

Summer 2017 Pilates Challenge



August 1-31, 2017

About the Summer 2017 Pilates Challenge

This summer I've put together my 4th Annual Summer Pilates Challenge. Because the Challenge is for you, my clients, this year I asked many of you who have been working with me since the Challenges began and even before: **What would you like to see in your Challenge?**

There were two resounding suggestions: include exercises that **do not require a Pilates mat** and exercises using the **TheraBand** as its inexpensive and very easy to travel with! Your wishes have been taken into account: this year's Challenge incorporates the TheraBand and most of the exercises do not require a mat. For the handful of mat exercises you can use a rug, a beach towel or even a grassy lawn.

The **themes** this year focus **on alignment of the body and arm strengthening**. Alignment is especially important as many of the exercises are done standing or kneeling. The arms are called upon more than in an average mat class thanks to the TheraBand. The exercises that I demonstrate kneeling can also be done seated on a Fit Ball or a stool for people with knee injuries, pregnant women or anyone who would rather be seated.

How does it work?

To facilitate your participation, I have put together descriptions of each of the exercises accompanied by photos that illustrate how to do the movements properly. On my website you will also find a video file which you can download onto your Smartphone, tablet, computer, etc. Now that I have created 4 Challenges for you, feel free to mix and match. Maybe you'll do a different Challenge each day? They are all available on my website in the section "Try at Home."

After the descriptions and photos, you will find a Log to note where and when you did your Challenge routine each day, followed by a space for comments about your workout. I especially want to invite you to write down your goals for participating and share them, with me or with the whole community participating via my Facebook page.

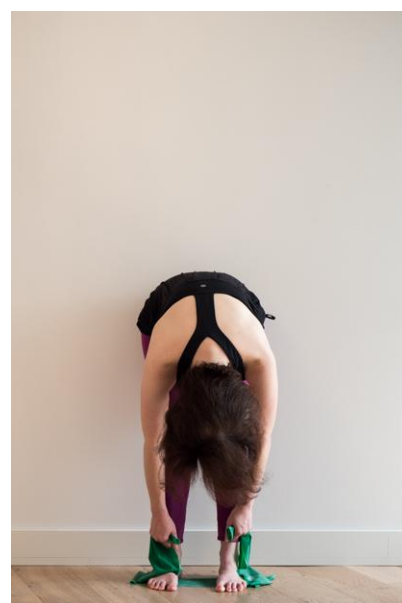
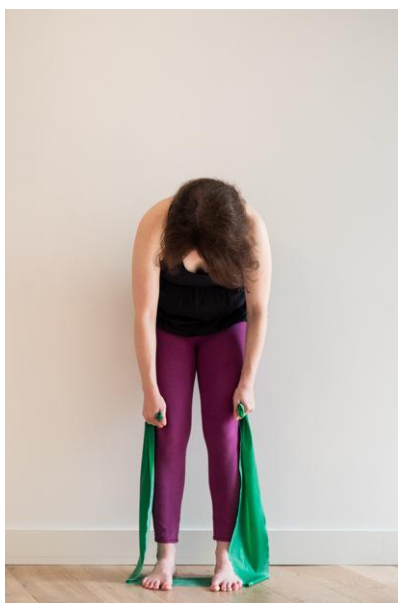
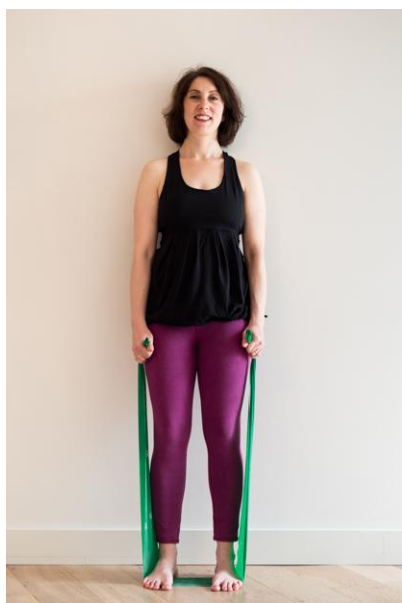
Enjoy this 4th Summer Pilates Challenge!

