

A photograph of an aerial fitness studio. Several long, flowing silks are suspended from the ceiling. The silks are primarily a vibrant purple, with a few yellow ones interspersed. The studio has a brick wall in the background and a wooden floor. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the fabric.

Aerial CURRICULUM JOURNAL

BY KAMA FITNESS, LLC / KAMA FIT TV
AND KARLENE LINXWEILER



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It is recommended that you check with your doctor or healthcare provider before commencing any exercise. By purchasing and use of these materials, you are making an agreement that you understand the risks involved with aerial fitness, and have investigated the risks involved with performing inversions.

Introduction

Aerial is no easy workout! It literally takes your fitness to the next level. There are so many skills and strength moves to master; that's why we put this journal together for you to easily identify moves within each lock, sequence ideas you have or feel inspired by, conditioning drills to help you get stronger in and outside of the studio, plus nutrition to get the most mileage out of your strong body!

Use this journal to be your guide to becoming the best aerialist and athlete you can. Train safe, Train well, and Be well. Karlene

About the Author

Almost a decade ago I remember watching my first Cirque du Soleil show, and being captivated by the woman dancing in the air on crimson red silks. At the time, I was a High School History teacher by day and Pilates and Yoga Instructor at night, working on my certifications in Nutrition and Personal Training. At 23 years old I never thought I would one day be able to take my own fitness in the air like this beautiful Cirque du Soleil performer, let alone run a studio centered around this beautiful art. The strength, beauty, coordination, and flexibility that comes together in aerial has become a passion I have fused with other fitness areas, including Yoga, Dance, and Pilates.

With the advent of aerial fitness popping up around the world, I wanted to create a program rooted in proper training, nutrition, conditioning, and injury prevention. Kama Fitness studio and Kama Fit TV were born as a result of this need, along with our teacher training for Aerial Yoga and online eBooks.

It is my hope that these resources will serve as guides for aspiring aerialists out there who wish to have a full spectrum of health and wellness.

Be Well, *Karlene Linxweiler* (Aerial Yoga Girl)

How to Use this Book

Aerial Silks can be an overwhelming endeavor – there are so many skills, tricks, transition to learn, not to mention all the conditioning, cross training, flexibility work, and nutrition that goes hand in hand with developing yourself as an Aerialist.

This book is intended to serve as your Aerial Bible – Your reference for your skills, taking notes on each trick, a section to write down sequences you learn in class or create on your own as well as a section in the end on nutritional and fitness guidance.

This journal is divided into 5 sections. The first, Curriculum, is a list of all the ways you can "lock" your body into the silks. Since aerial is such a diverse art with many differing names, I have opted to leave you several lines of free space beneath each "lock" to list all the moves you learn that come from being in this lock. This gives you the freedom to label all your skills as you have been taught them, and not based on how I may refer to them in my own studio and on Kama Fit TV.

The Sequences section is left for you to record ideas from class, for performances and demos, or just for fun that you would like to remember and record the moves in order so that you can refer to them later.

The final three sections encompass your Conditioning, Warm Up, Nutrition, and Workouts that occur around your Aerial Curriculum to help you map out your best plan as an Aerialist. They are guidelines that I have used personally as a Fitness Trainer and Instructor for the last 15 years and have had much success, and little to no injury. Your body is a complex system that needs all pieces being cared for fully in order to perform at your best.

Having a solid warm up, curriculum, conditioning, cross training, and nutrition plan will all help you become the healthiest and most balanced version of yourself possible.



To access more than 300 tutorials in aerial fitness, aerial yoga sequences and conditioning drills, please visit www.KamaFitTV.com.

EXTRAS

Same Side Knee Hook

Opposite Side Knee Hook

Conditioning

COMPLETE BODY WARM UP

Cat and Cow

Begin your warm up on the floor in a table top position, with hands wide and flat, and your wrists stacked beneath your shoulders. For Cat, tuck the chin towards the chest, press the floor away with your hands, and lift your rib cage in an arch towards the ceiling. Inhale and drop your belly, listing your head into Cow. Repeat 5 times.



