

Lose Your Mummy Tummy

Julie Tuppler with Jodie Gould
Da Capo Press, Massachusetts, 2005
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www.maternalfitness.com
 120 min, DVD, \$29.00

In this day and age, women are under enormous pressure to have flat tummies. After childbirth women have an increased challenge to attain this ambitious goal and to discover what body image and shape is most healthy for them. When the goal is toning and flattening the abdomen, Julie Tuppler's book and DVD *Lose Your Mummy Tummy* show women how to do that — with added benefits such as improving posture and decreasing back pain and the likelihood of back injury.

Tuppler attributes the new (and not so new) mother's "mummy tummy" to a separation or diastasis in the outermost layer of the abdominal muscles caused by abdominal expansion from the pregnant uterus. Under this increasing pressure, the band of connective tissue that connects the two rectus abdominis muscles together, called the linea alba, gets stretched. Bringing

the two recti muscles back together is the foundation for the comprehensive exercise program outlined in this book and DVD. Every exercise incorporates the author's signature "Tuppler Technique." This technique involves contracting the innermost "core" abdominal muscle, called the transversus, which in turn brings the two recti muscles closer together thus reducing the diastasis. The author also suggests that women use a splint to help hold these muscles together during certain activities and exercises.

The book clearly reviews the requisite anatomy and teaches the Tuppler Technique in the beginning, then outlines an exercise program with appropriate progressions. It becomes clear that this program requires a dedicated participant, since it begins with 100 transversus contractions 5 times each day and increases from there. There is a 15-minute workout, which progresses to a more comprehensive 30-minute workout. Having a detailed description of each exercise and an accompanying photograph of the author demonstrating proper technique makes it easy to follow and perform the exercise correctly.

A chapter addresses recovery from cesarean deliveries and episiotomies and does a great job encouraging women to do scar massages to increase tissue mobility. Included in this chapter is a three-page sidebar with a thorough exploration of tummy tuck surgery, which I think a woman would find helpful if she was inclined to explore this option. Two good chapters review proper body mechanics when doing activities of daily living and other types of exercise programs. The author appropriately restates one of her mantras, "If you can't hold your transversus in while doing a particular exercise, you shouldn't be doing it." In the "Post(partum) Script" at the end of the book, the author shifts her focus from exercise and closes the book by rightly reaffirming what a "perpetual race" parenthood is. Here, mothers can find encouragement to nurture themselves in other ways in addition to exercising their bodies.

In the *Losing Your Mummy Tummy* DVD, information is divided into 4 sections: an introduction, the Tuppler Technique, 30-minute workout, and testimonials. Each section and subsections within them can be easily accessed through the menu. When Julie Tuppler explains what a diastasis is, she is aided by excellent computer graphics that clearly demonstrate the anatomical premise for this program. She teaches the abdominal exercises, briefly addresses the pelvic floor, introduces her TupplerWear splint that helps keep the rectus close together, teaches how to check for a diastasis, and gives some tips to make a diastasis smaller.

In the 30-minute workout, as in the previous sections, the tone is serious and focused as Tuppler provides complete, step-by-step instructions and clear demonstrations of each exercise. She guides and counts through every repetition so that the viewer can do each exercise along with her and the three postpartum mothers who serve as models during the

workout. The workout includes a warm-up, abdominal work, and upper and lower body work. The exercises are sound, and someone who is serious about losing their “mummy tummy” would not be daunted by this program.

In future editions of the book and DVD, I suggest including what amount of separation of the rectus abdominis is within normal limits so that women can more clearly evaluate whether or not they have a diastasis. In addition, it would be useful if the infor-

mation on how to use correct body mechanics for activities of daily living was included on the DVD.

Overall, I think Julie Tuppler’s program is safe, innovative, and challenging. For mothers who are dedicated to losing their “mummy tummies,” this is the program for them.

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