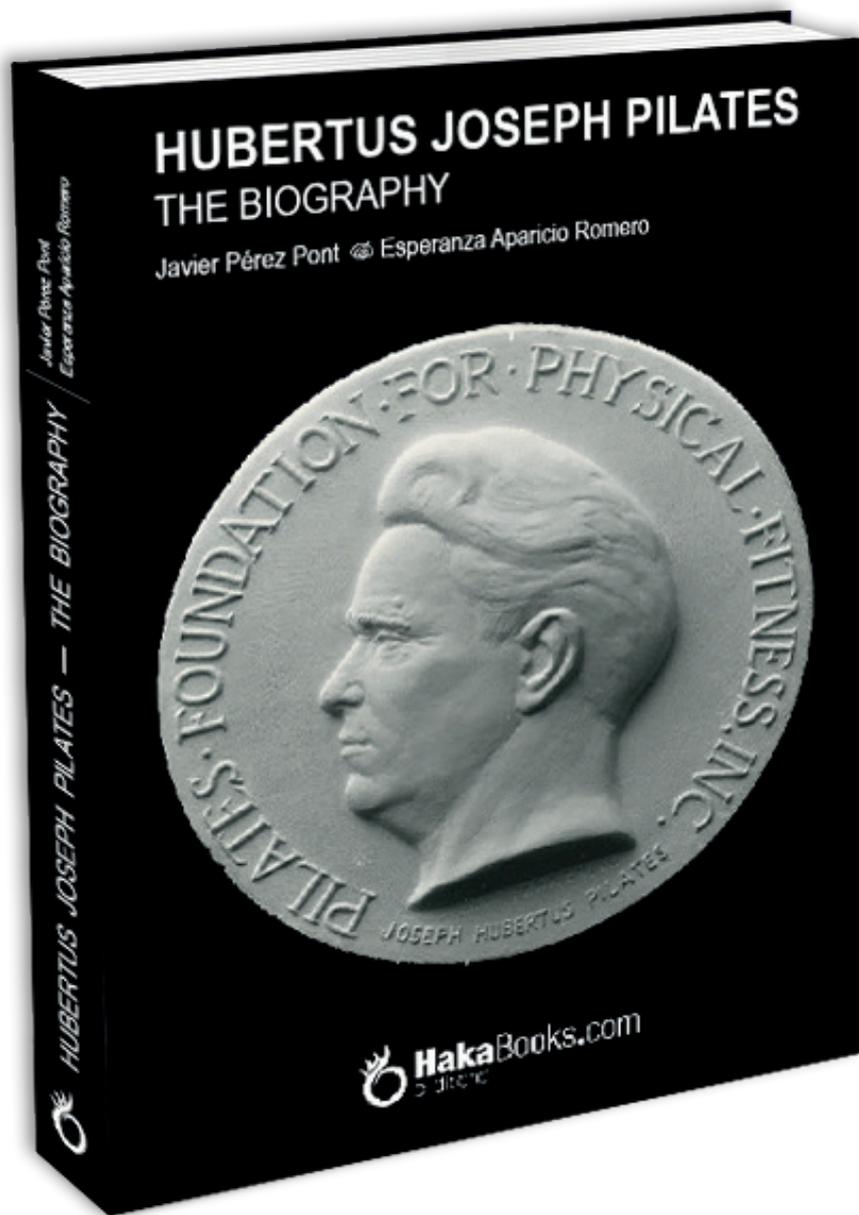
In late 1999 they decide to return to Spain and choose Barcelona as the site of what would be Barcelona's first Studio of Contrology, the first Contrology Studio in Spain to be endorsed and supported by their two teachers.

In 2002 they launch the Teacher Certification Program in Spain under the guidance of the two teachers mentioned above. During all these years, they have brought Contrology to a great number of conventions and TV and radio programs throughout Spain. Currently, and apart from managing their Studio and Teacher Certification School, they collaborate with the Romana's Pilates organization delivering international teacher-training seminars and classes.

Esperanza Aparicio and Javier Pérez Pont have published, in 2005, the first book about the method ever written by a Spanish author, under the title *El Auténtico Método Pilates, El Arte del Control* (The Authentic Pilates Method, The Art of Control) published by Martínez Roca, a part of the Grupo Planeta publishing house. The book has been a success, not only in Spain but also all over the Spanish-speaking American countries. It has also been translated into Portuguese.

And finally, they have just finished, after long years of research, the first and only biography to date of Hubertus Joseph Pilates. This biography is based on many oral testimonies, and also on official, historical and personal documents of Pilates himself. Under the title *Hubertus Joseph Pilates. La Biografía* (Hubertus Joseph Pilates. The Biography), this book will doubtlessly be a turning point on what has been believed to be true so far. The book has been published in three languages, Spanish, English and Italian.

<http://www.romanaspilates.com>.



For the first time ever we have the chance to find out the truth about Joseph Pilates.

A Book that will dispel the false myths concerning this historical figure, bring us closer to who Joe really was and what his Contrology meant.