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**Lucy Liu is known for kicking butt in such flicks as *Charlie's Angels* and *Kill Bill*. But offscreen she's more likely to be getting *her* butt kicked—by her Pilates instructor.**

“Pilates introduced me to muscles I never even knew I had,” says Lucy, who stars as Dr. Watson on the hit CBS show *Elementary*. “Soon I started to feel longer and leaner. Ten years of Pilates has really changed my body for the better.”

In fact, at 44 the actress says she is fitter and healthier than ever. “I’m smarter, stronger and more confident than I was in my twenties,” Lucy says over lentil soup at ABC Kitchen in New York City. “I know who I am now, and I’m more accepting of myself.” Read on to find out how she got to her happy place—and how you can too.

**You always play fierce female characters. What's the toughest training you've done?**

*Charlie's Angels*, because it was eight hours a day five days a week. I thought I was fairly fit when I started, but I wasn't. The kind of moves we were doing with all the kicking—oh my god! I couldn't even lift my legs afterward.

# e lucy

**After years of doing tough-girl routines like kickboxing and martial arts, Lucy Liu finally discovered the secret to shedding the last five pounds. All it took was the right workout and a little help from her friends.**

**By Patty Adams Martinez  
Photographs by Brian Bowen Smith**

**You work 16-hour days shooting *Elementary*. How do you fit in exercise?**

I don't always, but I can do Pilates at home with a ball [see “Lucy’s Lean Routine” on page 28], and I have a treadmill. I run while watching *Downton Abbey*, and I increase the speed a little at a time, decrease it and then raise it again. Each time, I say, “Just another 0.2 mile.” I’ve found that running is the fastest way to lose weight.

**What does working out do for you?**

Pilates and running help to clear my mind, and they really strengthen me. Pilates has engaged

my core and made me feel more confident in that area. I don't have long legs, but through the combination of Pilates and running, they look longer and feel better than they ever have. And if I have time—which I don't these days—I'll take a yoga class, hike with [my chocolate Lab] Apple or go for a swim.

### How do you stay motivated?

A group of five of us—friends and friends of friends—got an e-mail chain going, and we all set goals: an ideal weight, inches we wanted to lose, eating habits we wanted to adopt. We would e-mail, saying “I ran today” or “I ate this,” and we'd share recipes. Then we would celebrate by going to a show or taking a Pilates class when each of us reached our goal. We also celebrated mini milestones along the way to keep our motivation up.

### What was your goal?

To lose the five extra pounds I've



*Fit and fierce: Lucy battled bad guys in Charlie's Angels and fights crime on Elementary.*

had for years, which I did. It may not sound like a lot, but for my height, it makes a big difference. And doing it with a support group of my girlfriends made it easier.

### Do you feel pressure to be a certain size?

Part of being an actress is that people are going to judge you whether you gain or lose weight—it's just sort of a given. But I've never had issues with food. When I was growing up, my family didn't have a lot. So

if there was food, I was going to eat it!

### How do you stick to a healthy diet when you're working crazy hours?

When I'm exercising, I'm not as likely to eat sweets and junk food, because I tend to feel really good about myself and my body, so I don't want to ruin it. I have only juice before noon, usually made with bananas and berries. If I'm really hungry I might have a breakfast burrito with spinach, a fried egg and tomatoes. For dinner I have fish with steamed vegetables or a salad. But I also eat veggie pizza or pasta, because when you're standing all day, it's a workout, and sometimes you need to carbo-load.

### You seem so zen despite your hectic life. What's the secret?

I've been meditating twice a day for about two years now. It's helped me so much! It gives me a feeling of comfort and safety, and makes me feel as if I'm part of a bigger plan. ●

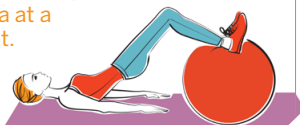
## Lucy's Lean Routine

To keep her body toned, the star swears by regular Pilates sessions. Steal five of her fave exercises from her longtime trainer Jared Kaplan, the owner of eco-chic Studio 26 in New York City. “Lucy does these on a reformer, but I've modified them for a mat,” Kaplan says. “Instead of counting reps, continue until just before your form starts to falter.”

### Semicircle

**Targets** butt, hamstrings

- Lie faceup on floor with knees bent 90 degrees and feet resting on a stability ball or the seat of a sturdy chair.
- MAKE IT HARDER** Position yourself at arm's distance from a wall behind you and press palms into wall.
- Lift hips so that body forms a straight line from knees to shoulders. Slowly lower spine to floor, one vertebra at a time. Repeat.



### Ice-Skater

**Targets** core, hips, butt, legs

- Stand with feet hip-width apart, hands on hips.
- Lower into a squat as you step right leg directly out to side.
- Step right foot back in as you stand up to return to start.
- MAKE IT HARDER** Using gliding discs or a towel on hard floor, slide foot out and back.
- Continue, alternating legs.



### Long Stretch With a Twist

**Targets** triceps, chest, abs, obliques, butt, hamstrings

- Start in full plank position.
- Bring right knee in toward chest; return to start, extending heel behind you, and bring left knee in toward chest.
- Bring right knee toward left elbow; return to start. Bring left knee toward right elbow.
- Lift bent right knee out to right side; return to start.
- Lift left knee out to left side.
- Continue to repeat series.



### Starfish

**Targets** shoulders, abs, obliques, butt

- Lie on left side in side plank position, body balanced on left elbow, feet flexed, left foot in front of right, hips lifted off floor to form a straight line from head to heels, right hand on hip.
- Rotate hips so that pelvis is facing floor. Return to start. Do 12 to 15 reps per side.



### Pike With a Twist

**Targets** shoulders, triceps, chest, abs, obliques

- Start in full plank position with shins resting on a stability ball, palms on floor.
- Bring knees diagonally in toward left elbow, keeping hips high while rolling stability ball down shins; return to start.
- Repeat, bringing knees toward right elbow. Continue, alternating sides.