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Standing Spine Stretch Against Wall*



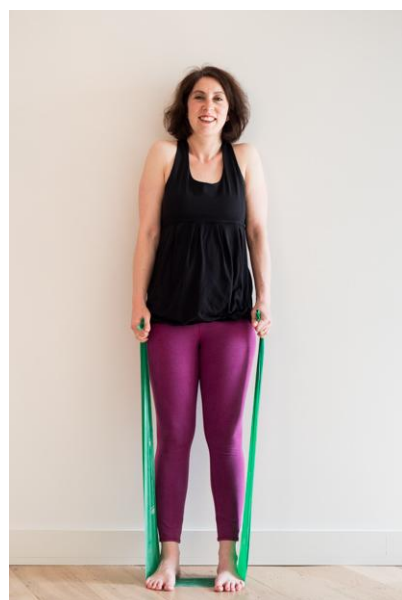
Repetitions: 3

Breathing and Instructions:

Place feet in the middle of the TheraBand on floor approximately a half of your foot size from the wall, align feet with the center of each hip socket – where the femur (leg bone) enters the joint. Take a moment to find your alignment: rib cage over pelvis and head over rib cage.

Inhale to release head downwards first, letting it feel heavy. Then continue to breathe while peeling the rest of the torso off the wall, the bottom remains against the wall. Keep legs straight to stretch. To go back up push the floor away with feet, start with an inhale and slowly stack body back against the wall: pelvis, rib cage, head.

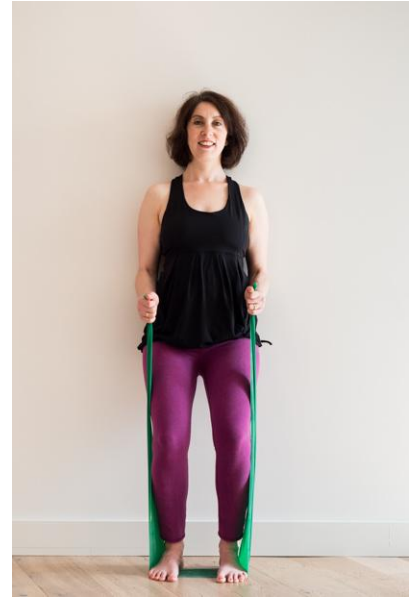
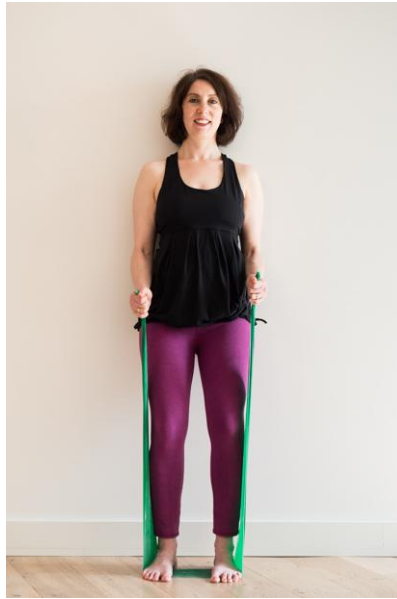
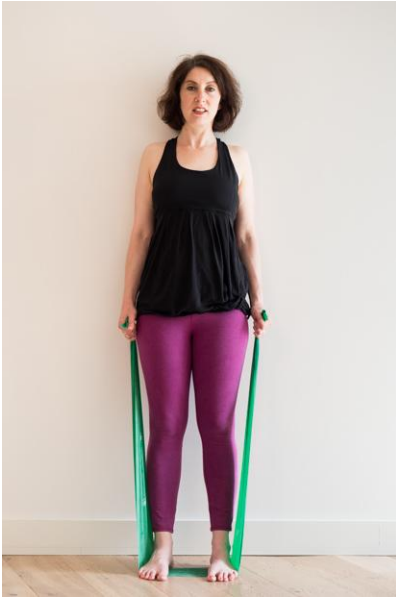
To finish remain standing and roll shoulders up, back and down 3 times.



