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SHERRI L. DODD

# MOM LOOKS GREAT

THE FITNESS PROGRAM  
FOR MOMS

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Please consult with your physician or health professional before starting a fitness program and/or you have questions about your health. If you feel any discomfort or pain during any of these exercises, stop immediately and consult your physician.

The author of this book does not dispense medical advice or prescribe the use of any technique as a form of treatment for physical or medical problems without the advice of a physician, directly or indirectly. The intent of the offer is only to provide information of general nature to help you in your quest for physical and emotional wellbeing. In the event you use any of this information in this book for yourself, the author and publisher assume no responsibility for your actions.

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## *About The Author*

Sherri Dodd remembers her introduction into the world of fitness. At fourteen years of age, her aunt and uncle gave her a racquetball training set. To alleviate typical teenage angst, she would channel all negative energy through her hand to the racquet and expel it with every blast into that little blue ball. Friends began to comment on her strength and it was then she decided that working out was bringing her a good amount of positive attention, which one can never have too much of during adolescence. While she was not big into school sports, her parents knew that she derived pleasure out of exercise, so they bought her a gym membership for her nineteenth birthday. So began the trend.

It has been quite awhile since those early days. After several nutrition and exercise-related courses while earning her college degree, followed by a fast-paced career in the corporate industry, Sherri decided to pursue her personal training interests. Although she already had many followers on an informal basis, it was in 2000 that she officially studied for, and then earned her certification as a Personal Trainer. Shortly thereafter, she also became certified as a Lifestyle and Weight Management Consultant.

Sherri Dodd's experiences range from personal training in a prestigious swim and racquet club to developing departmental fitness programs for a large corporation to personalized one on one training sessions. She is also a published freelance writer covering the topics of fitness and motherhood. For the Mom Looks Great program, she was able to experiment from both of her own pregnancy recoveries, as well as assist a few of her clients with their post-pregnancy recoveries. All have shown great results and now she is proud to bring the program directly to you.

*Dedication*

*To My Beloved Children - The Highest Inspiration For Me To Strive For  
Better Health.*

*To My Wonderful Husband, Who By Example Has Inspired Me To Pursue My  
Dreams.*

As an obstetrician for 13 years, I often notice a sense of uncertainty in patients leaving the hospital after the delivery of a baby. The pregnancy experience has been an educational journey filled with excitement, anxiety, worries and joy. There are amazing physical changes occurring throughout the antepartum period. Increasingly more frequent office visits allow for extensive exchanges of information and learning opportunities for expecting parents. There are regular discussions and planning sessions as we are building to a momentous climactic event—labor and delivery of the baby. So with all of this preparation, it would seem an unlikely time, when all has come to fruition, that there should be any ambivalence.

I feel these sentiments can be explained by the fact that the patient is going from an information-rich medical experience to one that, if not deficient, is certainly much ‘poorer’ regarding access to knowledge of what is happening to her body during the postpartum period. Almost universally, pregnancy is a time of personal growth and an experience that generally is highly rewarding for the expecting mother. She is the recipient of more attention from her physician, spouse, family members and friends than in almost any other time of life. For those looking, there is truly an overwhelming amount of information available from classes, books, magazines, television and the internet for couples who are expecting. Even family, friends and acquaintances will ‘share’ their knowledge of the pregnancy and birthing experience, which can be of mixed benefit. Along with giving their own information, obstetricians can help their patients interpret medical information filtering in from other sources. At the end of the pregnancy a patient has often gained more information about the changes occurring in pregnancy and how to care for themselves during that time than can ever truly be quantified. With this knowledge comes comfort that the changes that occur in pregnancy, size being most obvious, are normal, temporary and socially acceptable. This is a very different situation from the postpartum experience.

