



MOMMY BELLY GONE!

5 Of The Best Ab Exercises
Tighten Your Waistline!

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Mommy Belly Gone!
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Introduction

Thank you for purchasing my e-book! This book is my “ah-ha” moment after having two children and helping clients get rid of their “mommy belly.” As a personal trainer for over 15 years, I’ve come across many women who have approached me wanting to lose their belly after their pregnancy. It could’ve been excess belly fat, skin from a growing belly or a weak core. A weak core? Yes!

There’s something to be said when people tell you, “wait until it happens to you.” When the body changes to accommodate for a growing baby, a woman’s abdominal muscles stretch and/or separate. The medical word diastasis, means separation. The recti muscles are the outermost abdominal muscles. So, diastasis recti is the separation of the outermost abdominal muscles. When the muscles separate, the connective tissue (linea alba) joining these muscles stretch. The job of these muscles (called rectus abdominis), is to support your back and your organs. After the birth of my second child, I noticed that I was having back pain. This back pain, coupled with my own “mommy belly” was a constant daily struggle. I thought, “Maybe it will go down after breast feeding.” “Maybe it takes longer after the second.” “Maybe I’m still eating too much.”

It took a picture of me so I could truly address what was going on. I did a test on my belly to see if I had diastasis recti and sure enough, I did! It was horrible! I looked at old rehab books from college, researched the internet, and used the knowledge gained through my certification of Pilates to come up with 5 exercises that would address the separation I had going on. Would they work? What about the other women I knew who were struggling with the same issue?

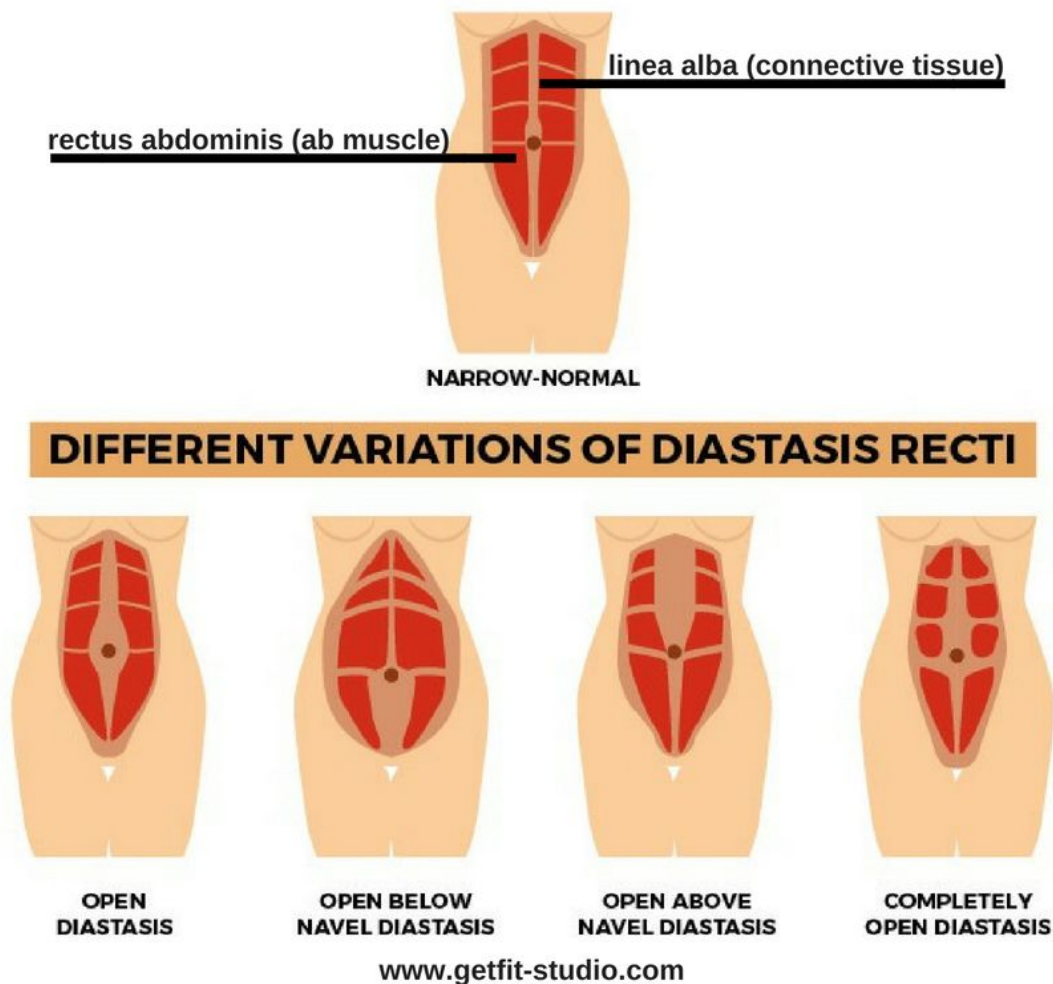
I took to Facebook in search of “friends” that would want to go through this transformation process with me. Interested in finding 5 ladies, 28 women came forward to help me on this journey. I created a Facebook group and together, for 8 weeks, we executed the 5 exercises, 2-3 times each week. Some of the ladies had multiple children, others just one. Some had their baby years ago and others were recent. After we completed the program, the results were amazing. Our core was stronger and our waist line was leaner!

