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REVOLUTIONARY YOGA
FOR ATHLETES

ERIN TAYLOR

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FOR ATHLETES**

ERIN TAYLOR



BOULDER, COLORADO

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To you, the athletes
of the Reset Revolution



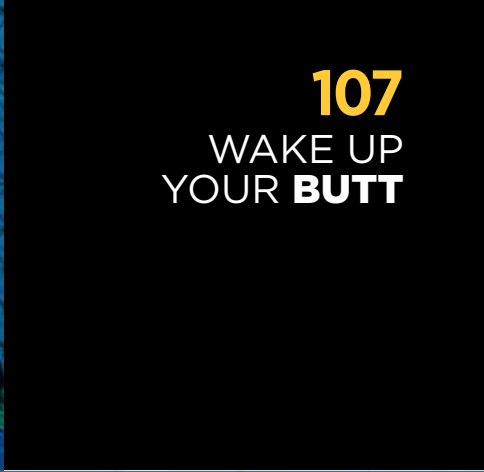
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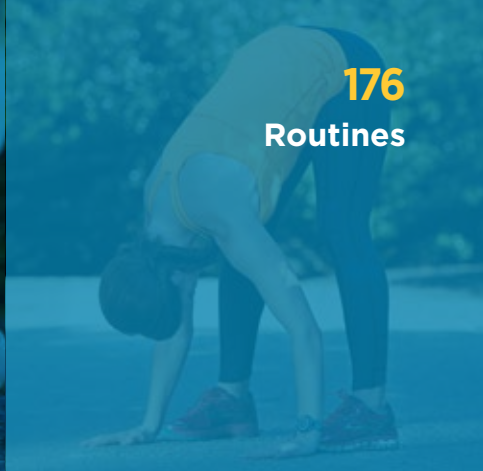
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INTRO

ATHLETE FIRST, YOGI SECOND

I was a reluctant yogi. I still don't often use that word to describe myself.

As a collegiate basketball player, I thought yoga was boring at first, time that could be better spent on the court or in the weight room. It wasn't until I was sidelined by a spinal injury from overtraining that I got real about what was going on in my body—that I wasn't impressing anyone with my pain threshold, least of all myself.

Yoga was the Reset that helped me bring things back into balance, and although no sport-specific yoga solutions existed at that time, I quickly realized that when used in a relevant way, yoga equals balance, and balance equals winning.

RESET = A yoga solution
that eases imbalance

FOR ATHLETES, INJURIES ARE DEVASTATING

There's nothing more disheartening than busting your ass to reach your peak only to end up injured and robbed of your chance to achieve your goals. After feeling the burn of a season spent on the sidelines, I knew more athletes would benefit from yoga's balance-inducing superpowers.

When I set out post-college to help athletes, the "yoga for athletes" space was a bit of an abyss, which forced me to think critically about what I was practicing and teaching and, more important, why. Athletes have been told that yoga will make them better at their sports, but the dots have to be connected. It's not just about doing yoga—it's how you do it. Certain poses might look cool on social media, but being able to put your foot behind your head isn't going to help you run faster or jump higher.

Over the last decade, I've dedicated myself to finding yoga's solutions to real problems and helping as many people as possible avoid the pain of imbalance—stress, injuries, and illness. These functional practices are practical, regardless of your sport or favorite fitness endeavor, whether you're a recreational or elite athlete or simply focused on better health and fitness. You can Hit Reset to become stronger and more resilient in as little as five minutes a day.

*BALANCE IS A
GAME CHANGER*

Throughout this book you'll find practical tools to help you Hit Reset:

- ✓ **Problems and Solutions:** Understand how your body is designed to work.
- ✓ **Self-Test and Correct:** Become more aware of your unique imbalances and how to ease them.
- ✓ **Hit Reset:** Do the routines to bring things back into balance.
- ✓ **Game Plan:** Think about what you're doing and why.

