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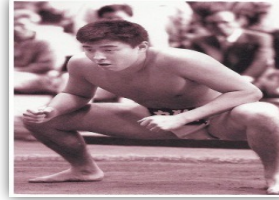
## OBJECTIVES

- Understand “How” and “Why” to use the Flexcushion® to alter intensity and create variations
- Learn the basic body positions used in Flexcushion Pilates®
- Explore some of the ways to use Flexcushion® with special populations



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## FLEXCUSHION® HISTORY



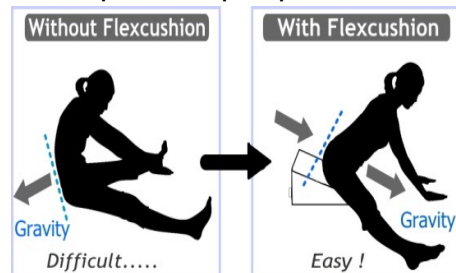
- Invented by Nao Sakata--Inspired by Sumo Training
- Research aided by Rikyo University
- Used by many top athletes in Sumo, Karate, Baseball, Basketball, Track and Field, Football, Hockey, Synchronized Swimming
- Applications for Fitness, Yoga, Pilates, Therapy- private and group training
- Not just a prop – a piece of equipment in it's own right
- Awarded Japan's Fitness Product of the Year 2010

*"Ju yoku go o seisu" - Flexibility Masters Hardness"*

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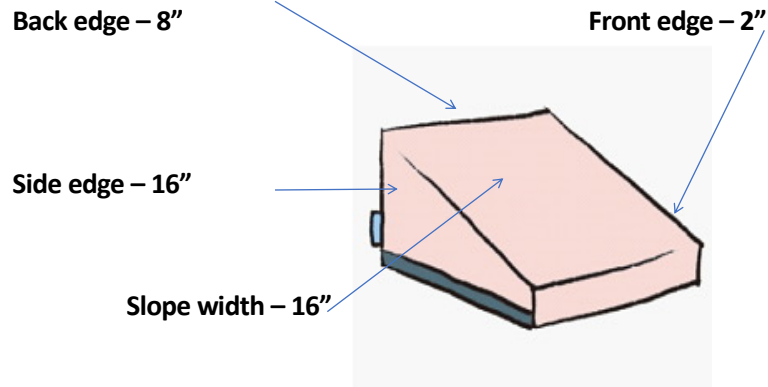
## BENEFITS

- Enhances body awareness
- Provides experience of isolation and integration of movement
- Improves posture & alignment
- Increases proprioceptive feedback & biomechanics
- Supports the neck, shoulder, back and hips
- Provides a portable solution for osteoporosis, pre-post natal work and special populations



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## ABOUT THE FLEXCUSHION



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## SAFETY TIPS

- Allow for ample room around the Flexcushion®.
  - Depending on the class type, determine suitable spacing and advise students how to space and place mats.
- Perform all exercises in a controlled manner.
- Center the body on the Flexcushion®.
- Do not sit directly on the back edge of the Flexcushion®.



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## ALIGNMENT & MOVEMENT CHECK

- Breathing
- Powerhouse/ Abs in and Up
- Centerline/ Box
- Frame
- Length & Opposition
- Critical Connections
  - Rib to Scapula
  - 3 Anchors
  - Heel to Seat
- C Curve
- Head in line with spine
- Perch
- Ease of Movement
  - Quality
  - Ease of effort
  - Differentiation



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## SUPINE HEADS UP

Purpose: Use for tight shoulders & chests, injured necks, severe kyphosis, respiratory conditions, obesity

- Center head and/or torso on Flexcushion®.
- Place inferior tips of shoulder blade near front edge of Flexcushion® if needed for shoulder support.



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## SUPINE- BACK ON SLOPE

Purpose: Use for back support, proprioceptive feedback, challenge.

- Center body weight on slope with sacrum on slope.
- Hold into slope with low abs & maintain axial elongation.
- Place hands under pelvis if needed.
- Keep head and shoulders lifting maintaining a smooth unbroken line from inferior tips of shoulders blades through the crown.
- Keep weight of head into core.
- Maintain legs in Centerline.



