

Focused, Zen, silent. Kerry Washington is all of these things as she performs an intense exercise move that would have weaker women grunting like Maria Sharapova returning a serve. After five years of dedication to a hard-core Pilates practice, the actress has abs of iron.

"Look at how strong she is!" says Pilates instructor **Nonna Gleyzer** in her calm, cozy West Hollywood studio, as her client tackles an advanced set of roll-back crunches without so much as a grimace. "And I don't give out compliments easily," adds Gleyzer. No doubt. The stern, self-described "body stylist" is a former member of Ukraine's rhythmic gymnastics team. Spend a few hours with Kerry, 35, and you realize that she approaches Pilates the same way she stares down many of life's challenges: with a resolve that suggests nothing is impossible. Take her work, for one. In *Scandal*—the first major network drama in nearly 40 years to feature an

African-American woman as the lead—she regularly clocks 16-hour days playing a crisis-management consultant who had an affair with the president of the United States. Then there's *Django Unchained*, the highly anticipated Quentin Tarantino film (opening on Christmas Day and costarring Jamie Foxx and Leonardo DiCaprio), for which she summoned the mental toughness for her role as a 19th-century slave who endures physical torture. But underneath that seemingly bulletproof (and totally toned) exterior, Kerry is caring and warm. "She thinks about everybody," says *Scandal* costar Darby Stanchfield, who likens Kerry to her on-camera

character, the unstoppable yet quite nurturing Olivia Pope. "After shooting a day in five-inch heels, my calves and arches were splitting. She sent me a contact for her masseuse and was like, 'You've got to get that worked out.'"

Kerry's explanation for why she's so tuned in to the body is simple: "I've never met anybody who's taken Pilates and doesn't understand their own body better afterward," says Kerry, who had her first session, with Gleyzer, after she pinched a nerve in her neck and shoulder area while working out with "a very famous" Hollywood trainer. "I lost feeling in my right arm, and it scared the crap out of me."

Ever since, Pilates has been the centerpiece of Kerry's fitness repertoire, which also includes dance classes, Gyrotonic training, hiking, and the elliptical machine. Because Pilates decreases stress as it increases strength, Kerry finds the hour-long sessions to be efficient workouts that aren't punishing. "You don't even want to be in your own body when [you] show up at the gym—I didn't for years," says Kerry, who battled body-image issues in the past. "As women, we live in this culture where it's like, 'You have to fix this.' Pilates has allowed me to be focused on my appearance and my health in ways that are not abusive or critical." Off the *Scandal* set and



Make Kerry's Winter Protein Shake!

This healthy concoction uses hemp milk ("It's great for my skin," she says) and is one of Kerry's favorite cold-weather breakfasts.

Combine in a blender and mix for 30 to 60 seconds:

1 scoop protein powder (Kerry's pick: PlantFusion Vanilla Bean, which packs 21 grams of nutrient-dense protein)

¼ tsp organic pumpkin-pie spice mix that includes nutmeg and cinnamon (Kerry likes Simply Organic)

4 to 6 oz coconut water (she prefers Pressed Juicery's version)

½ cup hemp milk
6 ice cubes

out of the Pilates studio, Kerry spends her rare free moments—we don't know how she has time for a social life!—looking out for other women's well-being too. She serves as a board member for V-Day, a global movement to end violence against women, and is an active member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities,

"It took five minutes of chatting with Kerry in our first meeting to realize that this was a woman I wanted to know," says Scandal (and Grey's Anatomy) creator Shonda Rhimes. "Kerry is someone who women want to be friends with, talk to, root for."



chaired by Michelle Obama. She spent several days this past year stumping for President Obama, which culminated with a speech at the Democratic National Convention in September. "Today there are people trying to take away rights that our mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers fought for: our right to vote, our right to choose, affordable quality education, equal pay, access to health care," she said, standing at the podium, ever poised. "We the people can't let that happen!"

"I looked at Kerry at the DNC giving that speech, and I just cried. I thought, *Look who she's become!*" says V-Day creator Eve Ensler, who met Kerry a decade ago. "Kerry cares deeply about the world. She's an activist. It's her life; it's not separate from her life. It's a huge part of who she is."

Back at a café in L.A., Kerry muses about how far women have come since the days of her *Django* character, Broomhilda. Olivia Pope "is arguably the most powerful woman in the United States, the opposite end of the spectrum with regard to education, power, and access. She is sort of the fantasy of Broomhilda," says Kerry.

Still, as unflappable as she seems, Olivia Pope, like most women, has a soft side. "At the end of the first episode, she's crying in a coat closet alone," says Kerry. "I think that's what a lot of us are dealing with in our lives—that we feel like we have to be so tough and so strong and have it all figured out. We live in a world where we do have the ability to be smart, bold, professional, talented women. But we also are vulnerable human beings, you know?"