HIT RESET SOLVES PROBLEMS

Organized by different areas of the body, this book presents straightforward explanations of some of the most common problems—imbalances—athletes suffer from today. Simple self-tests followed by practical, prescriptive solutions help you assess and correct issues that if left unchecked are likely to leave you injured and limit your potential. I've also included FAQs and techniques to make yoga more accessible and effective for you. It's my hope that you will use the knowledge and inspiration in this book to do yoga in a way that directly supports your unique and ambitious goals.

You'll feel more easeful when you rediscover balance and find a way to sustain it within your active lifestyle. You'll realize that while things aren't always easy, they don't have to be quite so hard. Accomplish this, and you will close the gap between where you are now and where you want to be.

WELCOME TO THE
**RESET
REVOLUTION**





STRENGTHEN *YOUR* CORE

Your core is the engine for your extremities. It is, fundamentally, your powerhouse.

While most people aspire to a lean, toned midsection, a buff bod doesn't necessarily equate to a strong core. A six-pack might look nice, but those surface-level abs are pretty useless when it comes to maintaining good posture, avoiding back pain, or helping you avoid falling while you fly down the mountain on your bike or skis.



! PROBLEM

Sleepy center limits your power

The most important layer of your abdominal muscles—your transverse—lives deep in your abdomen. It wraps around your midsection kind of like a corset, stabilizes your spine, and adds power to all your movements.

The problem is that athletes tend to go through the motions of doing core work without awareness that the transverse is even in there. And if you're not aware of a muscle or how to activate it, you can't effectively strengthen it or use it to full advantage.

More than anything, that deep layer of muscle is sleepy from sitting all day long. Think about it: Aside from your fave sports and fitness activities, what do you do a lot of? You sit. All the time—in your car, at your desk, at breakfast/lunch/dinner, on your couch ... you get

the point. And what do sitting and most workouts have in common? They both result in stiffness across the chest (hips too, but let's focus on upper body for now). It doesn't help that a lot of core work is like a compensation free-for-all—it isn't particularly effective for training the transverse, nor is it particularly functional. Exercises like crunches make it easy to cheat by using momentum and arm strength to drive movement. In addition, when you lie on your back and round your upper torso forward off the floor to do a crunch, you're simply reinforcing the bad posture you've spent all day cultivating. Over time, you'll continue to strain your neck, overstretch your upper back, and slouch forward even more. The fact is you don't need help rounding forward because chances are you're already there.

✓ SOLUTION

TURN ON YOUR TRANSVERSE

A strong transverse that can stabilize your spine in neutral—especially when you're tired—will optimize your power and help you avoid injuries. What's your most common movement pattern? Walking, running, or anything forward-

oriented. So working your core while mimicking that movement will help you wrap your mind around how to engage those muscles while you're actually out walking and running around, riding your bike, and even sitting at your desk.

! PROBLEM

Weak obliques fail to stabilize & twist

You have two sets of obliques, on both the right and left side of your trunk, which are known as the internal and external obliques. Not quite as deep as the transverse, they're responsible for twisting your spine, and when you engage both the right and left simultaneously, they provide stability—they make it feel like your front ribs are moving toward each other, as if you're going to knit the front of your rib cage closed.

The problem is that some people's bodies naturally love extension—back bending—which isn't surprising given that the mid-spine is the most mobile part of your back. Extension lovers are essentially the opposite of the forward floppers discussed above. It's like this: If you lean your torso back, you'll feel your front ribs on your right and left move farther away from each other, as if your rib cage is expanding. Imagine you're reaching overhead to serve a tennis ball or volleyball. If you don't counter the action of reaching up by engaging your core to keep your spine stable, you're putting yourself at risk for compensation and injury.

Additionally, if you're not using your obliques to drive your rotation, you're most definitely relying on momentum, arm strength, or a combination of both. The bicycle crunch is a classic example of this, where you twist to take your elbow toward the opposite knee while crunching.



