

PILATES PASSPORT TO ANTARCTICA, PORTUGAL + THE FRENCH ALPS

# pilatesstyle®

www.pilatesstyle.com

# FAST

## RESULTS ON THE MAT!

TOOLS AND TRICKS TO GET **PILATES-FIT** IN RECORD TIME

### ALERT:

THE SIP THAT MIGHT BE CAUSING WEIGHT GAIN (& EVEN SKIN CANCER)

# YOUR HEALTHIEST SUMMER

GUILT-FREE BBQ • PRODUCTS FOR GLOWING SKIN • NEW EQUIPMENT

# EVER

## PRO BALLERINA

SHANNON RENÉE BYNUM: "PILATES KEEPS MY BODY STRONG TO PREVENT INJURY."

+ HER GO-TO ROUTINE!



# 39 TONING MOVES INSIDE!

AUGUST 2014

\$4.99 US

08





# BEAT INJURY, Ballerina STYLE

Pilates keeps Shannon Reneé Bynum, a real-life ballerina with Ballet San Jose and Pilates teacher, on her toes—literally. Steal her routine for staying injury-free, a better dancer and stronger than ever.

Story by Amanda Altman  
Workout by Shannon Reneé Bynum



LEFT: PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRISHA LEEPER; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY JOSLYN SOLIMAN; RIGHT: PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRITT GORMAN; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY AMY CARTER  
CLOTHES: LEFT BY LORNAJANE, RIGHT BY LULULEMON ATHLE TGA; PUBLICISTS NINICO COMMUNICATIONS



Here at *Pilates Style*, we're inspired to meet many professional-dancers-turned-Pilates-instructors. The main reason they've hung up their toe or tap shoes, we're told time and time again, is that a serious injury ended their turn on the stage. Although suffering the physical and mental hardship wasn't easy, the silver lining is that they discovered Pilates, which not only gave them the means to rebuild their bodies, but also an entirely new career, one that has changed their lives for the better.

It's not often we're approached by a practicing dancer, who wants to share his or her story on our pages. And one who also works as a Pilates teacher? That's something we don't hear every day! So when we discovered Shannon Reneé Bynum, Power Pilates—certified teacher by day and Ballet San Jose star by night, we were floored—and dying to know how she does it all.

The story of how the San Jose native, a beauty of Middle Eastern and Irish descent, discovered the method rang familiar: "I became injured from dance in 2009 and needed an exercise routine to stay in shape that wouldn't put unnecessary stress on my body," says Ms. Bynum, as she's often referred

to in the dance industry. "I started training and loved the work so much that I wanted to share it."

Luckily, Bynum's injuries, though pretty serious—a ruptured FHL tendon and torn ATFL in her ankle, which required a complete reconstruction, followed by a series of hip injuries, including a torn labrum and hip flexor, also warranting surgery—were repairable, thanks also to a brief hiatus and lots of Pilates. The fact that she was able to return to dancing after three surgeries was virtually unheard of. "My hips are never going to be the same, but if I didn't do Pilates, I wouldn't have the strength to do ballet. Pilates is the reason why I'm still able to dance."

Even though she's back in the spotlight, being a ballerina always brings the risk of getting hurt. "The biggest challenge as a professional dancer is the chance of injury," Bynum says. And that's where Pilates has continually come in: "Pilates has helped me to rehabilitate faster after injury and keeps my body strong to prevent further injury."

The method has also made her a better dancer. "Pilates has made me

more aware of my body—my strengths and weaknesses, and I even breathe better because of Pilates. It has helped make me physically and emotionally a stronger woman," perhaps the most significant reason she's made it so far in the industry, performing in lead roles, such as La Chef Bandit in Roland Petit's *Carmen* and The Fairy Godmother and Winter Fairy in Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*, and as a guest artist all over the world.

Bynum's passion for Pilates is contagious, and it wasn't hard cajoling her into spilling the moves that keep her in her tutu. The following intermediate-level workout is designed by Bynum to keep your body on point. "These are the exercises that are most beneficial for my body and help me be a better ballerina," she says. "Mind/body awareness and breathing are the key elements," as are coordination and stabilization. Bynum recommends doing them at least three times a week, but ideally every single day. While we can't promise you ballerina-like technique on the dance floor, we can guarantee you a stronger, healthier body. And that's something that will never be *passé*.