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## SUPINE - HIPS UP

Purpose: Use for tight and or weak low backs and hip flexors

- Center hips on upward slope- keep sacrum on Flexcushion®.
- Maintain connection of spine and Flexcushion®.
- Pull abs deeply in and up into slope.
- Extend arms along sides of Flexcushion® or hold the back edge of Flexcushion® lightly with hands.



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## SEATED- FRONT

Purpose: Use for tight low backs and hamstrings, use to teach proper pelvic positioning in a seated position.

- Position tighter people higher on slope.
- Sit with shoulders just in front of hips.
- Position weight evenly on both sitz bones.
- Maintain neutral pelvis.
- Allow 2 inches between body and back edge of Flexcushion® for safety.



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## SEATED SIDE

Purpose: Use to improve alignment of hips and spine for side seated positions such as Mermaid Stretch and making exercise more accessible for tight hips and low backs.

- Sit sideways with seat a few inches away from top slope.
- Place weight on both sitz bones
- Square Box.
- Lift both sides of the waist.



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## SIDE LYING

Purpose: Use to help students with shoulder and neck issues to take the pressure off the shoulder/ neck.

- Position body into slope on side, square Box.
- Align and active forearm of bottom arm down and into back edge.
- Create length and opposition
- Activate side body.
- Lift weight out of wrists and pull into upper back.
- Move higher up the slope for hip bursitis.



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## PRONE – HEADS UP

Purpose: For tight shoulders and chests, weak backs

- Place pubic bones on low end of slope.
- Align body down center of slope.
- Keep shoulders away from ears.
- Pull ribs and abdominals in and up away from slope.
- Open legs parallel , hip distance apart if needed to accommodate the sacrum.



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## PRONE- HIPS UP

Purpose: For gluteal strengthening, proper hip extension patterning, challenge.

- Distribute weight evenly between right and left sides of body.
- Align hip crease to back edge with pubic bones on slope.
- Place hands together palms down and allow forehead to rest on hands.
- Relax upper back and keep shoulders away from ears.



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## WEIGHT BEARING ON HANDS

Purpose: Use to improve wrist and forearm alignment, as an aide to carpal tunnel and other hand and wrist issues.

- Place hands so wrists are over the slope edge either at the front or side edges.
- Keep hands same height on slope.
- Align arms, do not hyperextend elbows.
- Lift weight out of wrists and pull into upper back.



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## KNEELING

Purpose: For tight hip flexors and hamstrings, to protect delicate knees.

- Place knee toward bottom edge of slope.
- Work to bring hip of back leg forward and hip of front leg back and down to square box.



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## STANDING

Purpose: Use for proprioceptive feedback, balance challenges, to aide in leg alignment, to stretch lower legs.

- Stand toward the front edge low on slope.
- Distribute weight evenly between right and left legs from the feet upward.
- Check all posture points.



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## MISCELLANEOUS POSITIONS

- Feet on slope/ top edge
- Feet gripping sides
- Under hands

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## THE LEVEL I FLEXCUSHION® PILATES EXERCISES

### Supine Heads Up

- Hundred
- Protraction/ Retraction
- The Roll Up
- Single Leg Stretch
- Double Leg Stretch
- Scissors
- Lower Lifts
- Criss Cross

### Seated

- Spine Stretch Forward
- Matawari Stretch
- Saw
- Open Leg Rocker
- Teaser 1 Leg
- Teaser I
- Mermaid
- Chest Opener
- Swimming Prep

### Supine Hips Up

- One Leg Circle
- Corkscrew
- Leg Series:
- Frog
- 3 Point Frog
- Circles
- Walking
- Scissors
- Beats,
- Rolling Spine Stretch
- Bridge Variations
- Breathing

### Prone Head Up

- Prone Arm Series: V, T, I
- Swan
- Pulling Straps I, II
- Chest Opener
- Swimming Prep

### Prone Hips Up

- Hip Extension
- Swan Dive Prep
- Single Leg Kicks
- Swimming Flutter Kicks
- Prone Beats

### Side Lying

- Side Kick Series:
- Front & Back
- Up and Down
- Passé Stretch
- Circles
- Inner Thigh Lifts and Circles
- Quad Stretch