That’s when this very book came to mind! I want to help you! I want you to be strong and feel good about yourself. I want you to be able to do common everyday activities with ease while fitting in to a new pair of jeans! I want you to see the results you have been looking for!

Now of course, I wouldn't be the personal trainer I am if I didn't mention nutrition. The best thing you can do for yourself is to eat well and stay hydrated. Your body responds to good nutrition by giving you fast results that last. As with any workout routine, please make sure you consult your physician before beginning any strenuous exercise. If you experience any pain or difficulty with these exercises, stop and consult your healthcare provider.

Chapter 1- What is Diastasis Recti?

As mentioned in the Introduction, diastasis recti is a separation of the outermost abdominal muscles. When the muscles separate the connective tissue (linea alba) joining these muscle stretches sideways. The job of these muscles (rectus abdominis) is to support your back and your organs. Diastasis recti can happen with anyone but it is most common in pregnant women.



You can do a simple test to see if you have diastasis recti, but also consult your physician to confirm.

Directions:

1. Lay on your back, knees bent with feet flat.
2. Relax your upper body.
3. Place 2-3 fingers above your navel.
4. Curl up your upper body as if you are performing a crunch,
5. As you are curling up, gently press down your belly with your fingers.

Key Notes:

1. If your fingers depress, more than likely you have a separation of your linea alba.
2. Don't force the movement of the crunch. Raise your head gently off the ground while looking in the direction of your navel.

Chapter 2- Exercises

The exercises I experimented on myself, alongside other moms, were adopted from my certifying body for Pilates, The Australian Physiotherapy and Pilates Institute. These exercises can also be found in physical therapy clinics used for rehabilitation in low back pain, pelvic floor problems associated with incontinence and also different types of knee pain. Do what you can and take your time. Breathing is important. Studies have found that the particular muscles associated with the pelvic floor actually contract efficiently when the breath pattern is executed correctly.

I always preach to classes and clients, “quality not quantity” when relating to range of motion for the exercise you are performing. I don’t care how far you take the movement, if you are shaking or the opposite side is moving, then you are not stabilizing as you should. Remember, the stabilization is not coming from the limb that is moving, but from the opposite side that’s not moving. This is called an isometric contraction.

Squats





Directions:

- 1. Stand with feet hip distance apart.**
- 2. Draw in your torso (engage your core).**
- 3. Bend your knees as far as it's comfortable.**
- 4. Pause for a one count hold.**
- 5. Stand back up.**

Key notes:

- 1. Make sure that you are looking straight ahead.**
- 2. Stand so that you have an equal distribution of weight on your feet.**
- 3. Keep your toes flat.**
- 4. Sit back on your glutes- as if you are trying to sit down.**
- 5. As you return to standing, tuck the hips back into a neutral stance.**

Bridges





Directions:

1. Lie on the floor with your knees bent, legs hip distance apart.
2. Relax your upper body.
3. Tuck your chin into a neutral position.
4. Scoop your hips off the floor, towards the ceiling.
5. Hold for a one count.
6. Release your hips back down to the floor.

Key Notes:

1. Do not tense up your shoulders.
2. Keep your shoulder blades on the ground.

3. As you scoop your hips, think of your spine as a string of pearls. You want to raise the pearls off the ground one pearl at a time. Lower down the same way.