## THE HUNDRED

**SPRING SETTING:** 4 springs (heavy)

**PROP:** none

**PURPOSE:** warms the body; increases circulation

**SETUP:** Lower the footbar. Lie in the center of the carriage, holding the handles, with your knees pulled into your chest and forehead toward your knees. Extend your legs to a high diagonal, and lift your arms above your abdominal plane, keeping your fingers long.

1. Vigorously pump arms your arms, inhaling for 5 counts.

2. Vigorously pump arms your arms, exhaling for 5 counts.

3. Repeat sequence for a total of 10 times.

**TIPS:** Anchor the tips of your shoulder blades to the carriage. Keep your gaze focused on your navel.

**MODIFICATIONS:** Do the exercise with your legs in tabletop. Use a pillow for head support.

**ADVANCED:** Lower your legs, and adjust your inhale/exhale timing (i.e., inhale for 4 counts, exhale for 6).



### SETUP





## BACKSTROKE

**SPRING SETTING:** 2 springs (medium)

**PROP:** Long Box

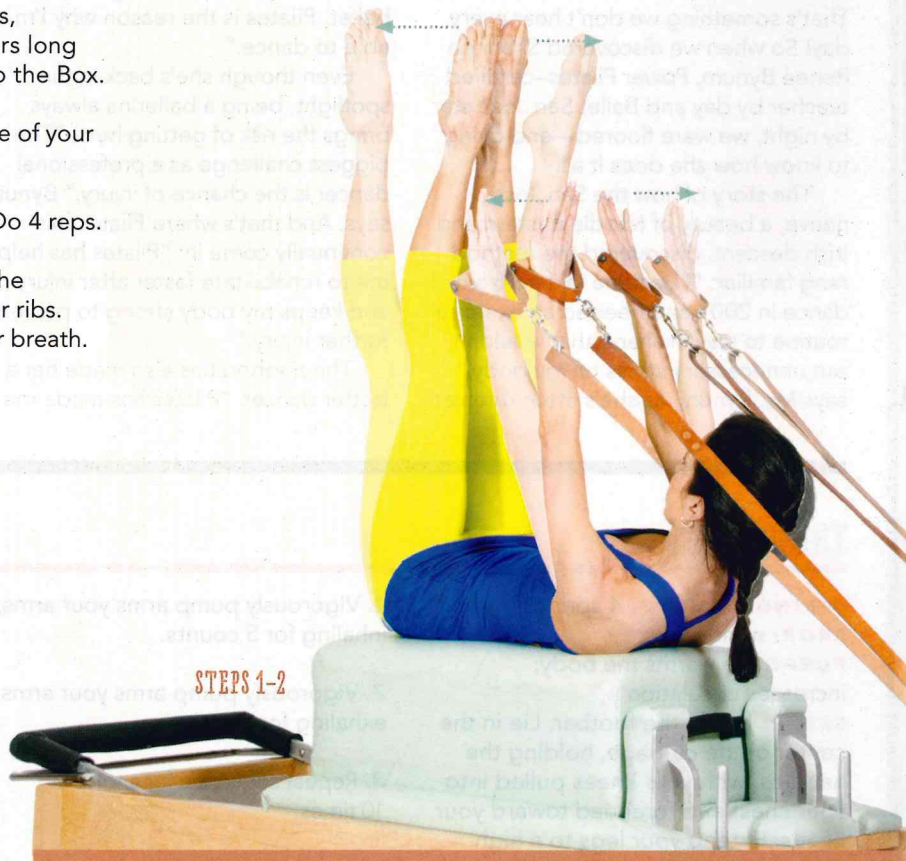
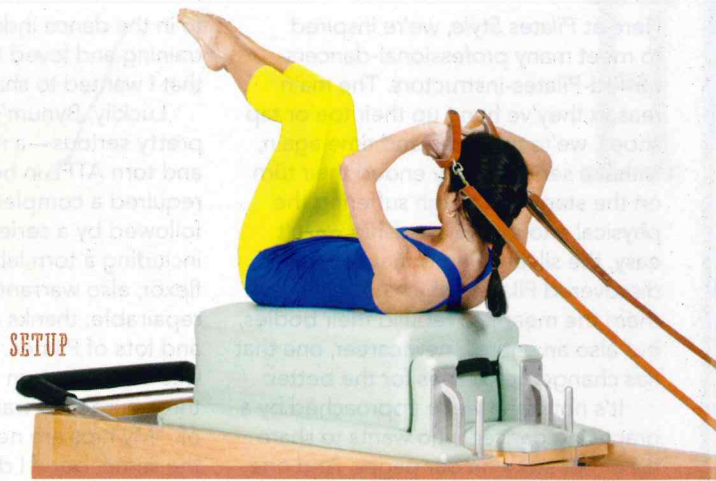
**PURPOSE:** targets the lower abdominals

**SETUP:** Lie in the center of the Box holding the handles, with your knees pulled into your chest and forehead toward your knees. Anchor the tips of your shoulder blades to the Box, and place your fists together on your forehead, elbows wide.