✓ SOLUTION

STABILIZE & TWIST

It's easy to use arm strength and momentum to twist your upper body. It takes way more focus to use your obliques to twist, but it's worth the effort because you'll gain power and avoid back pain and injuries. Strengthen the muscles that keep your mid-spine stable—slow down and make them do the work to rotate your trunk.

**STOP FLAILING AND
START WORKING!**

! PROBLEM

Weak back can't hold you upright

Let's talk about your most fundamental back core muscle for a second: quadratus lumborum, also known as QL. Along with the smaller muscles that live along your spine, this guy plays a key role in helping you sit up straight rather than rounding your low back.

The problem again is sitting, the effects of which are amplified when we go to work out. After slouching over your desk all day and then slouching over the elliptical machine, guess what? Your back is overstretched and weak. Most people don't realize this. You might feel sore around your low back, but it's more likely that area is pissed off because your core has been asleep all day and your back is tired from being overstretched. It's the opposite of what you might think is going on back there. But let's be real: When was the last time you complained about your weak core, which is really to blame for your aching back?



✓ SOLUTION

FIND YOUR BACK PACK

All this talk about six-packs ... what about your back pack? Your back pack isn't just the area of your trunk directly opposite to your six-pack. Your key back core muscles—your back pack—span pretty much the entire length of your trunk. These guys have to be strong to support optimal posture, stabilize your spine, and prevent back pain. Work 'em!



! SELF-TEST

WHERE'S YOUR CORE WEAKNESS?

Stand in profile in front of a mirror and observe your posture. (You can also do this test sitting on the floor, which isolates the issue even more.)



✓ CORRECT

- **If your weight shifts forward and your rib cage wants to pop open:** This is a good sign that your obliques are weak and you will benefit from the Stabilize & Twist routine (p. 46).
- **If your back rounds, making it tough to maintain an upright posture:** This signals that you lack back strength, which you can remedy with the Find Your Back Pack routine (p. 50).
- **For everyone:** It's safe to assume that your transverse could use some work, so be sure to hit up the Turn On Your Transverse routine (p. 40).



HIT RESET TO STRENGTHEN YOUR CORE

ROUTINES

- ✓ **Turn On Your Transverse** (p. 40)
- ✓ **Stabilize & Twist** (p. 46)
- ✓ **Find Your Back Pack** (p. 50)

BENEFITS

- Become aware of, activate, and strengthen your core muscles so you can use them to full advantage
- Improve posture
- Prevent low back pain and compensation injuries
- Add power to all movement

PRACTICE Pre-workout/crosstraining

HOW LONG Hold for 3–5 breaths or 10+ reps/multiple sets for movement

PROPS Block and bolster, pillow, or folded blanket

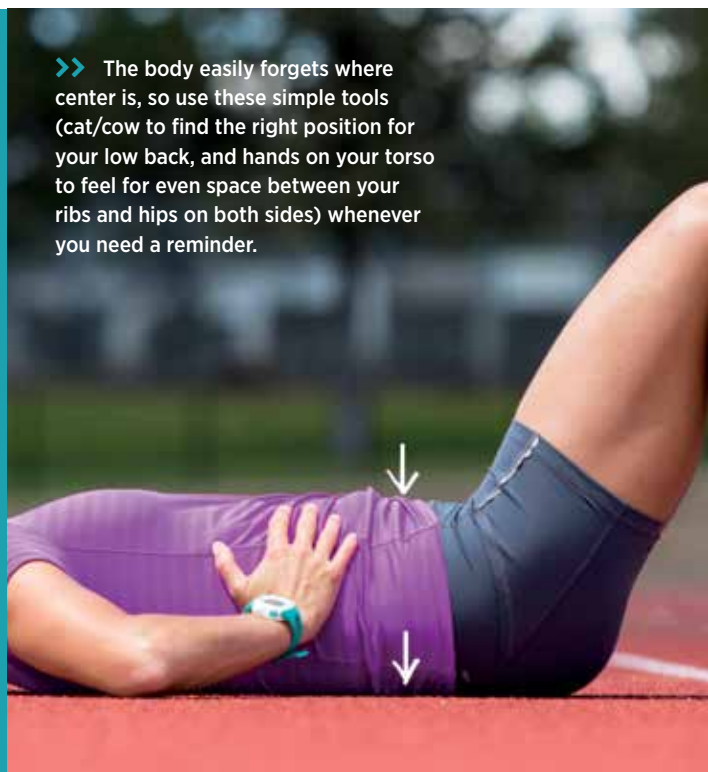
RED FLAGS Spinal compensation via back bending or side bending
Neck and shoulder strain