### Weight Bearing On Hands

- Leg Pull Front Support Prep
- Leg Pull Back Support Prep
- Push Ups

### Kneeling

- Lunges
- Half Splits

### Standing

- Ab Roll Down
- Achilles Stretch

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## A SPECIAL PROP FOR SPECIAL POPS

- De-Conditioned
- Tightness
- CLBP
- Osteoporosis
- Stenosis
- Hip Replacements
- Athletic Training
- Pre-Post Natal
- Obesity
- Forward Head
- Arthritis



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## TIGHTNESS

- Seated: Forward Bend, Cobblers Pose, Matawari variations
- Side Lying Bicycle Stretch
- Prone Hip Flexor Stretch and Reclining Legs
- Kneeling: Front Splits and Lunges
- Standing: Achilles Stretch



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**CLBP**



*Support and Assist*

Supine FC under knees

- Imprinting
- 10 count breath
- Smiling abs
- Pelvic clocks
- Piston Legs
- Knee Fold
- Hundred

*Improve Gluteal Recruitment*

Prone Hips Up

- Prone Firing
- Single Leg Hip Extension
- Add Hamcurl
- Bent X Leg Hip Ext
- 6 Way Spinal

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**OSTEOPOROSIS**

Prone Hips Up:

- Femur arcs and circles
- Unilateral develop' / Bilateral
- Diamond leg lower and lifts
- Leg Series
- Quad Stretches

Prone Heads Up:

- V/ T/ I
- Pull Straps 1 and 2
- Prone Hundred
- Diamond Elbow lifts
- Double Leg Kick upper body
- Swan
- Quad Stretches

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## KYPHOSIS

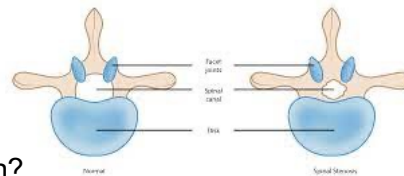
### Supine Heads Up

- Head Nods, Neck Curls, Capitut Circles
- Supine retraction/ protraction
- Rib Cage Arms/ Unilateral with 'look'
- Hugs/ Angel Arms
- Modified Hundred



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## STENOSIS



- Where do they hide extension?
- Improve axial elongation and spinal alignment awareness

Supine Heads Up: Hundred/ Roll Up/ Abdominal Series

Seated on Slope: Pelvic Clocks, Head Nods, SSF, Mini Saw

Seated in Front: Rolling Like a ball / Open Leg Rocker/ Teasers

Standing: Roll Down and Up

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## HIP REPLACEMENTS

### Supine Hips Up

- Knee Stirs
- Leg Extensions
- One Leg Circle
- Fans to midline
- Corkscrew I
- Small Circles

### Side Lying

- Side Kick Series: Bent Knee Swings, Clams, Bent Knee Circles, Inner thigh- (under knee)



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## ATHLETIC TRAINING

### Supine Hips Up/ Back on Slope

- Ab 5
- Bridge Variations
- Decline work

### Seated on Slope

- Open Leg Rocker Variations

### Seated Feet on FC

- \* Teaser Variations



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- Pilates, Yoga, Fitness, Therapy, Athletic Training, Personal Training
- Private or Group Teaching
- To help students with special health or orthopedic considerations
- For tight and /or de-conditioned students
- To help larger students feel comfortable
- For providing challenge more fit and experienced students
- Multi –level teaching tool
- One prop replaces many!

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## Sample Workout – Healthy Body Class

- Pain Management
- Connect to the PH
- Mobilize the spine
- Reconnect
- Arms
- Reconnect
- Legs
- Integrate
- Stretch
- Relax or Challenge



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*By expanding our deepest beliefs about what is possible,  
we change our experience of life.*  
*Dan Millman*

A photograph of a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a black tank top and black leggings, performing a wide-legged yoga pose (Prasarita Padmasana). She is sitting on a wooden floor with a light-colored block under her feet. Her arms are extended horizontally to the sides, and she is smiling. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

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## Thank You for Your Time & Energy

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Facebook: Pilates Solution

To order a digital manual contact Zoey

Ask me about the Mastery Program!