**Thanks to Cara Reeser for the standing exercises.*



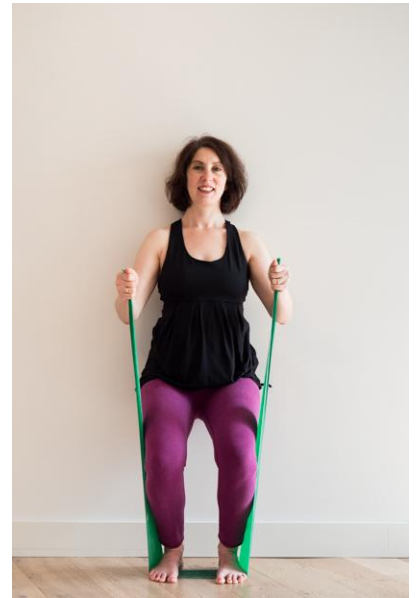
Wall Squats



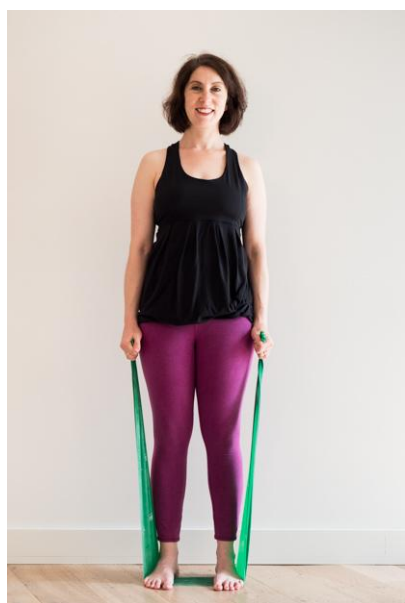
Repetitions: 3

Breathing and Instructions:

Keep feet positioned where they were for the last exercise. Take a moment to verify your alignment. Inhale to slide torso down the wall as you lift your fore arms and bend your knees. Go as low as you feel comfortable then exhale push into feet and slide back up the wall.



Arm Lifts



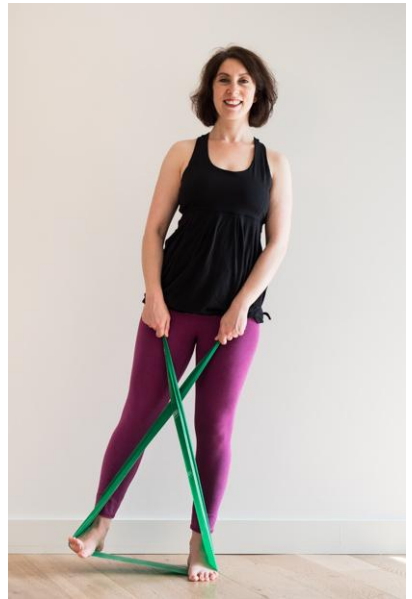
Repetitions: 3-5

Breathing and Instructions:

Take torso off the wall stand with head, ribs, pelvis and feet aligned. Arms to the side, the hands are holding the TheraBand with the thumbs up. On an inhale lift the arms high, on an exhale lower with control maintaining body alignment.



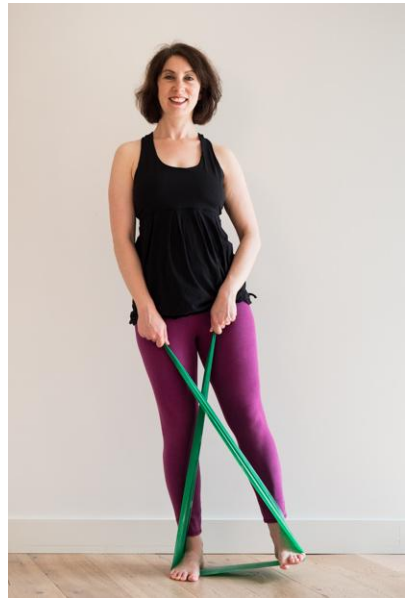
Lateral Hips



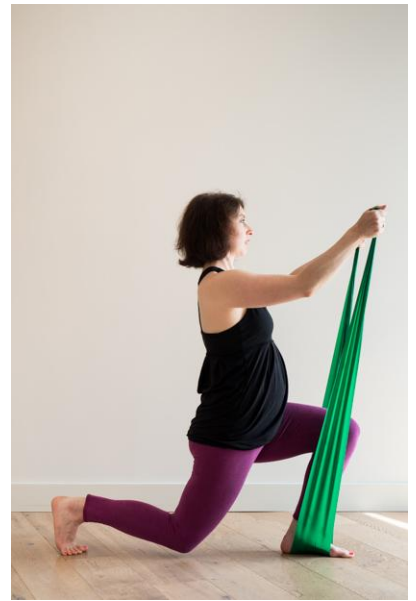
Repetitions: 8 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