Cat



Cow

Yoga Flow

Gentle Sun Salutation Flow:

Carefully come to standing, feet hip distance apart, and raise your arms towards the sky with palms facing in. Bend the knees as you exhale and touch the floor to forward fold. Pressing your hands into your floor, step your right foot back into a low lunge. Reach your arms up, and press hips forward bending into your left knee. Place your hands on either side of your foot and push your hips back, lengthening your left leg. Return to Low Lunge. Press hands into mat, and carefully step back into plank. Drop to your knees to do a slow triceps press (chaturanga) to bring your chest towards the ground. Lift your hips on the next inhale into down dog, sinking your chest back towards the floor and your ears between your shoulders. Take three low breaths before stepping your left foot forward into a low lunge. Repeat the movement on this side.



Thera Band Shoulder Warm Up

Using a medium resistance thera-band, from standing or kneeling position engage your core, relax your shoulders, and soften your elbows. Begin to lightly pulse the band back and forth and you bring your arms over head and then back down to your lap. Repeat 5 times.



Foam Rolling

Please visit <https://www.kamafittv.com/conditioning--yoga.html> for how to Foam Roll

Pull Up Bar

Hollow Body Hang from a horizontal bar with feet slightly out in front of you. Keep back flat, core engaged, and shoulders down (think of a long neck.)



Pull Up on a horizontal bar with thumbs wrapped around the bar and palms facing away from you. Keeping your hollow body engaged, bring your chest towards the bar so that you are slightly angled back.



Chin Up on a horizontal bar with thumbs wrapped around the bar, palms now facing towards your face. Like the pull up, lean back slightly at an angle to have the chest meet the bar.



Abs on the Mat

Find a hollow body on the mat with lower back flat, core engaged, shoulders, neck, and head all lifted off the ground. Feet are also elevated, as your arms reach down along your side. Without straining, hold from ten seconds up to a minute.



From your hollow body position, train your obliques with bicycle abs by pedaling one leg in with knee bent as the opposite elbow squeezes towards the knee. Keep arms gently placing pressure on the base of your head.



Mermaid Abs

Beginning in a seated upright position, bend your knee into your chest as if doing “boat pose” in yoga. Begin to roll onto your side, extending your legs out into a “mermaid” position.” Without dropping your shoulder blades or head, lift back up to the original “boat” position. Repeat on the other side. That’s One Rep.

This challenging exercise works the entire abdominal wall, from lower, upper, and obliques for a complete core workout!



Hip Keys

Using your split silks or other vertical apparatus, condition your hip key from the ground for a complete body warm up. With the fabric on my right side, stagger your right hand higher and right foot forward. As you exhale, lift your hips high, your legs going wide and straight. Scissor the legs with the fabric in between to land in your hip key with the top leg squeezing down and the bottom leg squeezing up. Reverse this movement by wind milling your legs back the way you came. Try three on each side from the ground.



To see a complete video, visit the “Hip Key Conditioning” Video on KamaFitTv.com.

Abs in the Knot

Back Balance in the knot by first straddling back, then pulling yourself up so your head and torso become parallel to the floor. Keeping your back flat, core engaged, and legs wide with pointed toes and turn out in your hips, breath as you slowly loosen your grip. You eventually want to be able to balance (as shown in the second image) with your arms out wide in a star position. Hold this for ten seconds to a minute.



Windshield Wiper Abs in the knot begins in the Back Balance (see previous exercise) but you continue to hold onto the silk poles the entire time. As you exhale, squeeze both legs towards one side going into a “meat hook” position and pointing your feet towards the ground. Inhale and return to your wide straddle back balance position. Exhale, and perform the same action on the other side.



Toe Taps also begins in your Back Balance in your knot. Keeping your core engaged and hands holding on to the silk poles, slowly lower your feet together with a turn out in your hips so that only your heels touch just a few inches off the floor. Do not let your back arch. Exhale and return to the start position.

Note: this is a VERY challenging conditioning drill! You may bend your knees in the beginning to make it easier, but please do NOT arch your back!

Cross Training

If you need some guidance with creating your own consistent workout routine, you can begin by choosing three to four days a week to workout. On each day, dedicate an hour or so to a body group. From my background in personal training, it is best to have your week divided as follows:

The workouts you do will need to be logical in WHAT you do when you work out. Ideally, your fitness routine should be broken down into major muscle groups.

1. Biceps and Back (pulling muscles)
2. Triceps and Chest (pushing muscles)
3. Legs and Glutes
4. Abs (optional day)

Abdominals are a muscle group that can easily be worked in to every workout. This means you could spend 3 days weight training, and on each of those days you incorporate 1 to 2 abdominal exercises.