TECHNIQUE

Work from neutral

- 1 Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet on the floor.
- 2 Do a few cat/cows into the floor—arch and round your low back while keeping your butt on the floor to feel the range of movement available to you.
- 3 Eventually stop in the middle, the even point between the two extremes of arching and rounding your spine—keep your spine there.
- 4 Now put your hands onto your waist and feel an equal amount of space between your ribs and hips on both your right and left sides—make sure your spine isn't side bending. Lift up your head and look if you need more feedback about where your body is in space.

➤➤ The body easily forgets where center is, so use these simple tools (cat/cow to find the right position for your low back, and hands on your torso to feel for even space between your ribs and hips on both sides) whenever you need a reminder.

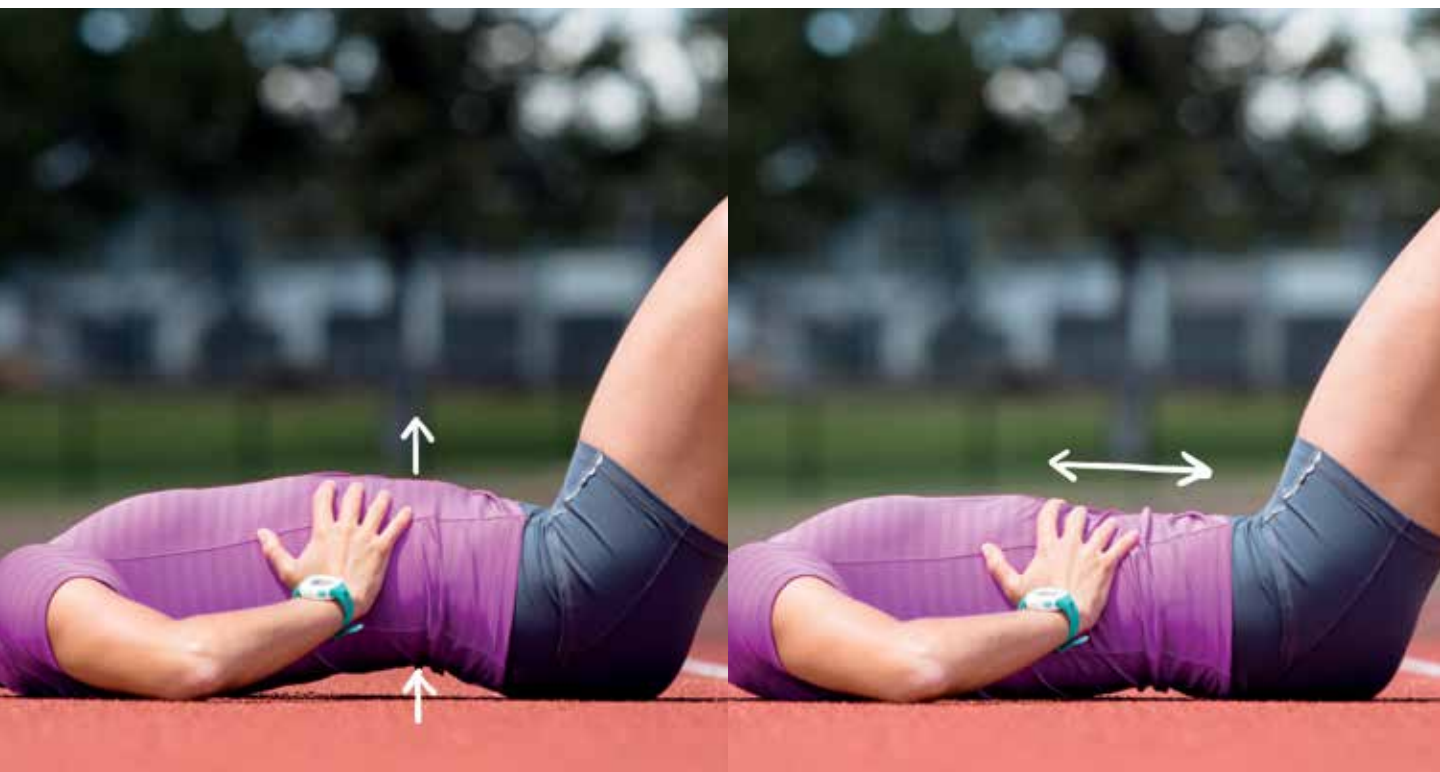


FAQ How do I engage my core?

When it comes to engaging your core, you should be thinking about your transverse. Not sure if it's awake? Here's a tool to clarify:

- Bring your hands onto your waist between your ribs and hips.
 - Cough!
 - Feel that contraction under your hands when you cough? Those are your deep abdominal muscles—your transverse and obliques, too.
 - Now see if you can create that same contraction without coughing and hold it without holding your breath.
- You should feel engagement around your low belly as well as your rib cage—if that's elusive, focus on bringing your front ribs closer together, as if you're trying to knit them together.
 - When all this is engaged, it should feel a bit like you've put on a tight vest.
 - As you keep that engagement through your center, you should feel as if you're able to lengthen your spine.
 - Remember, when in doubt about whether your core is firing, cough!

*EQUAL SPACE BETWEEN
YOUR RIBS AND HIPS = STABLE CORE*



✓ TURN ON YOUR TRANSVERSE

TABLE TOP

