

B THE NEWSLETTER

A Monthly Edit: Vol. 22 // MARCH 2023



VOL. 22

By Lia Bartha

It's been such a strong start to the year and we have so many fun and exciting events being finalized for our community in 2023. Through all of our various modes of communicating, I've noticed a lot of interest in taking our practice to the next level - whether that be more advanced series, a deeper focus on proper form, connecting with like-minded/like-bodied members of the community, or making the online experience more personal. All noted and we're going to try to do all of that this year!

We've already added a more advanced livestream series (think increased stamina) which uses both ankle and wrist weights for a little boost in intensity. Have you tried out these series yet? Also, remember to listen to your body and never push yourself into pain. You can always pause to give your body a break and there is no shame in the modify game! You'll see me struggle with one of the planks and use a modification to suit my needs that day. I had a hard parenting morning right before and it just wasn't my day.

And speaking of modifications, let's talk proper form. Often when challenges become too much to handle, our form is the first thing to go when we push ourselves beyond our limit. In every situation, proper form should come before anything else. It's better to have the smallest of movements with proper form, than bigger movements with no focus on form.

Aside from our increased advanced section, I'm introducing a section devoted to form tips. Naturally, we will begin with pelvic floor activation and the stability ball placement. I hope this helps and don't forget to send in feedback! I love to hear how these tips resonate and help you in your practice.

On that note, I hope you really enjoy this volume. There's a ton of great information, so please read until the end. I love you all!

xx

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pelvic floor activation and the ball

This new section in each month's newsletter will be focusing on form tips! As I'm sure you all know by now, proper form will allow you to get the absolute most out of every exercise. So let's dive deeper into some of our most common positions. I've had tons of conversations with our community recently about how to properly activate the pelvic floor, so let's start here: How to activate the pelvic floor using the ball. Below, I'm demonstrating and explaining the correct and incorrect way to squeeze the ball between the knees for pelvic floor health, which also applies to the positions which call for the ball between the ankles as well.



DO'S:

- Squeeze the ball very lightly by engaging the lower abdominals, pelvic floor, and inner thighs.
- Breathe laterally & unclench, but activate the glutes.
- Find a neutral pelvis by pressing the tailbone towards the floor without popping out the rib cage.
- Keep the knees hip distance apart.

DONT'S:

- Squeeze the ball from the knees, which causes too big of a squeeze & increases pressure on the pelvic floor.
- Hold your breath and tuck the pelvis, which clenches the glutes and shortens the core.
- Internally rotate the hips which tightens & shortens the hip flexors, deactivating the lower abs and pelvic floor.

MEET THE COMMUNITY

say hello to Emily



EMILY, Los Angeles, [@botanicafood](#)

Owner of [Botanica Restaurant](#) and our new recipe contributor!
Emily's newsletter [here](#)

A few months after starting to work out with Lia, I had the thought that I'd love to contribute recipes to her newsletter. I told myself I'd email her. But did I do it? Not for more than a year. Then, something clicked. I let go of the fear, sent the email, and wasn't attached to the outcome. Lucky for me, Lia enthusiastically responded within hours. Pushing out of my comfort zone used to come so naturally to me. This was a great personal reminder that, duh, risks are actually required in order to make progress! I'm so glad to be here and hope I'm able to help you all push out of your comfort zones in the kitchen.

Food is my love language. Cooking is how I unwind, rev up, & show my love for anyone and everyone who will sit at my table. At Botanica, my restaurant in Silverlake, CA, I'm no longer working in the kitchen, so I rely on weekly trips to the farmers market to inspire my meals at home. My food philosophy isn't too dissimilar from Lia's philosophy about movement: Eat mindfully and wholesomely. Value what you put in your mouth. Spend time—but not too much—ensuring it's delicious. Be grateful when you feed yourself well. I'm obsessed with vegetables, beans, spices, and the darkest chocolate. Thanks to a year spent working with an Ayurvedic coach (Ayurved is an ancient system of medicine originating in India), I'm more fluent in the grounding and stimulating properties of certain foods. Cooking and eating should be joyful, and in that vein, the recipes I'll be sharing are going to be nutrient-dense, celebrating the vibrance of natural ingredients. No restriction and no fear around food. Just sheer pleasure, as it should be.

Lia is generous enough to be including a recipe of mine in her newsletters. We will follow the seasons, but I will keep it real for those of you who aren't able to make it to a farmers market. I truly couldn't be more excited to cook (and move!) with you all.