Maintain the position of last exercise but now make an X with the TheraBand in front of legs. Holding the band with each hand lift one foot up then pulse leg out and in 8 times. Put foot down, find balance then repeat on the other side.



Lunges with Arms



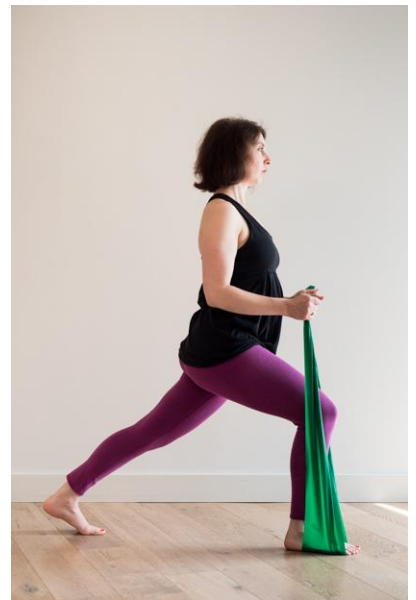
Repetitions: 4 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

Place one foot in the middle of the TheraBand, each hand holds each end of the band, thumbs upward. Place the other foot back in a lunge position with heel lifted. Establish your stability, find a stretch in the front of the hip.

Then inhale to bend both knees, the back knee almost touches the mat, arms are bend as you lower, exhale to rise up, repeat 4 times.

Transition to the other side by bringing the back foot into the TheraBand before removing the front foot. After the 4th repetition on the second leg, place the knee directly on the floor or mat to set up for the next series.



Side Arms 1



Repetitions: 5 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

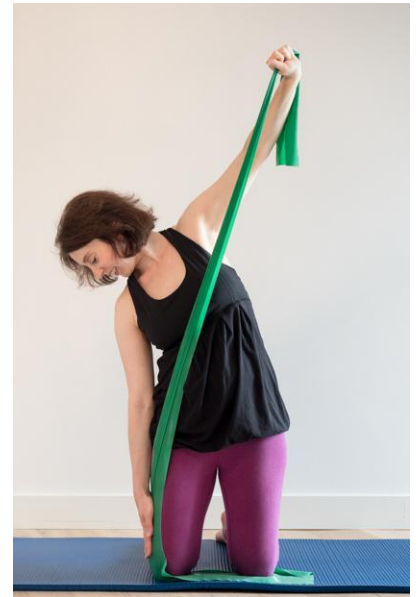
Come to kneeling on one edge of the TheraBand placing more of the band to one side. Pick up the band between thumb and forefinger of one hand. The lower the hold on the band the more taugt it will be and the more challenging. Hold higher to reduce strength of band. Squeeze opposite hand and arm to the other side of the body.

Inhale to reach the TheraBand hand up to the ceiling with elbow pointing forward and arm close to body. Exhale to lower. Repeat 5 times.

On the 5th repetition keep hand up to ceiling reach opposite hand up to grab the band, holding on to it with the thumb down. Transition to the next exercise.



Side Arms 2



Repetitions: 5 each side

Breathing and Instructions:

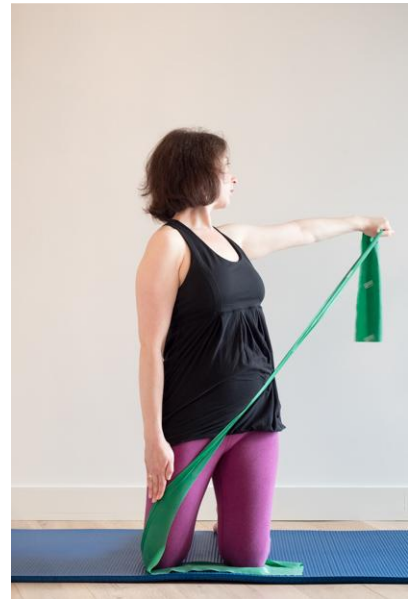
After grabbing the band as instructed at the end of the previous exercise press opposite hand into thigh as low as possible, turn head to look down at that hand. The torso is in a side bend position. Bend the arm holding the band keeping the hand over the head.