CARDIO

Along with weight training, cardiovascular movement should be incorporated to maintain a healthy heart, endurance, and overall cardio-respiratory health. Cardio also can help burn more fat, but it will also burn muscle. This is why cardio should be kept between 15-30 minutes maximum. Cardio can be broken up into interval routines that will challenge you and keep your body "guessing" for optimal fat burn and efficiency. Your cardio routine can be grouped into these three kinds of formats:

- Steady state cardio (jog/run for 20-30 minutes)
- High intensity Interval Sprints (sprint for 30 seconds, stop or walk for 30 seconds – repeat 15 to 20 times)
- Resist and Run (run/stair climb for 5 minutes , then weight train for 5-10 minutes – repeat)

WORKOUTS

These exercises can be modified to fit your lifestyle and gym access. The workouts listed here are intended to help you with overall musculature, with a primary focus on aerial training. For efficiency, these workouts are intended to only take up to 45 minutes maximum.

Day One

Steady state cardio – 20-30 minutes jog
(heart rate between 130 to 145bpm)

Biceps and Back (3 sets of 10 reps for each exercise)

- Dumbbell Curls
- Lat Pulldowns
- Cable Curls
- Seated Rows

Abs

- Hanging Leg Lifts
- Hanging Knee Tucks

Day Two

High intensity Interval Sprints (sprint for 30 seconds, stop or walk for 30 seconds – repeat 15 to 20 times)

Triceps and Chest (3 sets of 10 reps for each exercise)

- Lying Chest Press
- Triceps Push Ups
- Seated Chest Flies
- Cable Triceps Press

Abs

- Bicycles
- Stability Ball Crunches

Day Three

Resist and Run (run/stair climb for 5 minutes, then weight train for 5-10 minutes – repeat)

Legs and Glutes (4 sets of 10 reps for each exercise)

- Weighted Squats
- Weight Lunges
- Deadlift Twists
- Single Leg Deadlifts
- Walking Lunges (optional)

AT HOME WORKOUT

If you don't have access to a gym, there are a variety of exercises you can do from home with little equipment. Investing in a couple of dumbbells or kettlebells, yoga mat, floor gliders, stability ball, and a pull up bar (not required, but pretty cool) will give you exactly what you need to work out from home.

Best exercises to do from home with little to no equipment:

Planks

Down Dogs to Planks

Wide Arm Push Ups

Triceps Push Ups

Bicycle Abs

Leg Lifts / Reverse
Crunches

Walking Lunges

Arnold Presses

Kettlebell Swings

Squats

Single Leg Deadlifts

Split Squats

Standing Oblique
Crunches

Deadlift Twists

GET HEAVY

When it comes to how much weight you should use when you work out – it totally depends on your threshold. A good rule of thumb is to push about 5 lbs under your normal weight for your first set. Then, your next 2 to 3 sets should be enough weight that you feel you CAN DO the last two reps, but it is a struggle.

For example, say you are doing Biceps Curls. You know 15 pounds is moderately difficult, but 20 pounds is challenging enough that you feel a "burn" when you get to the last 2 reps. Not impossible, but definitely a bit of a struggle. If this is the case, your first set you should curl 15 pounds for 10 reps. Then, grab the 20 pounds for your next two sets. If you have a hard time getting to 10 reps, aim for 8, and see if you can safely finish the last two with good form. These last two are where muscle growth occurs – you need to safely challenge yourself, or you won't reap the benefits of weight training. Staying in your "safe zone" of weights or cardio that is "easy" and "do-able" will not challenge your muscles to grow.

SWITCH IT UP

In addition to challenging your body with heavier weight, you will also need to keep in mind that your body is good at adapting. This will mean that when you start a new workout routine, your body will be sore, and you will see changes. But, if you keep doing the same routine, your body will have diminishing returns because it is adapting to the workouts. What this means for you is that you will need to switch up your routine in order to "trick" your body and keep it guessing.

Switching up your workout can be as simple as going heavier in weight, changing the order of your exercises, doing more sets or reps, or adding cardio bursts between strength sets. It can also be completely changing your exercises – switching out from bench press to bench flies, or walking lunges for spit squats. It is wise to change your workout routine every 4-6 weeks.

Use the next few pages to write out your own personal fitness program.