Which brings us back to Pilates. Having a workout routine that strengthens and calms not just the body but also the mind helps Kerry achieve something most of us strive for: a life in balance. ■



She's an Eco Maniac

Kerry likes her food clean and her home green. "I try to be eco because I want to feel healthy and feel good about the things that surround me," she says. A few ways she's friendly to the environment:

She keeps a "clean" house. "I try to use nontoxic paints and do a lot of up-cycling and reusing stuff," says Kerry, who has an affinity for organic, cotton sheets and furnishings made from reclaimed wood. She's also a fan of Jessica Alba's The Honest Company, which manufactures eco-friendly family and home products. "It's such high-quality stuff," says Kerry, who travels with the hand sanitizer and uses it after workouts. "She's such an awesome woman for having done this entrepreneurial endeavor that comes out of being a mother."



She looks for eco versions of everyday items. If you haven't heard of Danny Seo, "he's like the green Martha Stewart!" says Kerry. "I'm always calling Danny [and asking], 'What's the green version of this?' He has these great new bamboo utensils—harder than maple and lighter than oak, as well as highly sustainable—and I just got a cutting board from him that I'm obsessed with."



She hits the farmers' market. "I like to buy produce that's local and organic. I try to check out the farmers' market in whatever city I'm shooting in. It's a good way to eat local and be engaged with the community."

She uses natural beauty products. Kerry gives a green thumbs-up to Tarte, a cosmetics line with natural ingredients and packaging made from recyclable or post-consumer recycled material. Her favorite product: Maracuja Divine Shine Lip Gloss in Blushing Bride, a plummy rose.

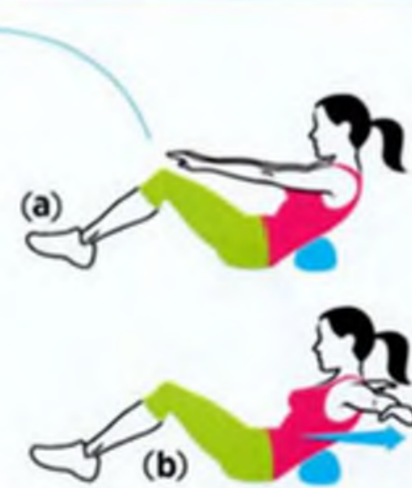


4 Pilates Moves for Every Body

Gleyzer—who's also worked with Madonna and Sting—designed this workout to make the most of her clients' core and gluteus muscles. "The first two moves are great for your lower abdominals, which can be difficult to reach," says Gleyzer. Moves three and four? Butt-tastic. "They're better than squats!"

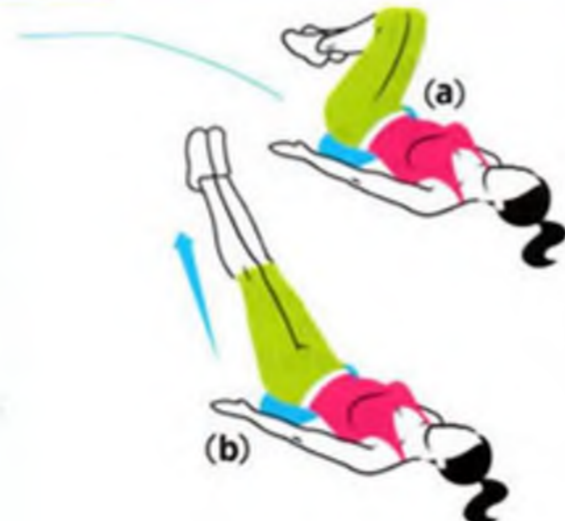
1 Roll-Back

Sit with your legs in front of you, knees bent. Place a Pilates ball at the base of your spine. Lean back and extend your arms out in front of you, palms facing down, and tighten your core (a). Open your arms out to the side and inhale (b); as you bring them back together, exhale. Do five to 15 reps.



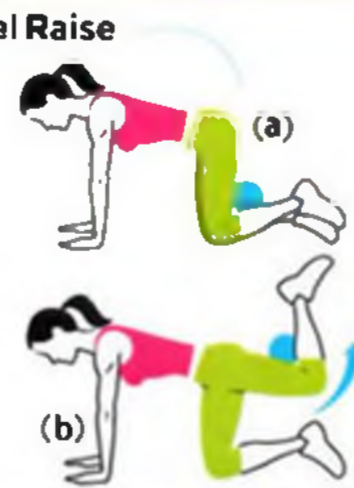
2 Double-Leg Extension

Lie on your back and place a yoga block under your tailbone. Bend your knees toward your chest and lay your arms at your sides (a). On the inhale, extend your legs up on a diagonal (b). Exhale, bringing your knees back toward your chest. Do five to 15 reps.



3 Pilates Single-Leg Heel Raise

Get onto your hands and knees, with your hands directly beneath your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Place the Pilates ball behind your left knee and raise your knee an inch off the floor (a). Raise your left heel toward the ceiling (b). Pause, then return to start. Do five to 10 reps, then repeat with your right leg.



4 Pilates Single-Leg Curl

Get onto your hands and knees, with your hands directly beneath your shoulders and your knees directly under your hips. Place the Pilates ball behind your left knee and raise your left heel toward the ceiling (a). Kick the heel of your left foot toward your butt (b). Pause, then return to start. Do five to 15 reps, then repeat with your right leg.