- 1** Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet hip width apart on the floor, and lengthen your arms along your sides, palms facing up.
- 2** Bring your spine to neutral and without letting your low back move, lift your legs to bring your knees over your hips at a 90-degree angle.
- 3** Engage your core to stabilize your spine in neutral as you hold your legs there, as if you're pulling your belly down toward your spine.

Relax your hip flexors—take the work out of your legs and put it into your core.

LIFT & LOWER

- 1** Set up Table Top and keep your knees bent at 90 degrees throughout the movement.

TECHNIQUE

Make a unileg

Why add a block? It's like this: Your pelvis and your legs are three pieces, and if you go blockless, you've got three pieces to coordinate. When you have a block or something to squeeze between your thighs, then you only have two parts to coordinate—your unileg and your pelvis—which is way easier to stabilize and a great place to start. If you feel your low back straining, or you find it difficult to keep your lifted legs side by side, gently squeeze a block between your upper inner thighs for the Table Top and Lift & Lower poses to create more stability.



2 Lower the legs a few inches forward toward the floor, keeping your core engaged and your spine neutral—if you feel your low back arch, the movement is too big.

3 Bring your knees back up over your hips.

4 Continue, using your core to stabilize your spine while you move your legs.



BACK RUNNING

- 1 Curl your knees toward your chest as far as possible without losing a neutral spine and lengthen your arms along your sides, palms up.
- 2 Extend one leg away from your body.
- 3 Curl the knee back toward your chest.



SPINAL BALANCE RUNNING

- 1 From all fours, bring your spine to neutral and engage your core.
- 2 Extend one leg behind you, flexing the foot so the toes point down at the floor.



- 4 Extend your other leg away from your body.
- 5 Curl the knee toward your chest.
- 6 Continue, using your core to stabilize your spine while you move your legs.

