

RESTORE THE HEALTH OF YOUR



LOW BACK

**4 - WEEK GENTLE AND EFFECTIVE
STRETCH & EXERCISE PROGRAM**



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SUMMARY

4 - WEEK PROGRAM

WHAT IS CORRECTIVE EXERCISE?

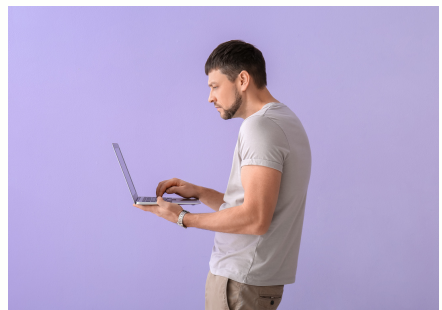
This program is based in Corrective Exercise (CE).

CE is a type of fitness training that focuses on joint and muscle tissue health (vs. growing muscle size or losing inches). A CE coach assesses three things :

1. how well your joints align (your posture)
2. how well your joints move (in exercise or everyday activity)
3. which muscles are being used when you move

Chronic joint and muscle discomfort can be a sign that we don't have great posture AND we're using the wrong muscles for movement.

Poor posture paired with the wrong muscle work can stress your joints and muscles over time which can lead to frequent joint and muscle discomfort, tightness, or pain.



SUMMARY

You'll be following a corrective exercise (CE) program for the next 4 weeks and here is what to expect.



WHAT TO EXPECT

In 4 weeks this gentle program will help you improve the health of your low back by :

- decreasing muscle tension
- improving hip and mid-back mobility
- improving low back stability and alignment.



HOW IT WORKS

- Get the recommended equipment (see page 4) if you don't have it already.
- Complete the stretches or exercises daily (as recommended) in the program.
- Stay consistent 😊
- Read the weekly details for a better understanding of what you're doing and why.



WHY IT WORKS

- The program helps ease tension in tight muscles in the low back which also helps improve circulation to the area.
- This program helps you gently improve the posture of your low back which will ease stress on the spine and muscles in that area.
- It helps you gently build strength in the muscles that stabilize the spine in the low back.

**See the disclaimer on page 5 for the full disclosure.

INTRODUCTION

Hello, I'm your coach Kelly Williams C.E.S.

CERTIFICATIONS & SPECIFICATIONS

- ICEI Certified Corrective Exercise Specialist
- AFAA Personal Trainer
- Balance Training
- Posture Correction

I'm Kelly Williams and I'm the owner of Restorative Fitness. I'm a certified personal trainer and corrective exercise specialist. I've spent 12+ years helping people restore their posture, flexibility, balance, and healthy joint movement.

I teach corrective exercise because I truly believe it



changes people's lives for the better. Corrective exercise is all about finding the right exercises for your body and your current needs. When you sync these together, you can start to eliminate your regular aches and pains.

Therefore, this type of fitness helps you physically feel better (less joint and muscle pain/discomfort) and restores your love of living life actively (vs. on the couch tired and in pain).

I'm so glad you're here! Cheers to you and your health!

- *Kelly Williams*

RESOURCE READY PAGE

Let's get you ready to feel better!

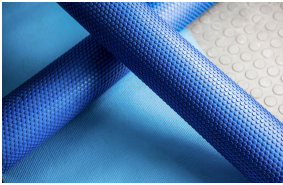
These are the recommended tools and props for this gentle program. Most of us have these tools, but you will find purchase links below if you need them.



YOGA MAT

I recommend the thinner yoga mats because thick mats can create instability. Use a yoga block or towel for extra cushion with thin mats.

Order here : <https://amzn.to/3KSsado>



MEDIUM DENSITY FOAM ROLLER

I find the 36 inch foam roller (longer) is more versatile to use, however shorter rollers (18 inches) will work too.

Order here : <https://amzn.to/45yMkRC>



MEDIUM - LARGE TOWEL

A full length bath towel is perfect for this prop. You can also use a couch blanket as well. I have not provided a purchase link because most of us have a towel or blanket to use.



2 YOGA BLOCKS

I recommend the thicker blocks (9in x 6in x 4in) because they are more stable, however any block size will work.

Order here : <https://amzn.to/3QQRKn5>



A PAIR OF THERAPY BALLS

I recommend these because you can use them both as a pair, or individually as needed. 2 lacrosse balls in a sock will work too.

