



LIFE FITNESS NEWS

Express Yoga | Your Core, Part 2 | Standing Strong

Newsletter

- It's All About Your Core, Part 2.
- Express Yoga for the Summer.
- Our Agile 4 Life Fitness Inspiration.
- Check out the article in the Reading Corner.

Birthdays

A Very Happy Birthday to:

Jane Micallef - April 26

Madeline Dillon - May 1

Mary Hurley - May 17

Barbara Rosen - May 19

New Members

Welcome to our fitness family:

Sarah Stephens - Sarah is a neighbor to Bob and Madeline Dillion.

Peggy Church - Peggy is the sister of Julie Price.

Special note: Julie Price is recovering well from her hip replacement surgery and we look forward to her return!



It's All About Your Core, Part 2

by Joy Fletcher

In the Oct/Nov 2022 newsletter, I wrote about the transverse abdominal muscle. In case you missed it, the newsletter is in the **Content Library** @ Agile4LifeFitness.PunchPass.com or click: [4 Life News Oct/Nov 2022](#).

Very briefly, the transverse abdominal is the large deep muscle that wraps around the torso, from one side to the other side. Its major role is to stabilize your core and keep you balanced which is why I thought it worthy to highlight. But the transverse abdominal muscle is not the only hard working muscle that stabilizes your core.

Your back muscles also play a huge role in keeping you stable. In fact, they help to support the spine as well as the whole upper body. It's the back muscles that help with many of your movements, especially those that involve moving your head, neck, shoulders, and arms. They help you to sit and stand, and even play an essential part in helping you to breathe. When they work together, they allow you to bend over, twist, and extend your back. And of course, you can't have good posture without them.

In this article, I'm going to focus on just 3 of the 40 back muscles. The 1) latissimus dorsi, 2) the rhomboids, and 3) the trapezius.

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The Reading Corner - For Better Health & Fitness

- [Extra 20 Minutes of Daily Exercise Cuts Hospitalization Risk. Study from WEBMD \(2/27/23\)](#)

New Articles are added to the Content Library regularly.

Fitness Inspiration

Lynn Roberts is our next fitness inspiration. Like many of you, Lynn is quiet, doesn't call attention to herself, and doesn't see herself as anything special.

She was part of a group of dedicated ladies from the Berkeley Y Changes group. I've known her for about 8 years. I've watched her masterfully juggle schedules as she cared for her aging in-laws, her family, and as if she needed any more balls in the air, deal with her own health problems.

A bad virus about 12 years ago which started with peripheral neuropathy and fatigue, was later diagnosed as Sjögren's (SHOW-grins)—a challenging systemic autoimmune disease.

Lynn lightheartedly admits her balance is not good. Health issues have contributed and when you're a tall woman that makes life a bit challenging. As she freely admits, "Most of my favorite exercises happen on the floor, where I can't fall very far!" Although, she has mastered the curtsy with the arm circles and finds it's a great mood booster. Learning to give her proprioceptors time to kick in with multiple tries has also been helpful as she continues to work on her balance.

These days she has adopted the motto **Use It or Lose It**. She jumps into live classes when she can and fills in with videos. Her new fitness challenge is getting used to the new [Urban Walking Poles](#). The goal is "To walk as fast as my geriatric knees will let me."

The amazing thing about Lynn is she could have claimed a dozen reasons (or more) of why she couldn't exercise. In fact, she could have used COVID lock down as the perfect excuse. **But she didn't**. Instead, like many of you, she adapted to her circumstances, and strived for better health and fitness overcoming many obstacles. Even though she doesn't think so, I think you'll agree, Lynn deserves to be recognized as a fitness inspiration. 💖



Add An Express Yoga Class to Your Summer Workout

Memorial Day marks the beginning of summer, vacations, day trips, graduations, weddings, barbecues, and other summer gatherings with friends and family. To help you stay on track with your fitness during the summer, we're making a change to the yoga schedule. We've heard from members that they would like to take Gentle Yoga but find the 8:45am start time just a little early for their schedule. Lori has graciously agreed to modify the schedule for Wednesday class.

Starting **Wednesday, June 7th**, Lori will be offering an additional Gentle Yoga Class. The new Gentle Yoga will start later and hopefully be a more desirable starting time for those who have been wanting to add this fabulous class to their fitness routine. To accommodate, the new Gentle Yoga Class, Intermediate Yoga will be shortened just a bit. For those who already block out that time in their schedule, feel free to take both classes.