The transition into the post-partum period occurs with the delivery. Even with all of the knowledge gained beforehand, the birth of a baby is always an incredible, emotionally moving life event. Ironically, the delivery initiates exponentially more rapid physical changes than conception did many months before. Almost every organ system in the newly postpartum patient is affected in a sudden and dramatic way. Also, especially for the first time parent, the anxiety of handling her newborn, combined with the instant sleep disruptions are a great psychological challenge. The patient has one to two days in the hospital to start to adjust to these changes, and to learn to care for their newborn with the help of doctors, nurses and lactation specialists. These circumstances make it difficult to

Absorb and apply all of the information being disseminated. It is not surprising that when the moment of discharge from the hospital arrives, and the next visit with her doctor is six weeks away, that there can be uncertainty in a patient's mind.

And what of the next phase in the postpartum period? The postpartum patient's body is still quite different from that of the pre-pregnancy state. Fatigue from anemia and sleep deprivation are common. Extra weight and decreased muscle tone are disappointing souvenirs of the baby's arrival. Weekly visits with the obstetrician, when patients had time to learn about the changes occurring in their body, are replaced with frequent pediatric visits to check on the baby. In spite of the physical and psychological challenges new moms are facing, the baby is the focus of almost all information gathering. The six-week postpartum visit is the only scheduled time for the healthy postpartum mom to learn about this phase for her body from her doctor. Discussions about other topics, like contraceptive needs, will often dominate this visit. There is little information available in the media for the postpartum patient and even family and friends aren't offering an abundance of advice, especially when it comes to discussing "weight issues." No doubt this can all contribute to a sense of bewilderment and loss of support in the weeks and months following the delivery of a baby.

For all of these reasons, I am very pleased to see someone take the time to focus on the needs of the postpartum patient. In her book, *Mom Looks Great*, Sherri Dodd uses her knowledge of exercise and nutrition, combined with her personal experience as a mother, to guide women struggling with the persistent physical changes in their bodies after delivering a baby. This sensible approach to a healthy, nutritious diet and a reasonable exercise regimen can help the post-partum patient regain a normal physiologic state. Sherri's motivational chapters are universally grounded to help readers understand the importance of using her guidelines and become invested in improving their health. The book even gives an overview of another little discussed residual effect of pregnancy, Urinary Incontinence. Beyond the postpartum period, women can use this information to maintain a healthy diet and remain physically fit for the rest of their lives. With its focus on the postpartum condition, *Mom Looks Great* is a welcome addition to the sparse 'after' pregnancy information currently available.

Martin S. Silverman, M.D., F.A.C.O.G.

Each child is an adventure into a better life –  
an opportunity to change the old pattern and make it  
new

*Hubert H. Humphrey*

## *Introduction*

Shortly after the birth of my first son I took a stroll through the local bookstore to acquire a book on postnatal exercise. I scanned through seemingly miles of wooden shelves and saw plenty of pregnancy books with 400-1000 pages dedicated to guiding pregnant women through many pregnancy-related subjects. Guidance for what you feel, what to eat, how to exercise, your fears, your tests and any other ache and pain associated with having a baby were abundantly printed for a very educated pregnancy. But, looking for a book, any book – little, big, thick or thin on the postpartum phase was fruitless. So, I once again picked up a pregnancy book and flipped all the way to the back and was able to find a short twenty-page chapter on postpartum recovery and exercise. Now, I do not know about the other seventy-five million mothers (U.S. Census Bureau) in the United States that have endured the after effects of pregnancy and trying to recover, not to mention the four million (U.S. Census Bureau) who have done so within the past year... but...I believe that an average twenty-page chapter for this crucial period is a bit anemic. Think of the carnage! We feel like we have been beaten, we are physically weak and extremely exhausted. Our tummies look like the evil talking goop from a tween-ager's foreign, animation series.

Our appetites are still geared toward eating everything in sight, our walk is still a waddle from months of habit and there are leaks here (tears of exhaustion) and leaks there (in not so appropriate places) that definitely need attention. One twenty-page chapter?! We are talking about a recovery that is going to get you through the rest of your life. And, forget about if you were not physically active before; now, you have a rapidly growing, quick, energetic and highly curious, yet highly accident-prone little babe to keep up with, look out for, not to mention, serve as a role model for. You must be in tip-top shape if you are ever going to survive parenthood.

