

A GUIDE TO USING THE  
**RELAXATION  
STRAP**

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WITH MANDY HOFFMAN

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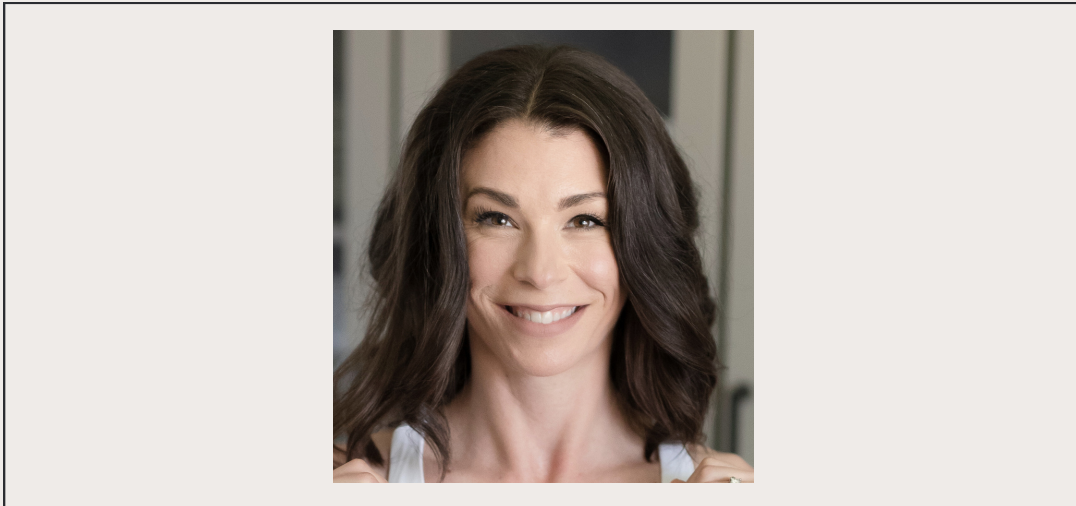
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## MEET YOUR COACH



### **MANDY HOFFMAN**

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BS Exercise Science, CPT, CGFI

My name is Mandy and I am a wife, mom, Rollerblading enthusiast, passionate fitness & wellness coach for over two decades, and the owner and creator of the StrongFlight online fitness community.

From coaching clients to certifying aspiring personal trainers, working with prenatal bodies to retired, older-active bodies, to creating excitement and motivation in live group classes or virtually online ... I Love Getting People To Rediscover The Joy Of Movement! I believe everyBody deserves a convenient and effective fitness lifestyle that fits into every schedule and space.

# BENEFITS

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## WHY USE A RELAXATION STRAP?

Props like a relaxation/yoga straps are useful for all levels- not just beginners! Here are just a few ways your strap can elevate your practice:

### 1. Form First

Chasing a 'pose' can sometimes mean losing correct alignment. Learning to not push into positions and listening to your body takes time. Allow your strap to assist you as you explore!

### 2. Advancing Practice

A strap offers us a chance to try otherwise unattainable poses. By creating the opportunity to feel what a new position should feel like, we can better express the movement within our current range of motion.

Many poses have us holding our feet... but what if our feet are out of reach?! Using our strap can allow our spine to remain safe and our hips even, as one example.

This habit and mindset of alignment serve us well at all stages of our practice. You'll notice advanced yogi's use straps because they know: modification is a sign of wisdom, not weakness!



# Ways to Use a Relaxation Strap:

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## **ALIGNMENT**

As mentioned before, sometimes our bodies need time to progress into a new position. Feeling great alignment along the way is more important than forcing our bodies into any certain position.

Your strap allows you the space to feel. By doing so, you reduce your risk of injury and create a smart progression where you can build strength in the proper muscles.



## **DEEPENING**

Another useful benefit is that the strap allows you to deepen your stretches, like Seated Forward Folds.

Here you can go deeper into a pose without sacrificing alignment. With time and practice you will be able to ditch the strap and perform a wider variety of movements with more supportive alignment. I personally enjoy using strap deepening to explore my binds and King Pigeon.