>> When you feel strong and stable in this movement, you can make it more fluid, as if you're walking, running, or cycling.



- 3 Reach your opposite arm forward alongside your ear, thumb pointing up.
- 4 Without moving your spine, bring your lifted knee and elbow toward each other.
- 5 Reextend your leg and arm.
- 6 Continue, keeping your spine stable.

>> Resist the urge to bring your elbow and knee together, as that will round your spine out of neutral.

Repeat on your other side.



PLANK

1 Come to all fours with your hands flat to the floor and step your legs back into a push-up position, toes tucked under.

2 Engage your core to

stabilize your spine in neutral by lifting from your low belly and front ribs.

3 Push back through your toes and forward through your hands, helping to integrate your extremities.

Don't slip into banana back.



PLANK RUNNING

- 1 From Plank, lift one foot until your leg is parallel to the ground, toes pointing down.



- 2 Bring your knee toward your elbow on that side.

- 3 Continue, keeping your spine stable.

Repeat on your other side.

➤➤ If this feels too hard or you feel yourself compensating in some way, lower your knees and work on building strength in Spinal Balance Running (p. 42) for now.



GLOSSARY

ACTIVE STRETCHING

Dynamic stretches that increase blood flow while lengthening the tissue and that allow you to increase the intensity on your own. These poses are most effective pre-workout, although they can be done post-workout as well.

BIOMECHANICS

The way all your parts—including your bones, connective tissue, and muscles—are engineered to work together.

BOOTY LOCK Just what it sounds like: super-sore butt and limited hip mobility resulting from tight hips and glutes.

COMPENSATION

The body's intrinsic and subconscious effort to find balance in the presence of compensation.

EXTERNAL ROTATION Aka turn out—think rotating your legs so your toes point out or rotating your arms so your palms face forward.

FASCIA/DEEP FASCIA The fabric that holds our cells together. Deep fascia specifically holds our muscle cells together and organizes them into specific muscle bellies.

FAST-TWITCH MUSCLES Muscles that provide explosive power—think sprinters and jumpers.

ADHESION Muscles have tons of fibers that are held in place by layers of deep fascia. Those are meant to align and slide over each other. When our fascia get cranky, thick, misaligned knots can form and cause an array of issues.

ATHLETE Anyone who values an active, healthy lifestyle and/or has made a conscious decision to pursue a sports or fitness goal.

BALANCE
Equilibrium.

CONNECTIVE TISSUE Sheets of fascia, ligaments, membranes, blood vessels, and more that connects stuff in your body.

EASEFUL Minimal stress and maximum effectiveness.

ECCENTRIC STRENGTH When tissues contract while they're lengthening.

FLEXIBILITY The ability to access the full range of motion of any joint.

FLUIDITY Being able to move with optimal power and minimal dysfunction. This brings a feeling of freedom!

FUNCTIONAL
Practical.

INTERNAL ROTATION

Aka turn in—think rotating your legs so that your toes point in (pigeon-toed) or rotating your arms so that your palms face back.

INTRINSIC MUSCLES

The little guys that provide stability, kind of like little helpers that provide support to align joints so your power muscles can create movement safely and effectively.

THE LAW OF COMPENSATION

When movement meets restriction and force continues to be applied, that force will transfer to the next available point of least resistance.

RANGE OF MOTION

The movement available in a particular joint.

SLOW-TWITCH MUSCLES

Muscles that provide stability and endurance—think distance runners.

SPRAIN A stretch or tear in a ligament.

MUSCLE BELLY

The meat!

PASSIVE

STRETCHING More restorative stretches that rely on external forces such as gravity or props to ease the muscles that have worked hard for you by softening their surrounding connective tissues. It's important to focus on these guys post-workout.

PULLED MUSCLE

See strain/strained muscle.

STRAIN/STRAINED MUSCLE

Stressing the muscle to the point of tearing the tissue.

TENSION Patterned, inefficient use of energy.

