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Stacey Lei KRAUSS

Harmonizing
mind and body

BY LUCIA VITI



Stacey Lei Krauss, a Nike Elite instructor, is at the top of her game. Most noted for her signature, award-winning workout *willPower & grace™* and her barefoot training methods, this 20-year fitness veteran adds her latest DVD release, *The Seven Steps to WillPower™* to an already impressive list of accomplishments. She is a master trainer for the Nautilus Institute; Schwinn Indoor Cycling; Body Bar; BOSU® and Beamfit™, among others. Certified by AFAA, ACSM and ACE, Krauss' extensive presenter resume—which includes domestic and international presentations at events including IDEA, ECA and Nike's Swoosh conference held in Denmark and Germany's Body Life—ranks her among the top "who's who" on the fitness pro circuit.

"It's incredibly gratifying to expose teachers, trainers, clients and students to innovative, effective fitness methods and movement techniques," said Krauss. "I believe that a variety of exercise modalities keeps everyone interested, involved and inspired. I've made it my mission to get people to move their bodies a little more every day. Exercise doesn't have to be harder, just smarter."

Adapted from the ancient ritual of the Five Tibetan Rites, *The Seven Steps to WillPower* is a 15-minute equipment-free workout that fuses tradition with a balanced functional approach to strengthen, energize and transform the body. The mindful and easy-to-follow sequence of "seven steps," adheres to fitness industry guidelines while maintaining the integrity of the practice once dubbed "the fountain of youth." Krauss' efficient "just do it" approach appeals to professional athletes, weekend warriors, seniors and those who need more motivation to break a sedentary lifestyle.

According to Krauss, the origins of the 2500-year-old energy rejuvenation exercises were publicized by Peter Kelder in the 1939 book *The Eye of Revelation: The Five Rites of Rejuvenation*. "As told by Kelder, an English Army officer traveled to the Himalayas in search of the fountain of youth only to discover that a fountain didn't exist. Instead he discovered a daily ritual, a set of rites, performed by Tibetan monks living in a monastery that kept its practitioners young, healthy and vibrant."

Krauss added two additional steps, the Plank for core stability and the Twisting Vine for spinal rotation. "Following suit after Plank, I named the sequence as the steps of Wind, Roaring, Morning Glory, Rising Lava and Waves to describe how each exercise should look and feel."

Krauss stresses the importance of the Plank as a goal-setting exercise and invites everyone to display photographs on her Web site (www.worldplank.com) of the Plank poses shot in strange and unusual places.

"If everyone would 'Plank' for a minute a day," she insisted, "we would enjoy a world of stronger, more fit and centered people. Even one minute a day builds willPower!"

Krauss' *willPower & grace* DVD earned four stars from *Health Magazine* and ECA's OBOW award for the best adapted class in 2006. This Pilates-meets-bootcamp, calorie burning, rhythmic mosaic of postures, drills and principles integrates barefoot training movements that strengthen feet and correct ankle, feet and hip imbalances while teaching participants how to land with grace on their feet.

"willPower is the ability to create change through the power of your mind. It's the culmination of movement and philosophy, performance and involvement. *willPower & grace* links our mind's strength, power and desires with our body's demands and potential. The workout is a manifestation of freedom and control united and is the perfect way to sweat your way to serenity."

Krauss strongly encourages barefoot training "because we've spent decades sporting high-tech, cushioned support shoes. Barefoot training affords our toes the freedom to extend, flex and grip, thus improving joint stability through the ankles, legs, knees and hips. Barefoot training enhances strength and balance where it's needed the most at the base of support."

Krauss admitted that her own barefoot training began by accident. "I forgot my sneakers for a class so I encouraged everyone to join me barefoot. I instantly realized that barefoot, not only did I have better balance, I landed more gracefully and paid better attention to my foot strike."

This native New Yorker, turned San Franciscan, now resides in Denver, Colo. In her "short spurts of free time," Krauss loves to burn placid energy at Denver's Zen Center because "nothing beats meditating in a spiritual setting."

"How can I not love what I do for a living?" concluded Krauss. "I'm passionate about guiding people along a path of well-being. My dedication to fitness as a physical, mental and spiritual empowerment is extremely rewarding. I'm truly blessed to call the gift of fitness my career." **AF**

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Lucia Viti is a freelance writer and has been a fitness professional for 22 years. She is AFAA and ACE certified and teaches in San Diego, Calif. Touting pleasure while promoting health and harmony through athleticism and community, outreach fitness events remain an integral part of her life as a fitness professional.