That is why I have created the Mom Looks Great program for you – the mom who is determined to be her greatest in all healthy aspects. While this book was written with approximately the first three postnatal years in mind, it is tailored to fit the general fitness needs of every mom, whether you have more than one child or even a mom with grandchildren. We all desire good health in order to fully enjoy our lives, be able to keep up with our children and be able to watch them grow up to someday give us grandchildren.

I have three core sections in the Mom Looks Great program – Motivation, Nutrition and Exercise. I have chosen Motivation as my starting chapter due to the fact that an average 50% of all people beginning an exercise program lose motivation and quit within the first

six months. I do not want this to happen to you. My Motivation chapter gives you guidance on how to identify and evade notorious outside influences that can derail your fitness plans, how to avoid your own impulses to quit your program and offers guidance on visualization and being organized in order to more likely follow through with your goals. Mom Looks Great also offers a chapter on how to avoid most setbacks and how to recover from a minor setback if and when you do experience one. Motivation is key number one to fulfilling your dream of being the fit and healthy person that you really want to be.



In Mom Looks Great, our nutrition chapter will guide you through the temptation of trendy diets that are certain to sabotage a healthy weight loss and decrease in body fat. It also consists of data gathered from the Harvard School of Public Health, which concluded that following a consistent eating program (i.e., not trying every new trend that comes along) will lead to better health. This includes a healthy body weight and a lowered risk of diseases such as heart disease and Diabetes II. Further, the nutrition chapter breaks down the different nutrients essential for your well-being. Protein, carbohydrates and fat are all given their own chapters, so that you may better understand the nutrients and how they relate to your health and ability to thrive. My aim is to dissuade you from being swept up in the whirlwind of trendy diets that take an all or nothing approach.



Finally, Mom Look Great provides you with a three-month and forward exercise program. As a mom, you will need strength that you may not have needed before having a child. Rarely did you constantly carry an eight, fifteen, twenty-pound and up load of anything, everywhere you traveled and everyday. As your baby gets older he will wriggle and lean while propped on your arm, placing a lot of stress on your lower back and pushing the limits of a single arm's strength. And, most often this will occur when you are right in the middle of a task that cannot be immediately stopped, so you are forced to endure the weight shift and balance out your body accordingly until your hands are free. And do not even think that you will stop carrying your child when he learns to walk. In addition to carrying my toddler to his crib, my older boy still insists I carry him from the car to his bed at night after long road trips home. Kids remain kids until they have kids of their own. And being the loving, nurturing moms that we are, we will be picking them up as long as we possible can, despite the fact that they are beyond half our weight and height. Trust me on this one! Not only have I seen

it with my own kids and younger siblings, but I remember milking my own parents for the chariot ride to bed as long as I could. I know it sounds crazy, but just wait; babies, and children in general, will push and manipulate you in directions you never prepared for and never quite imagined.



Your ability to react quickly will also necessitate agility, strength and endurance. No matter how safe you make your house for your new baby, accidents can happen. Unless you are planning to barricade your precious little one in her crib or bedroom beyond the age of four when you go out into the world, you will see that baby safety has not made the priority list. You are going to find yourself obliged to quickly jump, stretch, leap or drop to curb your little one's dangerous close call. When this happens, you are putting yourself at risk for pulls, strains and other injuries. Being in fit condition will reduce this risk and let you live to tell the tale of how baby once...

In the exercise section, Mom Looks Great also provides you with an expansive view of the various components of the fitness program – strength training, cardiovascular training and flexibility training. All components are then comprised into a comprehensive, exciting and effectual exercise routine that is specially suited for three different phases of postnatal recovery. Also, for the mother who is interested in participating in the program, but is well past the postpartum period, the book details how and where to begin within the different phases whether you have previously began an exercise program and simply wish to be a mom that looks great.