RESET

A yoga solution that eases imbalance.



ABOUT THE ATHLETES

Throughout this book, real athletes lead you back into balance.

Lauren Fleshman

Aka Fleshman Flyer, Lauren is a pro runner with Oiselle, five-time NCAA champ, two-time U.S. champ, cofounder of Picky Bars, and author of *Believe Training Journal*. She loves side bending.
www.asklaurenfleshman.com

Norris Frederick

As an elite long jumper, Norris can literally fly.
www.norrisfrederick.com

Linsey Corbin

Linsey is a pro triathlete, five-time Ironman champ, and American record holder. She also planks like a boss.
www.linseycorbin.com



Casey Pursell

Casey is a former collegiate basketball player who has used yoga to help recover from knee injuries and continues to Hit Reset regularly to keep his gun show in check.



Brianna Sweeney

A former collegiate soccer player, Brianna is a Jasyoga coach and world traveler whom you can count on to encourage you to “treat yo-self” with post-Reset donuts or beer.



Erin Taylor

A former collegiate basketball player and the leader of the Reset Revolution, Erin helps athletes use yoga to change the game. She loves a good run—you’ll always find her with her legs up the wall afterward.

www.jasyoga.com

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Erin Taylor is an international leader in yoga for athletes. It was her own experience of being sidelined by injury as a collegiate basketball player that first showed her how yoga can be the Reset that brings athletes back into balance.

Erin founded Jasyoga with the goal of providing practical yoga solutions to as many people as possible. Jasyoga equips athletes with powerful skills to prevent injuries and enhance recovery, optimizing performance in sport and life. With operations in the United States and the United Kingdom, Jasyoga coaches abandon the traditional studio setting and meet athletes wherever they work out. Over the last decade, Erin has infused meditation, functional anatomy, and physical therapy techniques into her practice. Now accessible anytime, anywhere via her online video platform, Erin's approach has been widely embraced by athletes ranging from recreational to elite over the last decade, and can be configured to help anyone achieve their goals.

Erin is a regular contributor to popular health and fitness blogs and publications. In addition to privately coaching sports teams and athletes, she hosts popular teacher trainings and yoga-for-athlete certification programs. She lives in London with her husband and daughter.

HIT RESET TO BRING YOUR BODY BACK INTO BALANCE

When you train and compete for your favorite sport or fitness endeavor, imbalance happens. Some muscles work overtime and others don't work hard enough. Your body ends up compensating for lazy, stiff, or stuck muscles and joints, and eventually you end up sidelined by stress, illness, or injury.

Hit Reset offers simple solutions for the common problems that athletes deal with every day. Yoga coach Erin Taylor gives you the know-how to identify and fix your specific imbalances. Her revolutionary approach to yoga fits seamlessly into your everyday workout prep and recovery. Become a stronger athlete in as little as five minutes a day.

Do it right, and yoga solves your imbalance problems. *Hit Reset* will help you prevent injury, recover better, and achieve more in sport and life.

BALANCE IS A GAME CHANGER

“With yoga, it's amazing to see something that looks so simple make such a big impact.”

—NORRIS FREDERICK, PRO LONG JUMPER

“Erin takes the physical and mental benefits of yoga for athletes and makes those connections better than any other yoga instructor I've had. It makes yoga very accessible for sporty people and motivates you to be consistent.”

—LAUREN FLESHMAN, PRO RUNNER

ERIN TAYLOR knows firsthand that athletes make reluctant yogis. As a collegiate basketball player she found herself benched with a serious injury, and yoga was the Reset that brought her back into balance. With a no-nonsense teaching style that tells athletes like it is, Taylor's balanced approach is a journey of self-discovery centered on sports performance and physical fitness.

REDISCOVER
BALANCE

BREATHE &
FOCUS

STRENGTHEN
YOUR CORE

BALANCE YOUR
FOUNDATION

SAVE YOUR
KNEES

UNSTIFFEN
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WAKE UP
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