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

Nutrition

Most people are looking for a Meal Plan – they want a prescription for exactly what to eat, how much to eat, and when to eat it. I have been down this road before – and I will say, these DO NOT work. At least, not in the long run. It is unrealistic and not sustainable to try to eat a regimented diet. It likely leads to an unhealthy obsession with food, eating disorders, extreme fatigue, and is just plain difficult to stick to.

Therefore, I will not be giving you a meal plan with exact measurements and macros (nutrient groups of fats, carbs, and protein.) This is not a realistic approach to living healthy – mentally or physically. The idea is to acknowledge what you already are in the habit of eating – and tweaking it to make it healthier while also fitting your lifestyle.

This will work well for when life happens – work, travel, holidays, parties, and get togethers. These things happen all the time, and we need to approach these events with the mentality of, "How can I eat the best for my body in this situation?"

SMALL CHANGES FIRST

Begin with the small changes you can make on a daily basis. A good example is your daily coffee break. Do you usually use cream and sugar? Flavor shots? Begin to drink less coffee and more water or tea OR start eliminating that added sugar and cream. If drinking coffee black is out of the question, then consider switching to almond milk and stevia or another healthy sugar alternative.

From here, begin to access your breakfast. The best idea is to eliminate as much sugar as possible from your diet. Sugar is stored in our bodies directly as fat, and holds almost zero nutritional value. It also has been linked to a leading cause of cancer and heart disease. If you typically eat yogurt, switch to Greek Yogurt or an alternative made with coconut in order to consume less sugar.

ALL NATURAL

The number one piece of advice I can give you about nutrition and health is to fuel your body with natural or as-natural-as-possible foods that you can find. Processed foods – foods that come in packages like cereal, chips, crackers, cookies, and most boxes – are all produced with excess sugar, sodium, and chemicals. Eliminating these products from your diet as much as possible and going to foods that are prepared from home will lead to the body being fueled and running efficiently. The key is to "eat the way we were created to eat by nature."

Take an inventory of your kitchen cabinets – what is not fueling you well? Can you part with it? If you can, please do! Boxed meals and bagged crackers, cookies, or chips are not serving you and should be treated as special occasion foods, not every day snacks.

When you go to the grocery store – go in with a plan. Purchase foods that are mainly on the perimeters of the store, not the aisles. I've included a list to help you out the next time you're at the grocery store.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

I won't speak too much on vegan or vegetarian diets, as I am not a licensed dietitian. I will say from personal experience, dairy and GMO white flour products and soy have proven to not be the friends of many people. When I eliminated these items from my diet, I noticed my skin cleared up and my body felt lighter, as well as my workouts and PMS symptoms became easier to manage.

Because our BODIES are so UNIQUE, our diets have to be as well. You will need to consider keeping a food journal or simply pay attention to your body and how it reacts to different foods. Try eliminating a potentially inflammatory food group such as dairy, soy, sugar, or wheat from your diet for a few weeks and see if you notice a difference.

WHAT IS HEALTHY?

Health is such an ambiguous term these days. Health can be defined differently for different people. The question is, what does it mean for you? What does it look like for you? Try to avoid confusing healthy with a number on the scale, or a certain size dress. These things aren't an accurate picture of health for every person – your height, genetics, medical history, and so much more affect this.

The next time you work out, practice repeating a mantra over to yourself. I like to say, "I am strong and balanced." Whether I'm doing yoga, running sprint intervals, or flying on my silks, I connect back to telling myself (and my students) this phrase. Try it for a day or for a workout session. See if it changes how you feel and what you can accomplish.

What you put into your body – what it digests and assimilates – becomes a part of you at the cellular level. Eating clean, healthy foods that are closer to their natural state will help your body function more efficiently and keep sickness away. It helps to have a healthy relationship with food, where your mind doesn't view healthy eating habits as restrictive diets. That mindset creates a sense of deprivation that is often followed by bingeing. Too often in our society we tend to become abusive and obsessive with our food.

All this being said, there is no one diet that fits all. Your genetics are very unique, as is everything about you, and this includes what you eat. Focus on what you can eat, not what you can't. Eliminate processed foods, and avoid sugars derived from corn syrup. Fill in your meals with nutrients from fruits, vegetables, grains that haven't been bleached, beans, nuts, eggs, meat, and dairy that is non-GMO (Genetically Modified.) If you buy anything in a box or can, read over the ingredients list to make sure you understand what you are putting into your body. Processed foods tend to be made with synthetic flavors and additional salt and sugar that your body doesn't need to run well.