Inhale to straighten the band pulling it away from the head, exhale to bend back.

After completing the 5 repetitions stack spine to straight then return band to other hand.



Side Arms 3

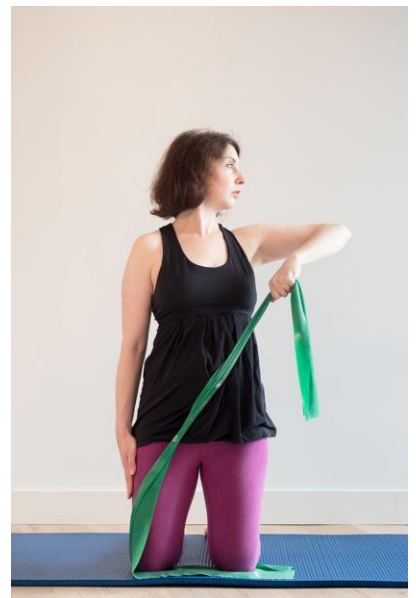


Repetitions: 3, then 5 twists each side

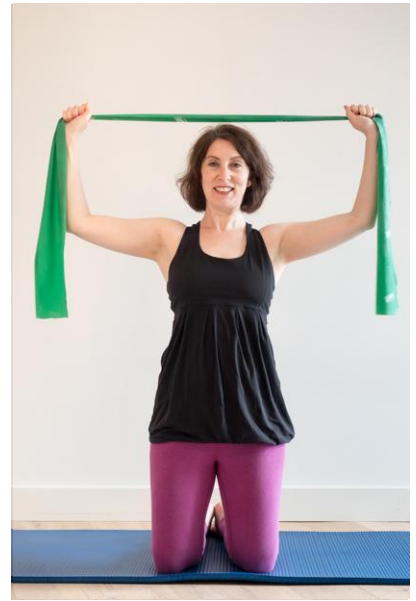
Breathing and Instructions:

Holding band, thumb down it crosses diagonally in front of the body. Inhale to pull the arm to straight keeping torso and pelvis aligned and forward facing. Exhale to return. After 3 repetitions add a twist to the gesture following the hand with head and gaze. Twist with the torso keeping the pelvis stable.

Upon completing this last exercise in the Side Arm series reposition the band to the other side and now repeat the 3 Side Arm exercises with the other side then continue with the next exercise in the list "Above Head Biceps."



Above Head Biceps



Repetitions: 5

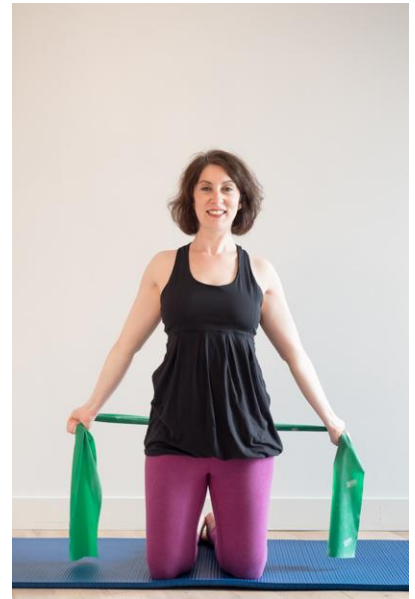
Breathing and Instructions:

After completing the Side Arm series with both arms take band in both hands and hold it over head. The closer the hands the tauter the band and more challenging the exercise, the further the hands the looser the band.

Keeping the band overhead inhale to bend elbows wide towards the outside, exhale to straighten arms back up to ceiling, repeat.



