Prana Pilates Level 1 Anatomy Questions

1. Core & Stability

1. What muscles make up your “powerhouse” or core in Pilates, and how do they work together to support spinal stability?

2. Describe what happens in your pelvis and spine when your core is under-engaged during a bridge or roll-up.

3. How does engaging your transverse abdominis differ from “sucking in” your belly?

4. Why is breath so essential for core activation and spinal health?

5. How does the deep core connect energetically to the Earth element in TCM?

2. The Spine & Articulation

6. List the four natural curves of your spine and their purpose.

7. What does it mean to “articulate through the spine” and why is that important for functional movement?

8. How would you describe the difference between spinal stability and mobility?

9. During Pilates roll-downs or roll-ups, what cues help maintain spinal articulation instead of momentum?

10. How might tension in the back body (fascia or muscles) restrict spinal flow — physically and energetically?

3. Joints, Alignment & Range of Motion

11. What are the main types of joints in your body and which are most mobile?

12. Explain why joint stability is just as important as flexibility in Pilates.

13. Why should elbows and knees never be locked out during weight-bearing movements?

14. How do you know if your range of motion is *functional* rather than *forced*?

15. Describe how hypermobility can impact joint health and energy flow.

4. Breath Mechanics

16. What is lateral breath, and how does it support Pilates practice?

17. How does your diaphragm move on inhale and exhale?

18. Which muscles assist your breath (primary and secondary)?

19. How does your breathing pattern change during effort or relaxation?

20. What meridian or element is most connected to breath awareness, and why?

5. The Pelvis & Lower Body

21. Identify the main actions of your hip joint and which Prana Pilates Movement is an example of each one.

22. How does pelvic alignment affect your lower back?

23. Why is it important to stabilize your pelvis during leg movements?

24. Which muscles are responsible for hip extension and stability?

25. What happens energetically when the hips become tight or overactive?

6. Shoulders, Neck & Upper Body

26. What muscles stabilize your shoulder blades, and how do they support posture?

27. How do you prevent neck strain during abdominal work?

28. Describe the difference between protraction and retraction of the scapula.

29. Why should shoulders stay away from ears during upper-body exercises?

30. Which meridians flow through the shoulders and arms, and how do you keep them open through posture and breath?

7. Movement Principles & Function

31. What does “initiate movement from the core” mean in practical terms?

32. Explain the difference between stabilization and articulation in movement.

33. What role does eccentric control play in Pilates (give an example)?

34. How does the principle of “breath leads movement” apply in your sequences?

35. Describe how TCM's concept of Yin/Yang balance can be observed in movement patterns (e.g., effort vs surrender).

8. Fascia & Energetic Anatomy

36. What is fascia, and why is it important for whole-body integration?

37. How does hydration and mindful movement support fascial health?

38. How does restricted fascia affect both physical mobility and energetic flow?

39. What are meridians, and how do they relate to fascial pathways in your body?

40. How can awareness of fascia enhance your teaching of fluid, Qi-inspired movement?

9. Nervous System & Mind–Body Connection

41. What part of your nervous system is most active during slow, conscious Pilates practice?

42. How does your breath and focus influence your nervous system state?

43. What cues or sequencing strategies can help regulate students experiencing stress or anxiety?

44. How do mindful transitions support nervous system regulation?

45. Which element in TCM corresponds most closely with nervous system balance, and why?

10. Safety & Contraindications

46. What are the key contraindications for Pilates practice (list three and explain why)?

47. Why is pain never a productive cue in mindful movement?

48. What signs indicate a student is moving beyond their safe range?

49. How can props or modifications support anatomical safety and accessibility?

50. What does “move within your edge” mean to you, both physically and energetically?