MONTHLY RECIPE

herby mushroom bundles with polenta

If you remember our old website, there used to be a recipe section that was updated rather infrequently. It included some of my favorite homemade recipes that, to my surprise, so many of you really loved making too - so much so that I received so many requests to bring back these recipes and add new ones to the repertoire. Enter the email from Emily. When I read her note, I had already been in a major brainstorming mode to make this happen for you all so the timing felt serendipitous. We had an initial phone call to meet, chat possibilities, get to know each other a little more and so many of our beliefs aligned. I'm so excited to be teaming up with Emily to get you inspired to cook seasonally. Naturally, because you know I love the umami nature of mushrooms so much, the first recipe we're sharing is an *Herby Mushroom Bundle with Polenta*. We hope you try out the recipe of the month and don't forget to share your creations with us!



Mushrooms

½ pound mixed Wild Mushrooms like Shiitake, Maitake, Blue oyster, Chanterelle
 4 cloves smashed Garlic
 zest of ½ Lemon
 ½ teaspoon [Sumac](#) (optional)
 2 sprigs fresh Thyme
 2 sprigs fresh Rosemary
 ¼ cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
 Salt to season and finish

Polenta

½ cup Quick-Cooking Polenta
 2 cups Water
 Salt

A few notes:

- Use Diamond Crystal Kosher salt throughout cooking and Maldon Salt for a final seasoning. If you use table salt like Morton, use smaller pinches. Morton is saltier than Diamond.
- This recipe calls for quick-cooking polenta, which takes about 8 minutes to cook, but feel free to use regular polenta (which will cook in about 40 minutes and is worth it if you have the time).
- I picked up a variety of mixed wild mushrooms at the market for this dish: Chanterelles, Maitake, Shiitake, Button, and Blue Oyster. Use whatever you can find, but I'd recommend a minimum of three varieties if possible!
- Sumac is a dried and ground berry popular in the Levant region. It tastes like the brightest lemon and is absolutely delicious if you can get your hands on it. Botanica sells it [here!](#)

For the polenta: In a pot, bring 2 cups of water with a healthy pinch of salt to boil. Slowly whisk in the polenta, turn the heat to a simmer, and continue to whisk until the polenta begins to thicken. Cook for about 8 minutes, whisking every minute or so, until it's cooked through. Taste to make sure you've cooked out the raw taste of the cornmeal. When the polenta is done, cover the pot while you cook your mushrooms.

For the mushrooms: Preheat your oven to 400F. Set aside two squares of parchment paper about 14" x 14" each, plus two pieces of string about 6" long. Tear the larger mushrooms into smaller pieces (I usually halve shiitakes, for context) and add them to a bowl with the garlic, lemon zest, sumac, thyme, and rosemary. Pour in the olive oil and a pinch of salt, then mix well with your hands. You want the mushrooms to be coated evenly with the oil. Divide the mushrooms into the center of each parchment piece, making sure each has an equal amount of garlic and herbs. Draw the sides of the parchment together and tie each bundle together with string. Place on a baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes.

To finish: Check your polenta. It stiffens as it cools, so you might have to gently heat it and add a bit of water to loosen. Ladle the polenta into bowls and empty the mushroom bundles atop. Season with Maldon Salt and enjoy.

Leftover polenta? Cut into squares (when cool) and sauté in olive oil to make crispy polenta cakes. Or reheat it (adding water as necessary) and serve beneath a thick, cooked down tomato sauce nestled with cubes of sheep's milk feta. Or top it with a fried egg, sliced spring onions and hot sauce!

And did you know? Mushrooms are one of the only plant based sources of Vitamin D, which is perfect for the colder months when your body craves it the most.

THINGS I'M LOVING

a monthly roundup of my current favorites



EQUIPT 1.5 LB WRIST AND ANKLE WEIGHTS - VEGAN LEATHER

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IN OTHER NEWS

- Our next Prospect Park walk in Brooklyn will be Sunday, March 19th at 9am! Come join me and meet other members of our community! Please RSVP and let us know you're coming [here](#).
- Want to be our next featured community member? Please let us know by emailing hello@bthemethod.com!
- I'm heading to [Chileno Bay](#), an Auberge Property, in Los Cabos, Mexico from April 5th-13th! I'll be teaching in-person classes every day on property and will be available for private sessions. If you're looking for a little vacation, please come join me at the beach or in the spa at The Well!

THANKS FOR READING & SEE YOU ON THE MAT

This newsletter is for our community, by our community. Please share any questions, comments, and feedback. We love to hear from you!