You will also find pertinent information in the back of the book in the various Appendix pages. I have provided you with various fitness formulas and self-administered tests to educate you on your specific needs for improvement, and thus, empower you to navigate through your program efficiently and make improvements where needed most. I have also given you a couple reference charts that will enable you to follow along with the book more efficiently, including the rating of a few foods on the Glycemic Index and a Calories Burned chart for various activities. Different charts for each phase of the Mom Looks Great exercise program are also provided for you in addition to a sample workout for each phase.

In Appendix E, I have written an in-depth analysis on postnatal Urinary Incontinence, which will be most helpful if you need assistance in overcoming weakened pelvic floor muscles. You will also find a variety of exercises for this area that have proven quite effective.

Mom Looks Great is a program that is made for you to be the best mom you can be as far as having the energy, ability and self-esteem to pass on to your child. This is so important in role modeling for your child and giving them the best you that you can. If you are unhappy from being unhealthy and lethargic, you will not be in the greatest physical or mental condition to happily raise a child and inspire them to be their best. And I know that as mothers, we truly want our kids to be the best they can be.

*PART I - POSITIVE MOTIVATION*

Stop thinking inside the box where you have been led by your family, peers and society. Realize that boxes, with a bit of effort can be ripped wide open at will.

## *Notorious Outside Influences*

You will hear countless stories about the “last ten pounds”. People assure you that last bit of weight is stubborn, indestructible and impossible to lose. This is what I like to refer to as a notorious outside influence. Whether intentional or not, these are the external sources that can de-motivate your plans of becoming physically fit. They are the afflicted living testimonial of the long-lasting negative effects of pregnancy. And the proof is there, right? Look at them - they had their baby; they didn’t lose all their weight, and that means that the last ten pounds will stay on you too. But, stand back for a minute and be objective. Look at what is not being said. Are they eating a well-balanced diet or do they let cravings dictate their meals? Are they committed to exercising and leading healthy lifestyles or are they full of excuses as to why they could never possibly implement an exercise program into their hectic life? Are they positive about losing the weight or are they subconsciously telling themselves they cannot do it? Or maybe, just maybe, when they went to lose their last ten pounds, someone came along and told them it could not be done. It is a relentless legacy and one that inflicts damage to positive motivation, especially if it comes from someone close to you.



Now, if you really think about it, I know you have seen moms around you who are in great shape. You do not just see them on the television or projected on a large theater screen as celebrities - you see them at the gym, you see them riding their bicycle down long streets and you even see them dropping their kids off at the same daycare or attending the same playgroup that your child attends. They are out there and they are normal everyday people just like you, whether they are a working at an eight-hour-plus office job or working full-time, as a mom, at home. These are the moms that do believe that you can lose your pregnancy weight. They are testimonials to the fact that you can lose that last ten pounds as long as you are willing to commit to a plan and do it.

Contrary to what you may think, you will find that the moms who did lose the last ten pounds are not talking about it much. In fact, I have talked with a few women about this very subject and the subject is avoided in a lot of conversations because they do not want to hurt the feelings of those who have not lost the extra weight nor do they want to present themselves as boastful. Instead, they are quietly sticking to their healthy lifestyles. They

are low key and do not look for fellow ‘sufferers’ to frenzy about how hard it is or how long it took to lose the weight and tone up their bodies. They just keep moving and strive for better health.

You may agree, when people are miserable and uncomfortable with themselves, they will generally try to seek company with someone to whom they can relate. There you are and there they are, both moms, both out of shape. While it is okay to admit that you may need to shape up after your pregnancy, do not let them pull you into their negative thinking. There are several books on the market, with years and years of research by mental health professionals that attest when you verbalize something, even if it is a white lie or a good-intentioned, co-miserating statement, your mind believes it. Statements such as “I’ll never get this weight off!” are extremely damaging to your subconscious mind and will only prolong any kind of progress. This can be likened to a dream of running and you actually wake up winded. Your mind does not know the difference. That is why I cannot stress to you the importance of positive self-talk and the polite avoidance of negative comments.