Order here : <https://www.tuneupfitness.com/shop/massage-balls/yoga-tune-up-therapy-ball>

!!PLEASE READ THE DISCLAIMER !!

By participating in this program, you expressly assume all risk of property damage and injury associated with this Fitness Program. The Participant hereby agrees to release, hold harmless, and indemnify Restorative Fitness LLC and its owner from any and all claims by or on behalf of participant arising directly or indirectly out of the Participant's voluntary participation in this Fitness Program, and participation in any online program offered by Restorative Fitness LLC. Participants need to understand that Fitness Programs involve physical exertion, are strenuous, and that injuries may occur when participating in such activities. Participant understands that it is his/her responsibility to consult with a physician prior to and regarding participation in this Fitness Program(s). Participant accepts and assumes the risks associated with this Fitness Program(s), including, but not limited to: overexertion, inability to perform suggested exercises or maneuvers properly, physical or mental conditions that impede the ability to properly perform suggested exercises or maneuvers, and failure to follow instructions.

A photograph showing the word "DISCLAIMER" spelled out using individual wooden blocks with black letters, arranged in a single row on a dark surface.

WEEK #1 - GET STARTED

Practice 3x Daily

- the entire routine should take 10-15min (complete entire routine 3x a day)
- you'll need your mat, foam roller, towel (optional)
- watch a demo for each stretch/exercise [HERE](#)

(CHOOSE ONE OPTION)



OPTION A



OPTION B

DOWN PUPPY POSE – hold 20 sec : repeat 3x

Start kneeling on the floor, bring knees under hips, wrists under shoulders, & create a curve in your low back by "lifting your tailbone". Reach hands out in front of you & come down onto your forearms (option A). Stay here on your forearms, or start to slide your hands forward & away from your shoulders (option B). You can use the towel under your knees if you need extra cushion.

Keep head aligned with spine & knees centered below the hips. Slightly firm up your abs without losing the curve in your low back. Hold & breathe to lengthen through your spine & low back. **If you have shoulder pain, try option A.*

YOGA SIDE STRETCH – hold 30 sec per side : repeat 4x

Start kneeling on the floor (optional to use a towel under knees), bring big toes together & take knees to outer edges of mat. Sink your chest down between your knees & take your hands to the R side of the mat. Push back into L hip/heel & reach top L hand towards the R side of mat. Stretch from hips to fingertips. Repeat R side going to the L. **Bend your elbows if you have shoulder pain.*

LOW BACK RELEASE – hold 3 min : 1x

Sit in front of the foam roller (FRL) & bring it up against the back side of your hips. Lean back onto the FRL & press into feet & lift hips; gently roll up & over roller lowering your shoulders & head onto the mat on the other side. The FRL should be sitting where the hips meet the low back. Tuck your knees in towards you gently & hold & breathe. You have the option to stay here or do a gentle small rock from L to R. Shoulders stay touching the mat & not rocking up. **Skip this step if you have osteoporosis or stenosis in your low back.*

Get the details on what you're doing this week and why on the next page. [NEXT](#) ➔

WEEK #1 DETAILS - THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND WHY

- This week you are releasing tension in the muscles of the low back and helping them relax into a more comfortable position.

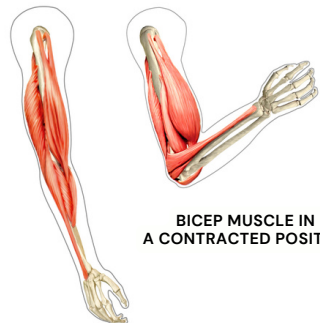
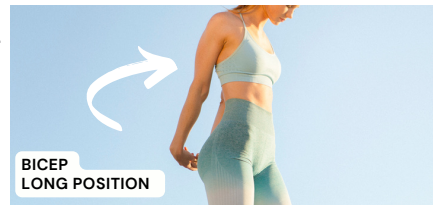
WHY RELEASE THE LOW BACK?

Healthy muscles like to be used in a full range of motion – this means a full contraction, a full relaxation back to the starting position, and (at times) a stretched (long) position. When muscles spend too much time in contracted positions (short position) OR in a long position (over stretched beyond the relaxed position), the muscle fibers lose their ability to contract and relax.

Losing the ability to fully contract or relax muscles can lead to them feeling tight or “ropey”, and can create pain or discomfort in those muscles. Think about a rubber band losing its ability to grip tight or to return to its taunt position after being stretched.