## **LENTHENING**

Your ability to reduce and avoid compression while trying new positions is powerful. Take Bow Pose -A strap can help you hold onto your feet without compressing or harming your spine, giving your legs a wider range of motion. Chasing how poses look in books or on Instagram can be tempting, but it's always best to remember we are looking recreate the feeling of the pose, safely.

# 1. SEATED FORWARD FOLD

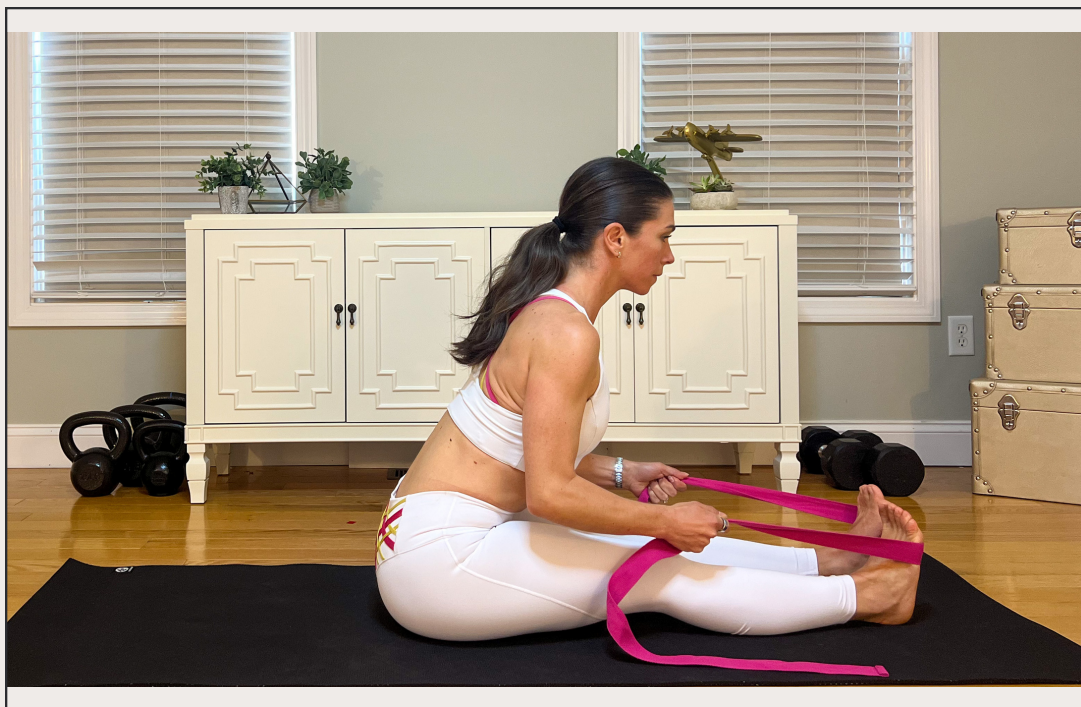
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This amazing hamstring stretch is most often missed out on because of alignment. It is common to observe backs rounded in an attempt to reach for one's feet.

**How Strap Helps:** Using a strap in Seated Forward Fold allows you to maintain a more neutral back, therefore allowing you to greater the sensation behind your legs, particularly hamstrings.

## How to use a strap in Seated Forward Fold:

1. Sit down on your mat, bend your knees, place the strap under the balls of your feet.
2. Flex your feet and begin straightening your legs, exhale and hinge from your hips with a straight spine. Less is more here.
3. This can also be used upright in forward fold modifications, etc.



## 2. LEGS UP THE WALL

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This restorative yoga pose can be challenging if you find your legs widening and slipping apart. The strap gives you the support you need to truly relax.

**How Strap Helps:** Using a strap provides your thighs support. If you have tight hips Legs Up the Wall can be very uncomfortable. The strap allows you to completely relax your body and obtain it's full benefits.

### How to use a strap in Legs Up the Wall:

1. Laying sideways, bring your bum to wall. Using bent legs, lift each one up the wall. Ensure your bum stays as close to wall as possible.
2. Once your legs are on the wall, take your strap and wrap it around your lower thigh, above the knee, tight enough that your legs are supported, but loose enough for comfort.
3. Stay here and use your breath to relax into the pose.



