

Diastasis Recti -The Whole-Body Solution to Abdominal Weakness and Separation by Katy Bowman

A review by Kathy Innes, owner of Back Your Body

This is one of my “go to” books when I’m being asked by a client “I’ve been told to do my pelvic floor exercises, but it’s not making any difference.” Or, “I’ve been told my stomach muscles have been split, and I need to strengthen them.”

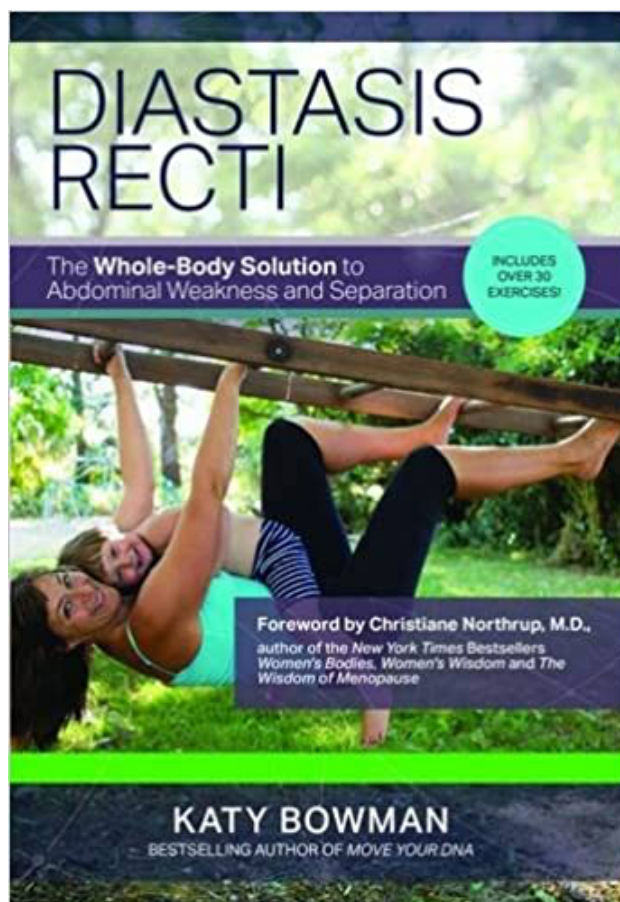
Diastasis Recti is not just an unfortunate side effect of pregnancy, it can happen to all ages, body types and even men.

The author is a biomechanist by training and instead of recommending the traditional pelvic floor exercise “kegel” she focuses on whole body movements as a solution to diastasis recti and pelvic floor disorders.

In the first section she gives a very good overview of the anatomy of Diastasis Recti (tummy gap) and describes in detail the various layers of the abdominals, but more importantly the reasons why we should not treat the symptoms of DR but by learning the many parts, visible and invisible that must work together, can lead to solving the problem rather than treating the symptom.

She uses a number of analogies throughout the book that are really easy to understand and working with clients that have been told their “stomach muscles have been split”, we can dispel the myths around DR and educate our clients in plain English that it is not necessarily due to “weak abdominal muscles”.

She uses her biomechanic knowledge to describe “The Forces”, the pushes and pulls on an object, are essential components when it comes to a functioning machine. She doesn’t go into too much scientific ‘speak’, so is very easy to follow and is very relatable to what we teach in Pilates.



Throughout the book she discusses extrinsic factors that can have an effect on DR such as nutrition and clothing which is really interesting, and although that's not part of our education as pilates instructors, it can be a valuable source of referral for our clients.

The second section of the book is called "Move" there are clear illustrations of the exercises she recommends from, "Body Neutral" to "Hanging" exercises. Throughout this chapter she gives the reasoning behind the movements and it is very aligned with our Pilates training. She describes the relationship between our ribcage to chest, shoulders and arms and learning to align our ribcage is crucial to improving the mechanical loads, because where your ribcage goes, it takes the linea alba with it.

She introduces the use of bolsters in various positions throughout the move section and progresses from "little" to "big" moves, challenging whole body movements, she is very honest and towards the end of her book she states; "If the physical outcome of your body isn't working for your life, then it's the life that has to change to get your body working'.