Week #1, we are focusing on the muscles in the low back – not the bicep. I just used the bicep muscle here as an example because it's easy to visualize the muscle positioning.

We start with releasing tension in the low back muscles so that those muscle fibers can start to contract, relax, and (if needed) stretch in a normal range again.



BICEP MUSCLE IN A CONTRACTED POSITION

BICEP MUSCLE IN A RESTED OR RELAXED POSITION

WEEK #2 - HERE WE GO!

Practice 2x Daily

- the entire routine should take 15–20min (complete 2x a day)
- you'll need your mat, towel, therapy balls, and foam roller
- watch a demo for each stretch/exercise [HERE](#)



FOAM ROLL LATS – work each side for 3 min : 1x

Start on hands & knees with the foam roller (FRL) in front of your arms. Come down to your R hip & reach your R arm out in front of you to rest the back of your R armpit on the FRL. Bend & stack your knees & start tiny up & down rolls (1/2 inch at the most). You should be slightly reclined backwards. After 1 min, move the roller 1 inch lower. Continue moving the roller down until it reaches your mid back (right above the low ribs).

**If your neck gets tired, use your hand to support it.*

**Use a towel under you hip if you feel pain on your resting hip.*



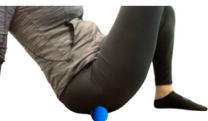
THREAD THE NEEDLE FULL – 5 reps per side : 1x

Start on all 4 – hands under shoulders & knees under hips. Lift your tailbone & widen your shoulders out, & pull them away from the ears. Stay here & reach L arm straight out to the side, then using only your upper torso twist up & lift L arm as much as you can without moving the hips or twisting in the low back. Hold 1 sec & then bring the back of the L hand to the mat (palm facing up) & slide the L hand under the R arm along the mat. Bend into the R arm to help get L wrist & elbow to mat. Hold 4 sec. Pull the L arm back out to the L side, & then return to all 4s. Repeat on the R side.

**Shift your weight back into your knees if you feel like your head is being “crunched” into the mat in the rotation.*

(CHOOSE ONE OPTION)

OPTION A



OPTION B

GLUTE RELEASE – work each side for 4 min : repeat 1x

(option A) Sit on top of foam roller (FRL) with tailbone center. Bring R hand back behind you & sink R butt cheek onto top of the FRL. Roll from bottom of cheek to the top, near low back. (optional to bring R leg into “Figure 4” position for deeper release). Repeat L side.

(option B) Start seated on the floor (optional to use a firm chair) with your knees bent. Place a therapy ball on the lower side of the R glute cheek where the “butt” cheek meets the back of the thigh & sit straight down on ball. Hold & breathe. After 30 sec move the ball ½ inch inward towards the tailbone. Hold & press. Repeat moving inward. Repeat the same on L side.

WEEK #2 - THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND WHY

- This week you are continuing to help the muscles in the low back relax and we're adding a release to the back of the hips.

WHY RELEASE THE HIPS?

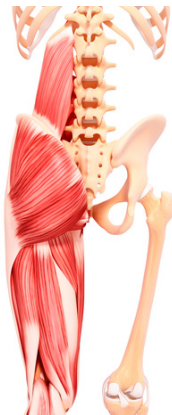
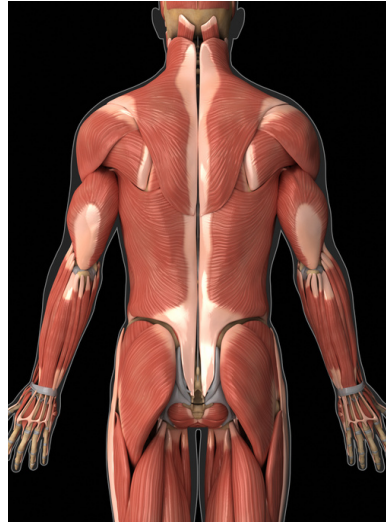
The low back is a junction where muscles from the back side of the pelvis and the muscles around the lumbar part of the spine (low back) meet and connect to each other.

Our soft tissues are very connected to each other and if we only address one area (like the low back) we won't find long term relief.

Imagine ironing a shirt and only doing the R side of the shirt. Or, imagine only putting makeup on one side of your face.

