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Get toned and trim in just four weeks with powerful Pilates moves, high-energy walks and healthy foods

You're exercising and eating right, yet your waistline refuses to budge. The fact is, as we grow older, we need to work harder to whittle our middle. A recent study shows that strength exercises, cardio and a shift in food choice cut twice as much ab flab as the typical low-fat and cardio plan. That's why we've come up with this three-part plan of ab-strengthening Pilates moves, cardio-boosting power walks and fat-busting foods so you'll see a slimmer mid-section and enjoy better health in four weeks.

bye, belly fat!

6 Pilates Power Moves

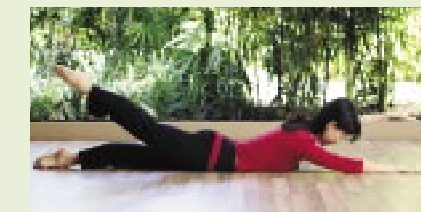
They may look graceful, but these six exercises are intense. Says Claudel Kuek of PowerMoves Pilates & Dance, "They are great for strengthening and tightening the abdominal muscles. After four weeks with these moves, you will find that your clothes fit better around the waist, your stomach is more taut, and you look and feel positively different from before you started." Do this workout at least twice a week.



1 The Hundred
Lie back with your arms by your sides. Lift knees and then stretch your feet, with toes pointed. Pull your belly button in toward the spine as you lift your shoulder blades off the mat, bringing your chin to your chest, as shown. While in this position, pulse your arms up and down for 100 counts (inhaling for five counts, exhaling for five counts).



3 Criss Cross
Lie back with your knees bent and your fingers laced behind your head. Lift your shoulder blades off the mat, and exhale and twist your left shoulder toward your right knee as you extend your left leg out, as shown. Pause at the inhale and then exhale to twist to the other side. Work up to 15 reps on each side.



5 Swimming
Lie face down on the mat with your legs and arms extended. Inhale as you slowly lift your left arm and right leg off the mat as high as you can (extending fully your arms and legs away from each other in opposite directions), as shown. Hold for one count and then lower to start as you exhale. Repeat on the opposite side and work up to 12 reps on each side.



2 Lower Abdominal Lift
Lie back with your arms by your sides and your legs extended toward the ceiling, with toes pointed. Contract your belly muscles and exhale to slowly lift your hips straight off the mat a few inches, as shown. Slowly lower to start on your inhale. Do this with control and without rocking the hips. Lift and lower for 10 reps.



4 Roll Up
Lie back with your legs straight and your arms extended overhead (but not touching the floor). Pull your belly button in toward your spine. Exhale as you bring your arms overhead and lift your shoulder blades off the mat, curling all the way up until your arms are parallel to your legs, as shown. Exhale again as you slowly uncurl back to start. Do this 10 times.



6 Plank
Lie face down with your legs extended and your forearms resting on the mat shoulder-width apart, hands in fists. Tighten your abs, tuck your toes under and lift your hips off the mat so that your body forms a straight line from head to heels, as shown. Hold for 30 seconds while breathing normally and then lower to start. Rest before repeating three more times.

The Experts

- Pilates director and studio owner **Claudel Kuek** of **PowerMoves Pilates & Dance** (www.powermoves.com.sg) at Asmara – The Garden Spa designed and demonstrated the core-strengthening routine.
- Personal trainer and director **Fenny Jamil** of **Gym 360** (www.fit360.com.sg) at Gallery Hotel designed the power walking workout.



Include interval walks to your walk routine – they work as moderate impact exercises that effectively burn calories.

Add Power Interval Walks

Interval walks let you burn calories for a longer period of time for better overall slimming. Adds Fenny Jamil of Gym 360, “Power walking is vigorous walking near the speed at which most people would break into a jog. It burns up calories as a moderate impact exercise without stressing the joints.” This workout alternates bursts of high intensity

activity with intervals of lighter activity. “This allows your body to better deliver oxygen to the working muscles. Muscles develop a higher tolerance to the build-up of lactate, hence strengthening the heart muscle. These result in improved performance and cardiovascular endurance.” When walking, use your full stride, landing squarely on your heel, then roll through the foot to push off strong with the toes. Pump your arms and work every muscle to maximise calorie burn.