The shorter class times mean you can get your yoga in and have plenty of time to get other things done. And if the Stretch Class is a little too late for your schedule, this Gentle Yoga Class will be the perfect option. I hope you'll give it a try and let us know if it works for your schedule. We even have a fun new name for the classes!

- **Express Intermediate Yoga** from 8:45am to 9:10am
- **Express Gentle Yoga** (right after) from 9:15am to 9:45am.

Tuesday and Thursday will stay the same:

Gentle Yoga 8:45am to 9:45am

Friday Intermediate Yoga is currently the same:

8:15am to 9:00am

*Have a great summer. stay safe,
and don't forget your mask.*

It's All About the Core, Part 2 (continued from page 1)

The reason I'm choosing these particular muscles is because of the role they play in overall strength and posture. Good posture and balance can decrease your risk of falling. And when one fall can have a devastating effect on your lifestyle, it's good to work on the things you have control over.

Let's start with the latissimus dorsi, also known as the "lats". From the picture, you can see that it's attached to the mid spine, the bottom edge of the shoulder blade (scapula), then extends out and attaches to the upper part of the arm bone (the humerus) with the bottom edge extending down to the pelvic bone (the iliac crest). It's not only the largest muscle in the back, but it's the largest muscle in the body.

Because of where it attaches, the lats are responsible for a variety of movements that are done using your arms. These movements include pulling, rowing, swimming, and of course extending your arm(s).

The lats are also responsible for rotating the shoulders due to its attachment to the lower edge of the shoulder blade (scapula). When I recommend you "dig your shoulder blades under", as you're doing a back exercise, the object is to contract your back muscles to pull the shoulder blades down. This will not only provide more strength to the movement by contracting the lats, but will ultimately improve your posture by keeping your shoulder blades down in a more neutral position.

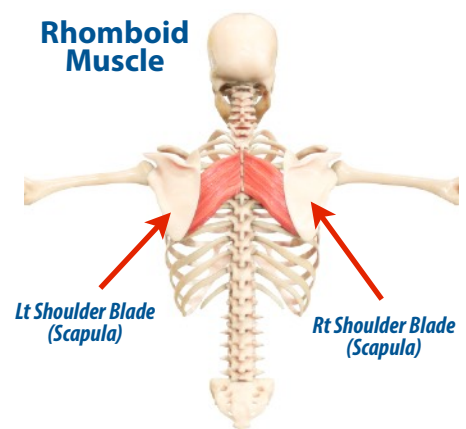
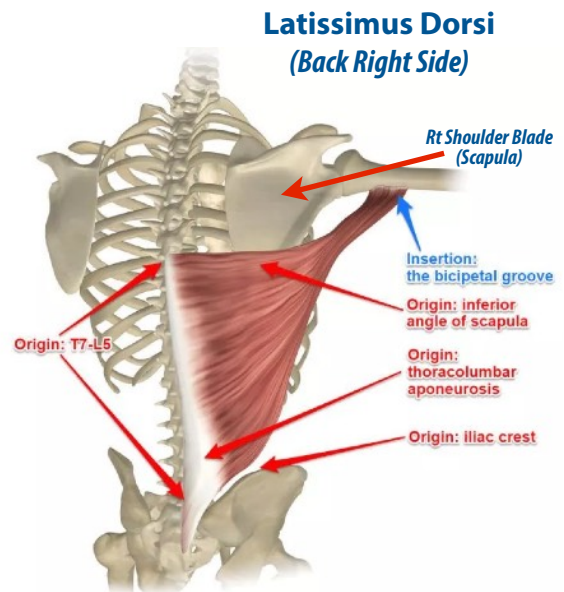
The lats are a powerful muscle and can be trained with a variety of exercises. In the **Agile 4 Life Fitness** classes, the most common strengthening exercises you do for the lats are a variety of rows, pullovers and deadlifts. Depending on the class, you'll perform these exercises with either dumbbells, resistance bands, or using your own body weight.

If you are looking to improve your strength, endurance, posture or balance, the latissimus dorsi is definitely a muscle you want to focus on. By training the lats, you'll improve your overall fitness and physique. Keeping your shoulder blades down while training your back muscles will improve your posture – helping you to be in a more upright position with less effort. This will also equalize the everyday forces pressing down on you (gravity), and help to improve your balance.

Next are the rhomboids which are part of the upper back. They extend from the spine out to the inside edge of the shoulder blades (scapula). Their main job is to contract the scapula inward toward the spine, or basically to squeeze your shoulder blades together.