Toe Taps





(modified starting position)

Directions:

- 1. Lie on the floor with your knees bent, legs hip distance apart.**
- 2. Relax your upper body.**
- 3. Tuck your chin into a neutral position.**
- 4. Raise one leg with knee bent over your hip, in a tabletop position.**



Directions:

1. Lie flat on your back with the knees bent, legs hip distance apart.
2. Draw your knees up over your hip (tabletop). This should be a 90 degree position with the legs bent.
3. Inhale to begin movement.
4. Exhale, lower one foot to the ground.
5. Inhale, draw the leg back up in tabletop position.
6. Keep exercising same side until repetitions are complete.

Key Notes:

1. Hips should be in neutral position.
2. Your low back remains flat on the ground.

3. Relax the upper body.

Heel Slides





Directions:

1. Lie flat on your back with the knees bent, legs hip distance apart.
2. Inhale to prepare your movement.
3. Exhale, slide your leg to the ground.
4. Inhale, draw your leg back to starting position, knee bent.

Key Notes:

1. Make sure that your spine is in a neutral position.
2. As the leg is drawn back in to starting position, think of the movement as zipping your pants.

3. This exercise can be performed on carpet or a hard surface. You may want to place a small towel under your heel if using a hard surface.

Leg Roll Outs





Directions:

1. Lie flat on your back with the knees bent, legs hip distance apart.
2. Draw your knees up over your hip (tabletop). This should be a 90 degree position with the legs bent.
3. Inhale to begin movement.
4. Exhale, release one leg off to the side, slightly outside hip distance.
5. Inhale, draw the leg back up in tabletop position.
6. Keep exercising same side until repetitions are complete.

Key Notes:

- 1. Do not lower leg close to the ground.**
- 2. The hips should not move or roll from side to side.**

Chapter 3- Recommendations

When executing these exercises think *quality not quantity*. You don't need a huge range of motion as you perform the exercises. It's about quality of the movement. Are you stabilizing correctly? Are you actually doing what you should be doing?

Next- don't rush. Understand that these movements go in sync with the breath pattern. Sure this can be done in front of a TV, but not while the cat is crawling on you or your children are calling for you. Execute each movement slowly.

The biggest point I want to make is that these exercises are designed to work the muscles that stabilize your core. This means, the side or limb that's *not* moving is where your focus should be. For example, one of the toughest of these moves are the leg roll outs. While the leg is released off to the side, the opposite leg should never move....ever. If you place your hands on your abdomen, as I do, in order to receive tactile feedback, you will actually feel the muscles engage to hold the leg in place. Perfect!

I'll be honest, you are not going to see changes overnight. If you had a baby, it took nine months for your body to change. So it's going to take some time to get you back to where you were. Consistency is going to get you there quickly. Keep up with the exercises and you will see and feel changes in just a couple of weeks.

Below is a sample workout plan. You may do the exercises one at a time or you can go through each exercise once and then repeat two more times. Stick with this and you will be able to move with ease, get out of bed easier, decrease back pain and slim down your waistline.