### 3. COW FACE ARMS

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Individuals with tight shoulders can find this movement challenging. While we work toward getting both hands to touch, it is important to also maintain a neutral spine.

**How Strap Helps:** Using a strap allows for a connection between hands without rounding posture. Hands can also 'walk down strap' as a progression.

**How to use a strap in Cow Face:**

1. From a seated position, hold your strap in your right hand, bring it overhead and then behind your neck.
2. Bring your left arm behind your back to grasp strap. Focus on an elongated posture and widened elbows more than inching hands closer.
3. With time, your hands will walk towards each other and possibly someday touch. Repeat the pose on the other side.





## 4. BOAT

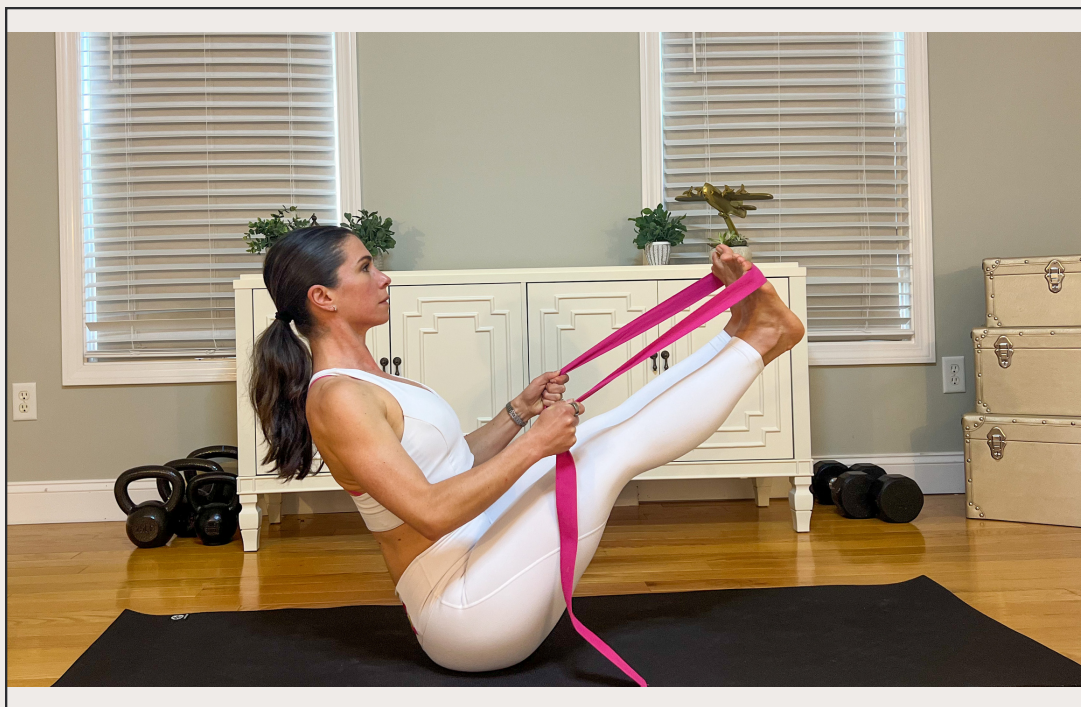
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This movement takes an incredible amount of core strength to keep both your legs and your back long. Any rounding of the back can be a sign that support would be a useful tool as you progressively build endurance.

**How Strap Helps:** Using a yoga strap provides your body with support as you balance, while still challenging your core strength. It also promotes proper posture by forcing you to lift through your chest.

### How to use a strap in Boat:

1. With your legs bent, place your strap under the balls of your feet and hold both ends of the strap. Balance just behind the 'bony' part of your bum.
2. Begin straightening your legs while keeping your lower back lengthened.
3. Equally push with your feet and pull with your hands, holding the strap to keep your spine straight.



# CONCLUSION

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## RELEASE JUDGEMENT- ENJOY MOVEMENT

From beginner to advanced, a relaxation strap can stoke the fires of your curiosity without compromising your safety.

We have the ability to customize the sensation we want to feel in each pose on any given day.

A strap is not a tool for only 'tight' or 'inflexible' bodies, rather, a tool for the adventurous who wish to learn more about their bodies and themselves.



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