Negativity comes when you least expect it. You may be visiting with someone you really like. The conversation is pleasant, you are both in a collaborative groove and then it comes out. A negative comment from the person that reaches out, ‘slaps’ you, bluntly getting your attention. This can be likened to a relative kissing your cheek and within seconds you begin to feel the residual saliva from their lips. Gross, huh? Well, that is just like a negative comment, gross. The moment was good, then it hit you and all you want to do is wipe it off and forget it happened. You do not want to be rude, because you care about the person, but the wetness remains and all you can think about is getting rid of it. You may nonchalantly brush it away, but you are still repelled by it and the conversation begins to slow. This is the same with a negative comment - it can leave a lasting impression if you do not ‘wipe it off’. I know you must have been privy to a bad remark like this in your life. It was not necessarily about weight loss, it could be about anything that you favor and someone else unknowingly (or knowingly) insults you. You have got to ‘Wipe It Off!’ You need to recognize when you have been hit with a negative remark and know how important it is to wipe it off and stick to your plans of getting back into shape. And likewise, be sure that you also take into account people’s feeling before planting a ‘big, fat wet kiss’ on *their* cheek.



Following is a list of possible negative remarks. If given to you, nonchalantly ‘wipe them off’ and make a mental note that you may have to avoid the subject of getting into shape with this person in the future. Further, while I believe that negative occurrences come into

our lives for a reason, whether to teach, warn or inspire us to be better, if this particular person is negative in general, it might be best to avoid them, period. Negative statements can be presented, as follows:

- Well, good luck, I don't know anyone who's lost those last pounds.
- Forget about it. Just take care of your baby, that's what is important now.
- Weight gain after pregnancy runs in our family, just stop driving yourself crazy about it.
- Well, if it doesn't work, you could always get liposuction.

*-Remember - just wipe it of when you get these negative comments.*

Most often, those closest to you know you best and know what types of manipulations work most efficiently – this is something you may know as “pushing buttons”. Once again, these individuals may not mean to maliciously condemn you. They are most likely just in the mindset it is possible to get beyond the subject and still be able to maintain the closeness. I just added diet to politics and religion in my conversational taboos.

A couple other healthy changes during the past few years have included getting fewer visits from a part of my family because I have talked with them on the dangers of their secondhand smoke around my children, something that I used to just endure before becoming a mother. I have even lost a good friend because I did not like the way they condemned another friend of mine on a regular basis. The point I am trying to make is that sometimes your changes are not popular with others; however, if you are to achieve the lifestyle and positive mentality that is best for you, you may see less of these people. You do not need to be rude about it. You just need to move forward toward your goals. The strongest relationships will survive these times. Otherwise, nothing beats an excuse like being a mom to avoid unpleasant people and their invitations. It is the most legitimate excuse in the entire world for being too busy to do something.

Of course, not all outside influences are negative. Friends, family and even complete strangers can be extremely supportive of your fitness goals. One client of mine found the additional encouragement she needed from an online chat room in a baby website. While she followed the guidelines of the Mom Looks Great program, she was able to receive accolades from a group of moms in the same predicament. Phrases such as “Way to go” or “Keep it up” and even “Don't worry, you'll do better next week” gave her mental stamina to uphold her regime and she is much better off because of it. She did end up gaining her weight back though...she is pregnant again – bless her heart.

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## *Taming Your Own Self-Talk*

There are more than just other people who sabotage our success for healthy bodies.

The most crucial person responsible for your well-being and maintaining healthy changes in you, is you. While we are usually our own worst critics, we have been known to be our own worst enemy as well. When we recognize this fact, we may very well decide it is time to stop hurting our own feelings and make amends with ourselves. Furthermore, when we are able to recognize that we are thinking ill of ourselves, we will be more inclined to stop the self-talk and be able to proceed with resolution in rectifying the negative outcome, which is usually a lack of self-confidence or self-esteem.