The skeletal muscles on the back side of the hips (aka the back side of the pelvis) like to fully contract and relax too like the muscles in our low back so we need to treat them the same.

Eventually these muscles need to be worked, but we can't work them until we get them moving again (not being stuck in a short position or over-stretched position). The fuller the range the muscle can contract and relax, the easier it is to use the muscle in exercise.



WEEK #3 - KEEP IT UP!

Practice Daily -2x

- the entire routine should take 10–15 min (complete 2x a day)
- you'll need your mat, yoga block, and towel
- watch a demo for [each stretch/exercise](#) [HERE](#)

LATERAL RECUMBENT THORACIC ROTATION FULL – 8 reps per side : 2x

Come onto your R side & support your head with a towel or yoga block (optional to support your bottom hip or waist with a towel or yoga mat). Bend & stack your knees & bring your arms straight out in front of shoulders. Stack your arms with palms facing each other. Keeping your spine straight, inhale & reach the top L arm up & over the shoulder by rotating through your ribs & shoulder. Pause at 90 degrees & if you feel no pain, slowly extend the arm further back by rotating through the rib cage. Don't let the knees shift. Slowly return to starting position. Repeat.

**Let the head go with you when you rotate back.*



ISOLATED ANTERIOR PELVIC ROTATION – 10 reps : 2x

Start on hands & knees with hands under shoulders & knees under hips (you can add a towel under knees or wrists if you want). Make sure your head & neck are in a neutral position & slightly push up between your shoulder blades. Maintaining this upper back position, lift your tailbone & then tuck your tailbone focusing on just moving your pelvis or "tailbone". Repeat slowly & focus on the control of the movement. Don't move the upper or mid back to make this movement.



BENT KNEE FORWARD FOLD – hold the fold 30 sec : repeat 6x

Start standing with feet hips distance apart. Bend the knees & sink your hips back as you slide your hands down the front of your thighs until your hands reach the top of your knees. Lift the tailbone towards the ceiling (create a low back curve) & keep your head looking forward & slightly up. Turn your fingers towards each other & bend the elbows to help you lift the tailbone. Without moving your low back position, slowly straighten your legs back about 1/4 inch back & hold & breathe. **Optional to put your hands on a couch, chair, or low table instead of your knees.*



Get the details on [what](#) you're doing this week and [why](#) on the next page.

NEXT 

WEEK #3 - THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND WHY

- This week you are practicing shortening and elongating the muscles in our low back and the back side of our hips with movement.

WHY PRACTICE SHORTENING AND ELONGATING MUSCLES?

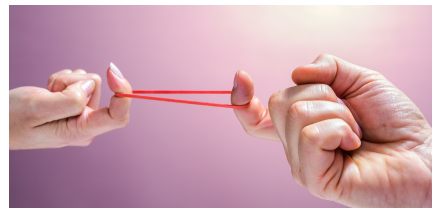
After week #1 and #2, we have the muscles along your low back and the back side of your pelvis ready for movement. This week we start gently moving them.

Gently moving means we are slowly contracting and relaxing the muscles to their fullest range in a repetitive cycle. We need to start gentle because if muscles haven't been moving in a full range of motion (contracted as much as they can and relaxed as much as they can) for a while, trying to force them into these positions won't work.

Imagine trying to force a worn out rubber band back to its original elasticity.

We have to re-train the muscle fibers to contract and relax in a healthy range. The slower and more focused you can do this, the better the muscles will respond. The better the muscle response, the less lingering tension you'll have in your low back.

Don't try to hurry or rush your exercises.

**MUSCLE FIBERS**

WEEK #4 - WRAP IT UP!

Practice Daily -2x

- the entire routine should take 12-18 min (complete 2x a day)
- you'll need your mat, towel, and foam roller
- watch a demo for each stretch/exercise [HERE](#)

**CAT COW – 8 reps : 2x**

Start on your hands & knees. Hands should be shoulder width apart with hands slightly in front of shoulders. Knees should be directly under hips & hips distance apart. Come into the cow pose by lifting your tailbone & lifting your chin making a large arch in your back. Relax the abdomen here. Slowly transition into cat pose by pushing your shoulder blades up towards the ceiling, rounding your upper back & tucking the tailbone. Firmly try to pull your hands apart here (they won't actually move apart. This will activate a widening between your shoulder blades.) Slowly release & move back into cow. Repeat into cat.