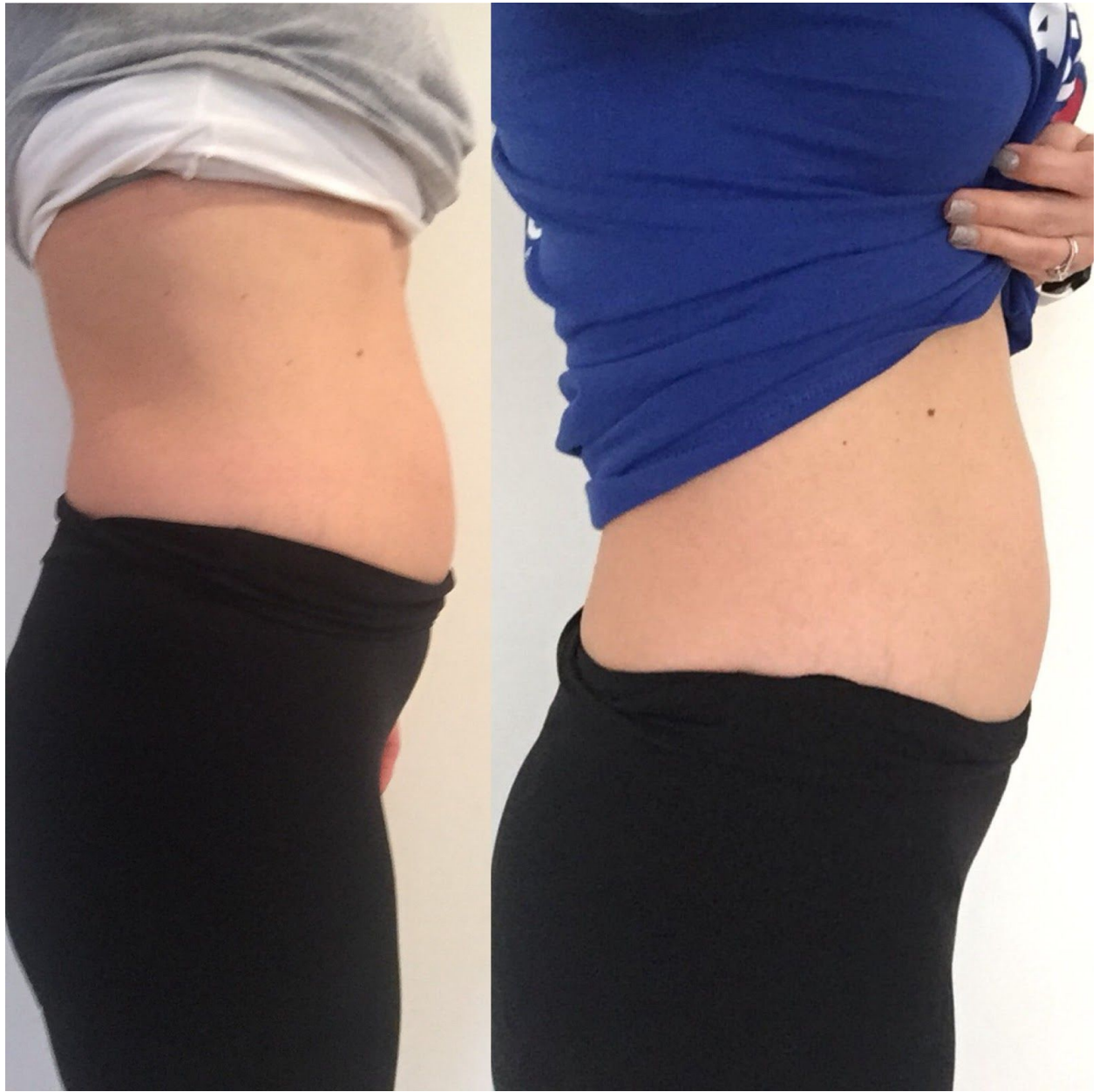
Exercise 2-3x/wk	Sets/Repetitions
Squats	3 x 10
Bridges	3 x 15
Toe Taps	3 x 10
Leg Roll Outs	3 x 10
Heel Slides	3 x 15

Chapter 4- Results

Someone once told me, “The proof is in the pudding.” At the time, I had no idea what that meant. As I evolved into the personal trainer and Pilates instructor I wanted to be, it became apparent. If all cylinders are working correctly, one should see results- subjectively and objectively.

I was pretty confident this program would work for me, but I didn’t know for sure if it would work for you. With the permission of the ladies who went through this transformation with me, I asked them to take before and after pictures. What you see below are two working mothers, with multiple children, who were tired of the way they looked and the way they felt. The differences in 8 weeks were phenomenal! I know you can do this too!





About Me



My love for fitness began when I was young, participating in dance and gymnastics. From there, I developed a niche in track and field, basketball and flag football, and later coaching the sports as well. Unfortunately, my competitive athletics came to a halt when I sustained a hip injury in high school. I moved on to college and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Sports Medicine and later a Master's in Business. Plagued by that old hip injury and two surgeries later, I backed down my activity to running, lifting and Pilates. At that point, I had to reflect on how I would like to physically function in the future. I

came to the conclusion to run, focus on my Pilates practice and lift using light resistance only a few days a week. Since I made a few changes to my workout regimen, I have been able to function with ease as a business owner and busy mom. I still have torn cartilage in the hip, but luckily, I have been able to avoid a total hip replacement by working out smarter, not harder. This renewed focus has produced better results than in the past.

Mommy Belly Gone! was written with personal and professional experiences in mind, relatable to many women. The results have both defined and supported workout literature. You don't have to push yourself to unattainable limits to see changes. Stay consistent, do what you can and be positive!

If you would like to receive more tips and insight on how to feel and look like the way you want to, subscribe to my weekly newsletter [Core Confident](#).