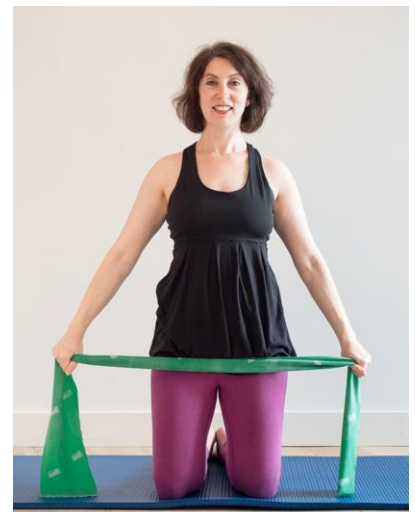
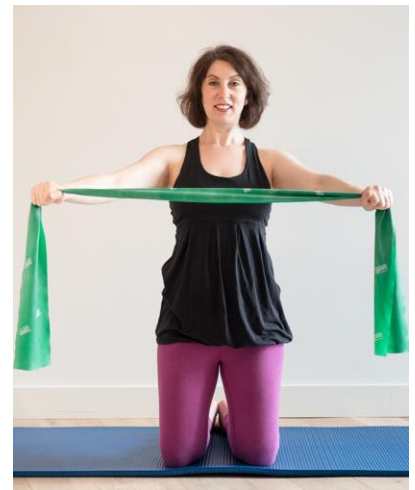
Shoulder Rolls



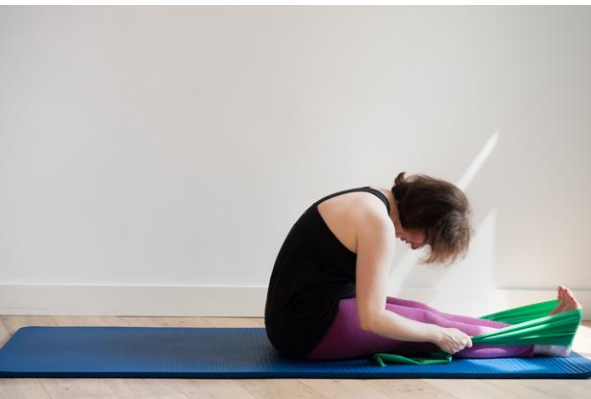
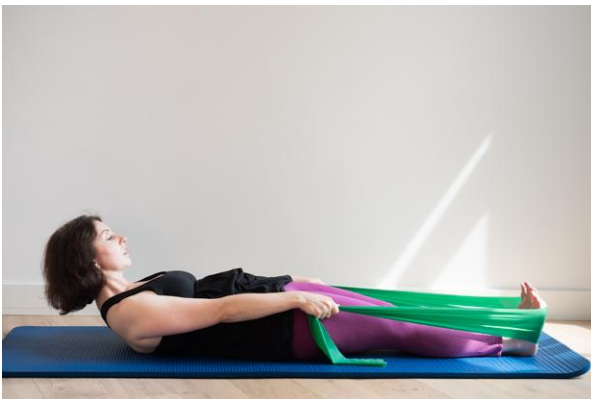
Repetitions: 3-5

Breathing and Instructions:

Keeping both hands on the band, widen the grip to inhale and reach arms all the way to the back of the body letting the humerus (arm bone) rotate fully in each socket. Exhale to pick the band back up to lift up and over the head and forward. Repeat. Hold hands on band as wide as necessary to be able to comfortably repeat the gesture.



Roll-Up



Repetitions: 3-5

Breathing and Instructions:

Place both feet in parallel and flexed in the TheraBand holding on to it with both hands. Start seated. Inhale to begin rolling the spine back to the mat, exhale to finish. Inhale to pick up your head. Exhale to continue to lift your body off the mat stretching your spine forward.

Beginners: Bend your knees if needed but the help of the TheraBand might be sufficient.



Single Leg Circles with Stretch

Repetitions: 5 each direction, a total of 10 for each leg

Breathing and Instructions:

After the Roll-up remain supine, remove one foot from the TheraBand and keep it straight on the mat. Reach the other foot up to the ceiling.