Your Walk Workout At A Glance

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Week 1	Interval	Power Walk 30 mins	Power Walk 30 mins		Interval
Week 2	Interval	Power Walk 35 mins	Power Walk 35 mins		Interval
Week 3	Interval	Power Walk 40 mins	Power Walk 40 mins		Interval
Week 4	Interval	Power Walk 45 mins	Power Walk 45 mins		Interval
Week 5	Interval	Power Walk 50 mins	Power Walk 50 mins	Power Walk 50 mins	Interval
Week 6+	Interval	Power Walk 50 mins	Power Walk 50 mins	Power Walk 50 mins	Interval

WEEK 1: Walk It 1

TIME	WORKOUT	
3 mins	Brisk walk at a comfortable pace	Warm up
2 mins	Increase speed slightly higher than a comfortable pace to a slow jog	
2 mins	Walking lunges	This is 1 Interval; repeat Interval 4 to 6 times depending on fitness level
30 secs	Sprint	
1 min, 30 secs	Recovery: Slow jog to recover	
3 mins	Walk at a comfortable pace	Cool down
	Total workout time: 25 mins	

WEEK 2: Walk It 2

TIME	WORKOUT	
3 mins	Brisk walk with swinging arms	Warm up
2 mins	Increase pace to a moderate jogging speed	
2 mins	Walking lunges	Repeat Interval 4 to 6 times depending on fitness level
1 min	Sprint	
1 min	Recovery: Stationary jog	
3 mins	Walk at a comfortable pace	Cool down
	Total workout time: 24 mins	

WEEK 3: Stair Challenge 1

TIME	WORKOUT	
4 mins	Brisk walk with arms swinging	Warm up
2 mins	Increase pace to a moderate jogging speed	Repeat Interval 5 to 6 times depending on fitness level
2 mins	Walk up stairs (take wide alternate steps)	
	Jog down stairs	
1 min	Recovery: Stationary jog	
4 mins	Walk at a comfortable pace	Cool down
	Total workout time: 25 mins	

WEEK 4: Stair Challenge 2

TIME	WORKOUT	
2 mins	Brisk walk with arms swinging	Warm up
2 mins	Increase pace to a moderate jogging speed	
2 mins	Sprint up and down stairs	Repeat Interval 5 to 6 times depending on fitness level
1 min 30 secs	Recovery: Stationary jog	
5 mins	Walk at a comfortable pace	Cool down
	Total workout time: 26 mins	

WEEK 5: Hill Interval 1

TIME	WORKOUT	
3 mins	Brisk walk with swinging arms	Warm up
2 mins	Increase pace to a moderate jogging speed	
1 min	Knee-ups (jump and bring alternate knee up to waist)	Repeat Interval 5 to 6 times depending on fitness level
30 secs	Hill sprint	
1 min 30 secs	Recovery: Downhill slow jog	
5 mins	Walk at a comfortable pace	Cool down
	Total workout time: 25 mins	

WEEK 6+: Hill Interval 2 (add ankle weights to up the intensity)

TIME	WORKOUT	
5 mins	Brisk walk with swinging arms	Warm up
1 min	Increase pace to a moderate jogging speed	
1 min	Knee-ups	Repeat Interval 6 to 7 times depending on fitness level
30 secs	Hill sprint	
1 min	Recovery: Downhill slow jog	
5 mins	Walk at a comfortable pace	Cool down
	Total workout time: 26 mins	

Fab Flat-Ab Foods

Of course, if you down 3,000 calories a day, you can't expect to lose your belly. And there are certain foods that contribute to belly bulge: The ongoing Framingham Nutrition Studies report that women who ate almost 400 fewer calories, but chose the least nutritious foods, had a two-and-a-half times higher risk of abdominal obesity than those who ate that much more but made better choices. Add these to your must-eat list, and watch the flab peel off.

• ORANGE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

According to research by the Copenhagen University Hospital, women trimmed their waists when they replaced refined foods like white bread with carbs from fruits and veggies. They suspect it's the rich antioxidants, such as vitamin C and beta-carotene, that help ward off fat. Good sources of beta-carotene include carrots and cantaloupe, while oranges and berries are packed with



vitamin C. To keep calories down, pick vegetables over fruit, and fruit over juice.

• GET SOME PROTEIN

Too much protein may stress the kidneys and deplete calcium, but getting about 25 per cent of your calories from protein can have ab fat-reducing benefits. Skidmore College findings show that protein keeps you full and boosts energy, but leads to overall weight loss and reduced belly fat. Choose lean choices such as low-fat yoghurt, fat-free milk, fish and poultry. Nuts are also a good source but they are high in fat, so stick to five 30-g servings each week.

• MAGICAL MUFAS

A Spanish study shows that it's easier to stay slim eating monounsaturated fats (such as olive or canola oil) and omega-3s (found in fish, tofu and flaxseed), but omega-6 fats (prevalent in corn oil, eggs and baked goods) caused ab fat to pile on. There are five major categories of MUFAs ("moo-fahs") or monounsaturated fatty acids. Try to incorporate one serving of any of these at every meal: Oils (1 tbsp); nuts and seeds (2 tbsp); avocado (¼ cup); olives (10 large); and chocolate (¼ cup dark or semi sweet). **WWI**