It helps to have some familiarity with how to cook grains, such as rice, quinoa, and whole wheat pasta, and being able to chop, steam, sauté, blend, bake, and roast. Investing in a crock pot, blender, pots and pans, cutting utensils, cutting boards, food processor, mason jars, and a vegetable spiralizer are all helpful when making healthy, clean meals easily.

To help you with what kinds of foods to shop for, or to keep on hand in your kitchen, here's a helpful list:

Dairy

Almond or Cashew Milk, Coconut Milk, Greek Yogurt, Organic Cheese

Fruits & Vegetables

Everything Organic is best! Check for the "Dirty Dozen;" a list of foods that have the highest concentration of pesticides, according to the Environmental Working Group

Healthy Fats

Nut butters, Avocado (oil), Grass-fed Butter, Coconut Oil, Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Beans & Legumes

Black beans, Mungo, Pinto, Kidney, Cannellini, Fava, Garbanzo, Peas, Green Beans, Lentils, peanuts

Natural Sweeteners

Honey, Maple Syrup, Nectar Agave, Molasses, Stevia

Nuts & Seeds

Almonds, Brazil Nuts, Cashews, Hazelnuts, Macadamia Nuts, Pecans, Pine Nuts, Pistachios, Walnuts

Chia seeds, Flaxseed, Pumpkin Seeds, Sesame Seeds, Sunflower Seeds

Protein

Beef (organic, sparingly), Chicken, Eggs, Duck, Lamb, Salmon, Tuna, Turkey

Whole Grains

Barley, Brown Rice, Farro, Oats, Quinoa

Avoid

Alcohol (sparingly)

Saturated Fats

Processed Foods (canned, deli meat, prepared condiments, processed meat and cheese, cured meat, boxed chips, cookies, crackers, juices)

Refined Sugars (aspartame, brown sugar, cane juice, sucralose, white sugar, artificial sweeteners)

Soda and Fruit Juices (concentrated)

The novelty of processed foods is how easy they make it to consume with minimal prep work. When you choose to eat clean, you will often have to prepare or prep your food, which can be potentially time consuming. Many people use their Sunday afternoon to pre-cook all their grains and package their meats and produce for the week. If you have a busy schedule this is a great idea, but if you're like me and enjoy your Sundays open to play, I invest in dinner meals that take no more than 30 minutes to prepare and breakfasts and lunches that take only 5 to 10 minutes to make.

Breakfast Bowls are a great way to set the tone for your day and get nutrients in your body first thing in the morning. The bonus is they're fast, easy to make, and taste awesome. Plus they are very filling. Use the Chart Below to help you make your own creative breakfast blends:

RECIPES

Breakfast Bowl Recipe

1

Pick a Fruit

Acai Puree

Frozen Berries

2

Pick a Liquid

½ cup Apple Juice

½ cup Coconut Water

3

Sweetener

Honey, Agave, Maple Syrup

Nut Butter

4

Choose a Base

Yogurt (Greek, Coconut, Dairy)

Banana

5

Top It Off

Nuts, Seeds, Fresh Fruit

Granola, Muesli

Instructions:

Blend together ½ cup of acai puree and/or ½ cup frozen berries with ½ cup of your liquid, your sweetener (optional), and the base. Pour into a large bowl, and top with the seeds, nuts, fruit, and granola of your choice. Adding more nut butter, seeds, nuts, and yogurt will amp up the protein for a more filling meal.

If I'm in a rush, I will just put a scoop of Greek yogurt in a bowl with fresh fruit and top it off with granola.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

When it comes to lunch and dinner, crock pot meals are always an excellent idea. You can make soups, meats, and sauces easily with minimal prep time.

Another great option is grain bowls. Simply prepare your choice of whole wheat pasta, noodles, quinoa, and/or brown rice. I usually steam the grains, and top it off with a protein, vegetables, and a homemade dressing. I love to have crunch in my food, so I will always top them off with nuts or seeds. Stir fries work the same way, where I substitute soy sauce with Liquid Aminos for less sodium. Making soups and salads with a little creativity can go a long way, too. Experiment with making your own dressings, marinades, and sauces for salads and meats.

Remember that food is your first form of medicine. Eating well will help you stay healthy in the long run as well as avoid getting sick on a regular basis. If you find yourself coming down with a cold, you can make this Cold Killer Soup that is full of immune boosting nutrients.