1. Inhale, extending your arms and legs toward the ceiling, palms facing forward and fingers long.
2. Open your arms and legs to hip width.
3. Circle your arms and legs out to your sides, keeping your hands above your thighs, fingers long and tips of your shoulder blades anchored to the Box.
4. Holding your breath, roll up just to the base of your ribs for 3 counts, scooping your abdominals.
5. Exhale, returning to the starting position. Do 4 reps.

**TIPS:** Don't try to roll up all the way—avoid the temptation to go further than the base of your ribs. Really scoop your powerhouse. Focus on your breath.

**ADVANCED:** Work on enhancing your flow.



The biggest challenge as a professional dancer is the chance of injury. Pilates has helped me to rehabilitate faster after injury and keeps my body strong to prevent further injury.

## GEAR GUIDE

Gratz Pilates Designer Reformer  
(\$4,595; [www.pilates-gratz.com](http://www.pilates-gratz.com))



## COORDINATION

**SPRING SETTING:** 2 springs (medium)

**PROP:** none

**PURPOSE:** enhances the mind/body connection; works the powerhouse and inner and outer thighs

**SETUP:** Lie on the carriage, holding the handles at your sides, with your legs in tabletop. Lift your head, neck and shoulders off the carriage, gazing into your navel, as you bend your elbows to a 90 degree angle, with your fingers long in the handles, palms facing forward and elbows hugging your midline.

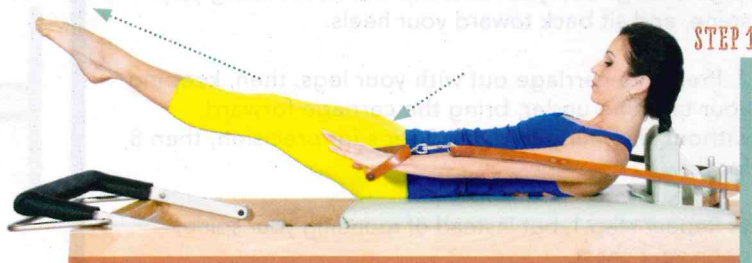
1. Inhale, shooting out your legs and arms at the same time.
2. Holding your breath, open and close your legs.
3. Exhale, returning your legs to tabletop, then your arms to the starting position. Do 8 reps.

**TIPS:** Use your own body's resistance when opening and closing your legs. Hug your midline.

**ADVANCED:** Instead of opening and closing your legs, add beats and wraps.



SETUP



STEP 1



STEP 2

## HAMSTRING CURL

**SPRING SETTING:** 2 springs for both legs (medium); 1 for single leg (light)

**PROP:** Long Box

**PURPOSE:** recruits the abdominals to target and strengthen the hamstrings

**SETUP:** Facing the springs, lie on your stomach on the Box, with your kneecaps just off the edge. Place the shortened straps on your arches, bending your knees to about a 90 degree angle, and hug the front of the Box with your arms, keeping your spine straight.

1. Anchor your hips, lift your abdominals and with precision, bring your heels toward your backside.

2. Release. Do 5 reps.

3. Remove 1 spring, and repeat with just one leg; do 5 reps on each leg.

**TIPS:** The key here is precision. If the springs are too heavy and your backside is lifting up, reduce the spring tension. After you perform the exercise, stand and do a forward fold to stretch your hamstrings. Breathe naturally throughout.

**MODIFICATION:** Use just 1 spring, and skip the last step.



SETUP & STEP 1



## KNEE STRETCH SERIES

**SPRING SETTING:** 2 springs (medium)

**PROP:** none

**PURPOSE:** increases abdominal strength and control

**SETUP:** Facing the springs, get on all fours on the carriage, with your knees hip-width apart and soles of your feet against the shoulder blocks. Place the heels of your hands shoulder-width apart into the footbar, fingers long. Curl your tailbone under, rounding your spine, and sit back toward your heels.

1. Press the carriage out with your legs, then, keeping your tailbone under, bring the carriage forward, without slamming it in. Do 2 reps for precision, then 8 for flow.