I had the privilege of hearing a great lecture the other day which very much pertained to taming your self-talk. The person said that our negative thoughts can be likened to a rattlesnake (he may be from Texas) and our mind can be likened to the sanctity of our home. He asked what you would do if there was a rattlesnake in your home. I think of questions such as: “Would you sit there with a woeful expression, sad because you have a rattlesnake in your house? Would you throw up your arms and give up, figuring that the snake is already in the house and there is not much you can do about it now? Or, maybe you would think that it is your own fault because you are incapable of protecting your house from rattlesnakes?” These questions may sound ridiculous, but they are exactly how you must treat your own self-deprecating thoughts. If a rattlesnake crawled in your house, you would probably kill it, if not call for help. And forget about if you were afraid of snakes before having children, a mother’s protective instinct will enable you to kill, skin and eat the darn thing if need be. That is why, if and when a negative thought about your ability comes into your mind, you must ‘kill’ it immediately. Go a step further and replace it with an affirming thought. For instance if you doubt your ability to stick to your Mom Looks Great program, replace it with – I will stick to my program AND it will improve the way I feel or I will accomplish my goal to lose my pregnancy weight and it will enable me to more effectively raise my child. If you find that after many attempts, you cannot kill these negative thoughts about yourself and they are persistent, you may want to call for help. Postpartum depression is a common occurrence after childbirth and can appear in various forms, such as indecision, anger, fearfulness or sadness. These symptoms can come on gradually after the baby is born and last for years, if untreated. The admittance and acceptance of postpartum depression does not mean you are weak or a bad mother. Most certainly seek help if you have thoughts of harming yourself or your baby. Your doctor will definitely be able to guide you in the appropriate direction.



Aside from rejecting a negative thought and replacing it with an affirming one, it is very beneficial and effective to write down a plan of what you intend to achieve by doing the Mom Looks Great program. Be sure to be reasonable when talking in terms of how many pounds or the amount of body fat you wish to lose. A good place to start is to use your pre-pregnancy weight and body fat percentage. If you do not know your pre-pregnancy body fat percentage, the weight will be sufficient for beginning your program. If you were heavy even before becoming pregnant, generally, you could place your initial focus on a number about ten to twenty pounds less than your current weight. Depending on how overweight you are, studies from the American Council on Exercise show that you can attain your lowest weight since the age of twenty. However, to be safe in your weight loss efforts, a good rule of thumb is to calculate a one to two pound drop per week, whether losing pregnancy weight or dieting in general. Though I highly support breastfeeding, know that you will additionally lose an extra one to three pounds when you wean your baby.

As mentioned, write down on a different sheet of paper or copy the following exercise as a guide to assist you in your goal setting. Writing down goals and knowing what you want is half the battle of getting where you want to be. Since some of the following questions may be clearer after reading the entire book, you may want to create a rough draft now and then when you reach the end of the book you can make your final edition. If you can think of any other questions that would additionally serve your purpose of self-improvement, add them to the sheet. Finally, feel free to modify the list to fit your own style of motivation.

### HOW I WILL SUCCEED!

- What I want most from my Mom Looks Great program is:
- In starting my Mom Looks Great program, I will dedicate myself to:
- When I get a defeating comment from another person, I will:
- When I create my own defeating thought, I will:
- In order to be best prepared for fulfilling this program, I will:
- As a woman, I want to have the energy to:
- As a mother, I want to have the energy to:
- As a woman, I want to have the strength to:
- As a mother, I want to have the strength to:

- By the end of three months, I want to have lost \_\_\_\_ pounds.
- By the end of six months, I want to have lost \_\_\_\_ pounds and have a body fat percentage of \_\_\_\_%.
- By the end of the year, I want to have lost \_\_\_\_ pounds and have a body fat percentage of \_\_\_\_%.
- When I achieve my goals of postpartum weight loss and fitness, I will reward myself by:
- I know that when I achieve my goals in my Mom Looks Great program, I will feel:
- NOW, create a Mom Looks Great mission statement - Use your answers to the following questions to create your mission statement. Arrange them in a way that they will inspire you to stay committed to your program.
  - Write your name and list your most cherished roles (mother, wife, big sister, career title, etc).
  - Aside from your roles, list the three things of most value to you and how these will benefit from your overall improved health.
  - List your three most valuable characteristics and how they will enable you to make a commitment to your Mom Looks Great program.
  - List how achieving the desired results of your Mom Looks Great program will enhance your self-image and/or self-confidence. (When you list these, put them in present tense as if you have already accomplished them.)
- Recite your Mission Statement every day, usually first thing in the morning or last thing at night.

