

Joe's Toe Gizmo[®] by Balanced Body



Joseph Pilates designed the Toe Corrector to increase the strength and flexibility of the toes and the feet. Balanced Body took the original Toe Corrector designed by Joseph Pilates and created a more durable model with spring weights that are more appropriate for the average client. We hope you will enjoy Joe's Toe Gizmo!

BALANCED BODY PILATES EDUCATION TOE CORRECTOR EXERCISES

The primary job of our feet is to respond to the surface we are walking on and to make all the adjustments required for the body to stay upright. Joe's Toe Gizmo helps develop strong, flexible feet and toes—essential elements for good balance, posture and performance, whether we are walking, running, dancing or jumping.

1) TOE FLEXION SERIES

This series is designed to strengthen the toe flexors creating a strong and flexible arch and increasing the strength of the back of the calf. This series can be helpful for:

- » Improving flat feet
- » Creating a stronger jump for dancers and athletes
- » Improving pointe work for dancers

Partial range of motion/ starting position

This series can be performed sitting in a chair. Place loop of Toe Gizmo around most distal joint of 1st toe and hold other loop in your hand. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1

The Exercise:

Lift toe off ground without taking metatarsal off floor. Pull on the Toe Gizmo to create resistance for the toe. Pull toe down to ground. After you have completed big toe, place the loop around each of other toes in turn and repeat exercise. Notice that you will need less tension on Toe Gizmo for smaller toes. Repeat 6-10 times for each toe.

Full range of motion/starting position:

This series can be performed sitting in a chair. Place foot on a small box with metatarsals on box and toes off edge of box. Place one loop of Toe Gizmo around most distal joint of 1st toe and hold other loop in your hand.

Lift toe up into extension without taking metatarsal off box. Pull on the Toe Gizmo to create resistance for the toe. Pull toe down until it is below level of the. Repeat 10 times.

After you have completed big toe, place loop around each of other toes in turn and repeat exercise. Notice that you will need less tension on Toe Gizmo for smaller toes. The goal is to pull proximal phalange of toe below level of box and to pop knuckles up rather than to curl toe in. Repeat 6 - 10 times for each toe. Note: Keep toe straight as it pulls down as if it is strapped to a small board.

- » Try not to curl toes to stretch Toe Gizmo.
- » Move smoothly throughout range of motion.
- » Move the toe in a straight line and try not to let it move into adduction or abduction as it pulls. This is especially challenging with bunions.

Don't worry if all the little toes go together. Just focus on each one as you do it.

2) STANDING EXERCISES

This series is designed to increase strength of hip external rotation and to improve knee tracking.

External Rotation / Starting Position (Fig 2):

Place one loop of Toe Gizmo on each of big toes and stand upright with heels together.



Fig. 2

The Exercise:

Pull Toe Gizmo apart by sliding front of feet along floor. Initiate rotation by focusing on external rotation muscles in back of hips. Return to starting position with control. repeat 10 times.

Variations:

One Leg: Keep one foot still and externally rotate other leg. Switch sides

Plies:

Bend and straighten knees while maintaining tension on Toe Gizmo.

Relevés/heel lifts (Fig 2a):

Begin with feet parallel, turn legs out bringing heels together and pulling on Toe Gizmo. Rise up on to balls of feet, rotate legs back to parallel and lower heels. Rise back up on to balls of feet, externally rotate leg and lower heels back down.



Fig. 2a

Note: Stand up straight and don't look down at the feet. Initiate the motion from the hips not from the lower leg. Keep the knees lined up over the feet.

3) CORRECTING LEG ALIGNMENT

This exercise is especially helpful for clients who tend to internally rotate when they bend their knees. Starting Position: Place one loop of Toe Gizmo on each big toe and stand upright with the feet in parallel. (Fig 3)



Fig. 3

The Exercise:

Pull the Toe Gizmo apart just enough to feel a slight engagement of the external rotators but without changing the alignment of the feet. Bend and straighten the knees keeping the tension on the Toe Gizmo. The focus is to maintain the proper alignment of the hips, knees and ankles throughout the exercise. Repeat 10 times

Precautions:

Be careful with these exercises if you have any foot conditions that are currently painful or inflamed. Be especially careful with painful bunions, plantar fasciitis, neuromas and after any kind of foot surgery. If you have any questions about performing these exercises, ask your doctor, podiatrist or other medical professional if they are appropriate for you.