***Use the towel under your knees or wrists for extra cushion.**

(CHOOSE ONE OPTION)

OPTION A**HAPPY BABY (core exercise) HOLD : 30 sec : 6x**

(option A) Lay on back with knees bent & feet off the floor. Neck is long & flat. Breathe into belly, back, & ribs. DON'T FLARE RIBS or over arch the back. You want to maintain the neutral curve in your low back with your abdominal muscles. Don't let the low back flatten out or over arch. Squeeze down firm on your abs & maintain the low back curve & breath. (option B) Instead of having your feet elevated off the floor, have them resting in a slightly elevated position on a prop. The low back has to stay in a little curve & should not be flat.

***Use option B if your low back hurts in option A or put a rolled up towel under your low back.**

OPTION B**SINGLE ARM THORACIC ROTATION ON WALL : 6 reps per side : 2x**

Start standing with feet together & your L shoulder next to a wall free of objects. Extend your L arm out along the wall & turn your palm towards the wall as best as you can. Keeping your hand on the wall, slowly slide the arm up the wall so that it's over your shoulder. Don't move the spine to get into this position. Slowly start to twist through the midback & slide the arm back behind you on the wall while your head tries to follow the arm. Slowly untwist the torso & bring the arm back up over the shoulder & back to the starting position. Be mindful not to move knees.



WEEK #4 - THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE DOING AND WHY

- The final week we are adding in light strength work to the spine and hips.

WHAT KIND OF STRENGTH?

We often think of muscle strength as a big mass of muscle that is made by repetitive motions.

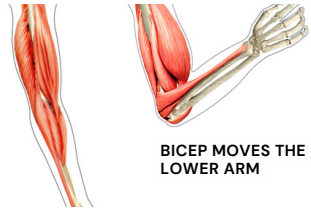
That is true for most of the muscles that move you. But we have muscles that move us (ex. the bicep bends the elbow) and those that stabilize us (e.g., the tiny muscles along the spine).

Our stabilizing muscles don't have to be really big in size to be effective. In fact, healthy stabilizing muscles usually aren't as big in size as your "moving muscles" and that's OK!

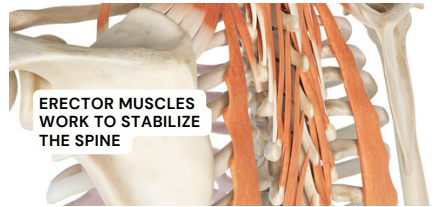
However, we can't use the "mover" muscles without the "stabilizer" muscles doing their job too. Picture a cheerleader pyramid - the person at the top can't do their cheer if the people below don't do their stabilizing jobs.

Weeks #1-3 have been focused on getting the mover muscles to relax into a better position and move in a healthy range (contraction and relaxation). Now we need to re-train the stabilizer muscles that support your moving muscles to do their stabilization jobs.

Training your stabilizer muscles will NOT feel like really heavy work or heavy lifting - not at this stage of the game. We need the stabilizers to be reintroduced to work and we do this with light and effective work.



BICEP MOVES THE LOWER ARM



ERECTOR MUSCLES WORK TO STABILIZE THE SPINE



YOU DID IT!

YOU FINISHED!

What's next?



#1 KEEP WORKING THE PROGRAM

You are more than welcome to keep going with this program to keep your low back in good working order. Feel free to pick and choose the exercises or stretches you enjoyed the most and use them as needed. If your low back gets really out of sorts, try the whole 4 - week program again. Or, if you'd like to learn more on how to get rid your low back discomfort, check out option #2 and #3 below.



#2 : LET'S DO A FULL PERSONALIZED ASSESSMENT

Sometimes you just need a little extra help to figure out why you're struggling so that you can find the right solution forward. I offer personalized assessments where I look at your joint alignment (posture), the health of the muscles around your joints, and how you move your joints. I use this information to give you a full picture view of why your joints and muscles don't feel great.

- I can do these assessments live online (or in office)
- I start with **FREE** consultations [BOOK FREE HERE](#)



#3 : PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT

If you have any questions, I would love to hear from you!

Kelly Williams C.E.S.

Contact@restorativefitnessaz.com

I would also appreciate any feedback you have on the program, your experience, and how we can improve this moving forward. I appreciate you taking the time to improve your health!

Share your feedback and comments with us here :

<https://forms.gle/XWdCypD4ERhfjTvUJ>

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