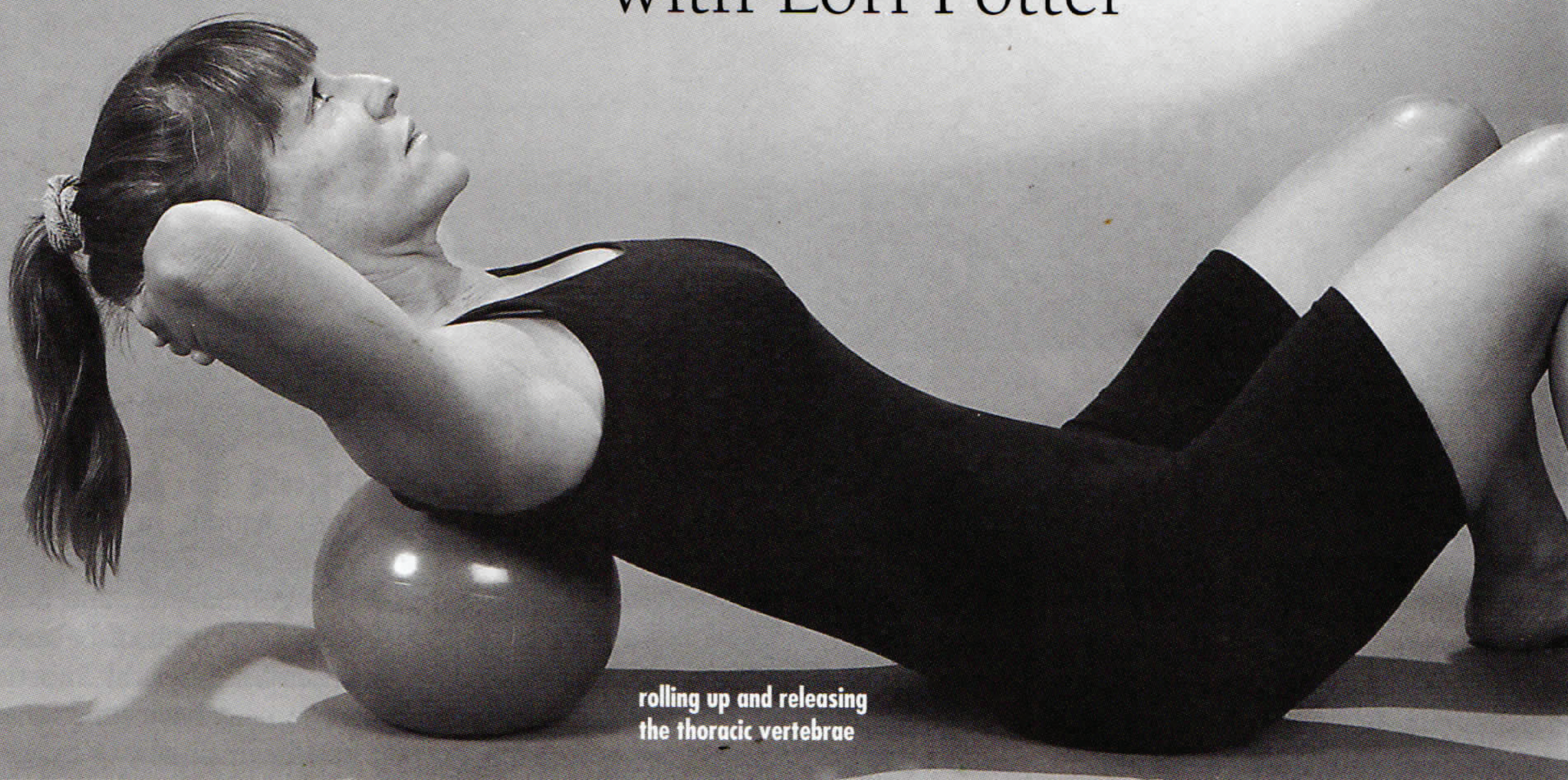


YAMUNA BODY ROLLING

with Lori Potter



Becoming conscious in our bodies...what does that mean? Having the ability to go inside and discover what our physical patterns are, what they are trying to tell us...where we are limited and how we may be creating pain. And then the question arises: how can we work with these patterns and become more functional? Yamuna body rolling teaches us experiential anatomy which means really learning to feel where bones, muscles and attachments are. As we roll out our bodies using small balls beginning at the origins of our muscles, we follow them up or down to the insertions. The first routine we learn and the most profound is rolling up the spine creating traction and therefore space between each vertebra sinking into the bone, tendons, ligaments and fascia and breathing deeply; it's a sensation of cleaning off the bones. It provides a deep awareness and the ability to prevent injuries. It also provides a feeling of well-being and peace.

In my 22 years of doing body work, I have

learned that the majority of pain and discomfort comes from two things: contraction or lack of space (shortened muscles) and from imbalances between length and strength in an area we use a lot. This creates poor body alignment or architecture. When a muscle is used repetitively and not taken back to its length, pain or injury can be the result. Also when something is out of alignment, pain results and joints wear down.

The idea of fitness is different for everybody...some feel it means having a good cardiovascular capacity, for others it is having good muscle strength or being stretched and flexible, and some just want to be slim. As Yamuna Zake (the creator of body rolling) says, "True fitness simply means that your body doesn't hold you back from doing what you want to do and you feel good while you're doing it. Your fitness depends on what your needs are." But if you're working out or living life and not aware of dysfunctional patterns you can be causing more problems than you know. For example, if a person wants hard abs with muscle definition, but the posture is slumped, a workout program that only tightened the abs would make this pattern worse. With body rolling, one can create length in the front of the torso lifting the rib cage so the posture becomes more upright and the person can focus on doing the strengthening exercises. Or if

someone is trying to develop core strength but the hips are uneven or twisted forward or back, it will only cause more pain. By doing body rolling first and unraveling those patterns, one can eliminate pain. Another example is carpal tunnel syndrome. In my experience, if clients have caught it early enough and are willing to roll and create space starting first in their backs then arms and then inside that narrow area of the wrist, the muscles relax and the nerves have the space to sit comfortably without pain.

Yamuna body rolling goes beyond the combination of stretching and strengthening that yoga and pilates offer by adding the element of massage. It conditions and lengthens muscles, improves core strength, enhances posture, flexibility and balance. It also realigns the spine and joints, relieving pain and muscle tension while providing a workout, massage and chiropractic session all at once.

Yamuna body rolling is a great self-care technique. Once you learn the routines well you have the confidence to use it to explore and maintain your body's well-being on your own. It's something everyone can utilize no matter your level of fitness. ①

Lori Potter offers open public classes in Kapa'a at Hatha Yoga Kaua'i on Tuesday mornings from 8:30-10am. She also has a private practice and works out of the Natural Health Clinic in Lihu'e and her home office in Wailua. Call 822-7267 for more info.