Their diagonal orientation helps to reinforce the shoulder and gives the arm a stable base from which to move. Their location in the upper back means they are directly responsible for good posture.

If you have a slumped posture alignment, where the shoulders are rolling forward, the pressure exerted on the rhomboids can cause them to overstretch. And because they're attached to the spine, when they're being pulled forward, that will add pressure to the vertebrae of the spine. This can lead to extra wear and tear on the spine leading to pain



in the shoulders, neck, and/or back.

Last is the trapezius muscles or the “traps”. This muscle attaches at the top of the neck, extends across the width of the shoulders, and goes down to a “V” in the middle of your back. Similar to the other back muscles, the traps act as a posture stabilizer and a movement muscle. As a side note, the rhomboids are covered by the trapezius muscles.

The trapezius is made up of 3 sections, an upper (top of the neck), middle (from vertebrae T1-T4) and lower (from vertebrae T5-T12).

The upper section’s official action is the elevation of the shoulders. That means it’s the muscle you use when you shrug your shoulders. That movement however, actually involves the shoulder girdle (the scapula, clavicle, and spine of the scapula) so it’s sometimes considered to be a muscle for the upper limb (or arm) rather than of the back. The other function of the upper section is to allow the neck to rotate, tilt, and extend.

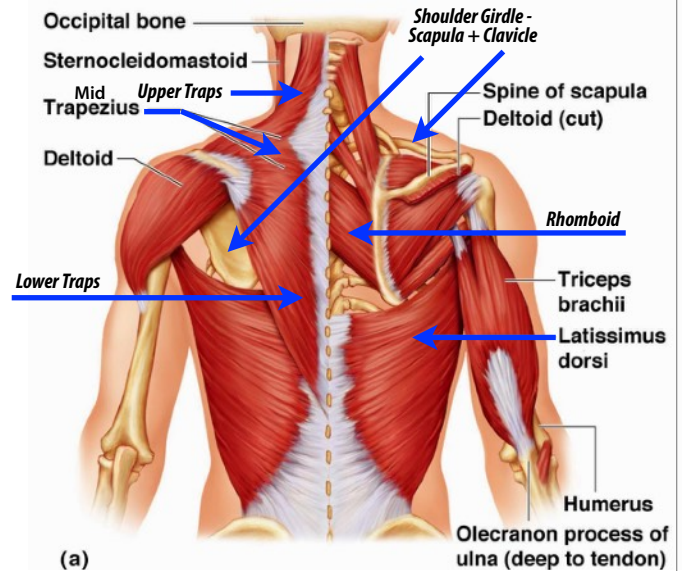
Again, if you have slumped posture alignment, it puts the shoulder girdle in a constant pulled-up and pulled forward position. This can lead to misalignment or chronic tightness of the traps which can cause headaches and pain. It can also limit movement in the shoulders causing loss of flexibility in the neck.

The middle section brings the shoulder blades back toward the spine. Plus, it provides stability to the shoulder during arm movements in a row exercise. In the **Agile 4 Life Fitness** classes that would be a bent over row or a seated row done with either dumbbells or resistance bands.

The lower section of the traps help to stabilize the upper and mid spine. It brings the shoulder girdle down which is the exact opposite of what the upper traps do for the shoulder girdle. Since the lower traps help to keep shoulder blades down while doing movements above the shoulders (like overhead dumbbell presses), weak lower traps can lead to shoulder pain and injury of the rotator cuff. And when your shoulders are less stable your overall strength will be adversely affected.

Some of the best exercises to strengthen the lower traps are done while lying face down on the floor and raising your arms above your head. That’s exercises like YT I’s, YT I W’s, super persons, and pullovers. While standing it’s exercises done where the pull motion is shoulder or head high like a standing chest press or bent over rows.

If all this talk about your back muscles has you a little overwhelmed, don’t worry. I got your back...and the other 610 muscles! As your personal trainer, I take my job seriously. You can count on me to continue to put together the best age appropriate exercises to work all of the muscles you need to stay strong, flexible, improve your posture, and do it all while having less pain or injuries.



Tell Your Friends:

The **Standing Strong** program - *a Seniors Guide to Fall Prevention*, will begin on Tuesday, August 29th. It will be a 12-week group program that meets twice a week over Zoom, with each session 45-minutes long. Participants will receive a free set of TheraBands and a full color e-book to keep. It will cover everything a seniors needs to get stronger to improve balance. If you or anyone you know is interested, please let me know. **More info is coming soon.**