2. Repeat step 1, but instead of rounding your spine, open your chest.

3. Return to the starting position. Lift your knees 2 inches off the carriage, keeping your tailbone curled. Repeat step 1 in this position.

**TIPS:** Scoop your powerhouse and move with flow, but control the springs. The accent is on the forward motion. Breathe naturally throughout.

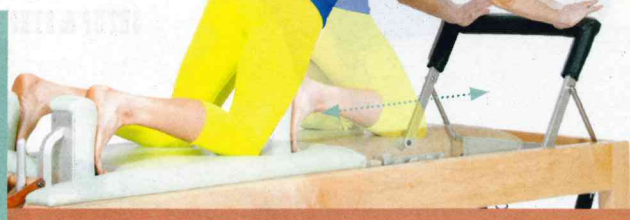
**MODIFICATION:** Omit the 8 reps for flow throughout.

**ADVANCED:** Concentrate on flow—don't pause between the steps.

### SETUP



### STEP 1



## PULLING STRAPS

### STEP 1



### STEP 2



**SPRING SETTING:** 1 outside spring (light)

**PROP:** Long Box

**PURPOSE:** strengthens the back

**SETUP:** Facing the shoulder blocks, lie on your stomach in the center of the Box, with your legs long and together. Hold the straps at the sides of the frame, with your arms straight but elbows soft. Keep your chest lifted and neck long.

1. Anchor your hips, lift your abdominals, squeeze your legs together and pull your shoulders down your back.

2. Keeping your arms straight, pull the straps back, gliding the tips of your shoulder blades together; hold for a count of 3. Do 3 reps.

3. Return to the starting position, and extend your arms out to your sides into a T position. Repeat steps 1–2.

**TIPS:** Position your body with your hips and shoulders on the tips of the Box. Think about “peeling” your chest open and keeping your collarbones wide. Breathe naturally throughout.



## SHORT SPINE MASSAGE

**SPRING SETTING:** 2 springs (medium)

**PROP:** none

**PURPOSE:** creates space in the lumbar spine using abdominal strength

**SETUP:** Lower the headrest. Lie on the carriage, and place the shortened straps around your arches, with your feet in Pilates stance (heels together, toes apart), knees bent toward your chest and shoulder-width apart. Keep your arms long by your sides and tailbone planted on the carriage.

1. Inhale, extending your legs out to a 45 degree angle, then overhead, bringing the carriage all the way in.
2. Exhale, lowering your knees toward your chest.
3. Inhale, rolling down one vertebra at a time.
4. Exhale, planting your tailbone down and elongating your spine.
5. Repeat sequence.

**TIPS:** Keep the carriage as smooth as possible—avoid slamming it. Hug your midline as your legs go up and overhead.

**ADVANCED:** Focus on your flow.



**Shannon Renee Bynum**, a Power Pilates-certified teacher, has danced many leading roles with Ballet San Jose, including: *La Chef Bandit* in Roland Petit's *Carmen*; *The Fairy Godmother* and *Winter Fairy* in Ben Stevenson's *Cinderella*; *The Mistress of Ceremonies* in *Graduation Ball*; and "That's Life" in Twyla Tharp's *Nine Sinatra*

*Songs*. Additional roles include: the Italian *Fouette* solo in *Paquita*; *Swanilda's friend* in *Coppélia*; *Spain* in both *Dennis Nahat's* and *Karen Gabay's* productions of *The Nutcracker*; *George Balanchine's Allegro Brillante* and *Who Cares?*; *The Gypsy Woman* in *Wes Chapman's* staging of *Don Quixote*; and *Jorma Elo's Glow*, to name a few.

Ms. Bynum toured with Ballet San Jose to China and Cleveland, has been a guest artist at *Festival Del Sole* in Napa; *Margaret Wingrove Dance*; *Pointe of Departure*; *MKF Altered Modalities*; *Dancers Responding to Aids*; the *Rawson Project Contemporary Ballet*; and performed with *Opera San Jose* in 2010 and 2011.

A proud San Jose native, Ms. Bynum made her Ballet San Jose debut in 2006 after receiving her training at many schools throughout the Bay Area and with the *Joffrey Ballet* and *American Ballet Theatre* schools. She is an *ABT®-certified teacher*, who has successfully completed the *ABT Teacher Training Intensive* in Pre Primary through Level 7 of the *ABT National Training Curriculum*. Ms. Bynum is also a *Gyrotonic trainer*. For more information, visit [www.shannonreenebynum.com](http://www.shannonreenebynum.com).