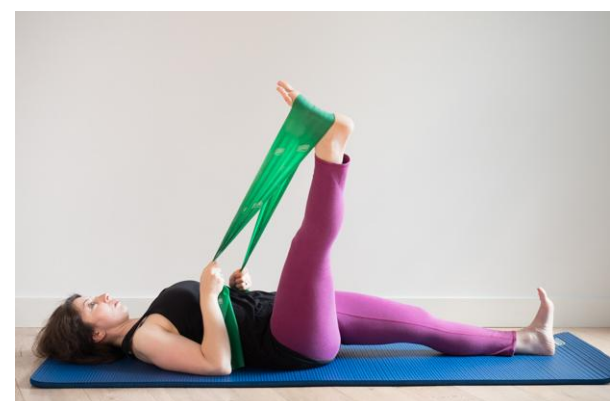
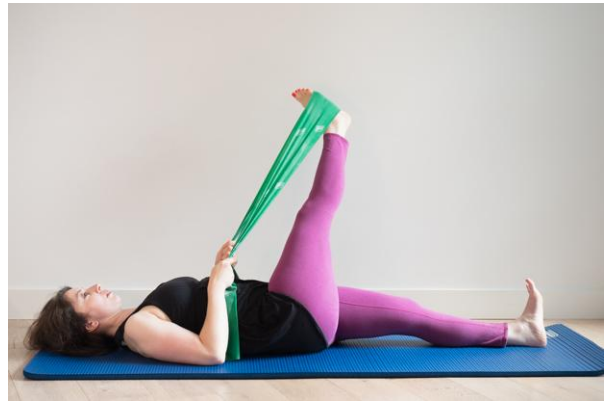
Keep shoulder blades down and wide and elbows bent pressing into mat.

Stretch: Push the foot across the body keeping it straight, hold for a few breaths to stretch. Return to center.

Single Leg Circles: Draw a circle with the leg. Start by crossing the leg over your body drawing a circle. Inhale for the first half of the circle, exhale for the second half. Do 5, then change directions. To change legs reach the down leg up to the ceiling to switch feet in the TheraBand, the opposite leg goes to the mat. Repeat stretch and circles with second leg.

Beginners: Draw small circles

Intermediate/Advanced: Make the circles progressively bigger.



Swan



Repetitions: 5

Breathing and Instructions:

Begin lying prone (on stomach), forehead down, with hands placed palms down, just below shoulders on the mat. Inhale to pick up head aligning it with the spine, then continue to lift head, neck, then chin, then chest and continue lifting rib cage respecting your personal range of motion. Exhale to lower down vertebrae by vertebrae, eyes go down to the mat last.

Beginners: Keep legs hip width.

Intermediate/Advanced: Keep legs close together.



Plank

Repetitions: Hold plank for approximately 30 seconds or 5 push-ups

Breathing and Instructions:

After the last Swan, flex toes and push up into plank position. Once in the plank position realign head, rib cage, pelvis and feet. Either hold plank or bend elbows and inhale to lower, exhale straighten to rise up.

Remain in plank to transition to standing, see next page.

Beginners: Hold plank and breathe for 3 counts. Can be on forearms instead of hands.

Intermediate: Bend elbows wide to lower and lift.

Advanced: Bend elbows narrow close to body to lower and lift



Transition to Standing



Repetitions: 1

Breathing and Instructions:

After completing the plank, press hands firmly and walk feet toward hand trying to keep legs as straight as possible. Once the feet are as close to hands as feasible for you, straighten legs and stack spine up to straight: feet, legs, pelvis, rib cage and head.



Goals

Before you begin: What are your goals, what do you expect from this challenge and/or what do you hope to accomplish?

Excercise Log

Day	Time	Place	Comments
Tuesday 1			
Wednesday 2			
Thursday 3			
Friday 4			
Saturday 5			
Sunday 6			
Monday 7			
Tuesday 8			
Wednesday 9			
Thursday 10			
Friday 11			
Saturday 12			
Sunday 13			
Monday 14			
Tuesday 15			
Wednesday 16			
Thursday 17			
Friday 18			
Saturday 19			
Sunday 20			
Monday 21			
Tuesday 22			
Wednesday 23			
Thursday 24			
Friday 25			
Saturday 26			
Sunday 27			
Monday 28			
Tuesday 29			
Wednesday 30			
Thursday 31			

31 Days Later...: How do you feel? Did you meet your objectives? What did you learn? Would you do the same challenge again?