This Mission Statement is a story of you and your commitment to a healthy lifestyle through the Mom Looks Great program. It is an affirming plan that will help you acknowledge your values and strengths and will assist you in overcoming challenges that could take you off track of achieving your goal of personal excellence. Remember to recite your Mission Statement every day and you will assimilate it into your sub-conscience.

You may notice that this written exercise sets up a precedence of realizing that being fit is not just for you (which is important in itself) but also for your child, your family and other important areas of your life. When you know why you want something and you Absorb the why into your mind, you are making it that much harder for obstacles to stop you from fulfilling your dreams. This happens the minute you write your hopes and dreams down. Also, when you are proactive in determining how you will manage an obstacle, it will be

less of a threat to your success when you actually encounter it – consider it a ‘preemptive strike’ towards your own methods of personal sabotage or those negative comments others may make.

Self-talk can be the most destructive of all negative feedback; fortunately, it can also be the most convenient to counterattack. After all, while you cannot make other people change their ways of interacting with you, you can most certainly bring change within yourself. Speak the good into existence. Recite your Mission Statement with conviction and meet your goals head-on. When you do accomplish this victory, you can say to your self ‘I always knew I could do it’.

## Visualization Techniques

Visualization has long been deemed as one of the golden key of success in many undertakings. There are countless books to read, videos to watch and seminars to attend on various self-improvement topics, and I would almost bet my toddler's new Cozy Coupe that each and every one of them will emphasize the importance of visualization. Whether it be writing your goals, closing your eyes and imagining your needs fulfilled or even a few words formulated into a chant...whispered repeatedly...in front of a candle...on a full moon night. Okay, maybe that is a bit on the creepy side, but you catch my drift.

Now you need to visualize your success. How would you like to see yourself a year or so from today? Read through the following exercise and then take a moment to explore your own desire toward change.

- Close your eyes and 'look' into a mirror - imagine yourself in the gym with rows of exercise machines behind you or in the privacy of your own home "gym".
- Start with your face - as cute as they were, notice how your cheeks are no longer pudgy from pregnancy swelling.
- Go to your shoulders and arms – see them as toned and well defined. Strong and sturdy enough to carry your toddler, a bag of groceries, a purse as well as an empty water bottle, all while opening the door to your home.
- Go to your chest – your pecs are tight and efficiently holding up what could have once been used as nursing instruments.
- Go to your waist – notice how it curved inward as your eyes traveled down.
- Go to your stomach - look at how nice your skin looks with a slight shadow on either side of the mid-section and maybe even a faint indentation of a six-pack. Nice! Keep going.
- About face - you see a firm butt, with hips that have slimmed. And on it goes!

This is positive visualization. It is the process of recording something that you 'see' into your mind, and then supernaturally, it will begin to take form. If you are new to this way of thinking, I know it may sound ridiculous. But, I have to tell you that it truly works! The sayings are all there. See it and believe it...See it and receive it... Your mind follows your thoughts...If you can conceive, then you will receive. They are all leading to the same conclusion and I swear to you now, that the results are terrific and very much attainable.

You just need to close your eyes, open your mind and make your 'want list'. I offer the following poem from an anonymous source:

I presented my thoughts as a small wish,  
And that is just what I got,  
But when I realized I could have asked for much more I found myself  
quite distraught.

Had I known that the sky was wide open,  
Had I known no limit was bound,  
I would have set my sights on much higher things, And not stayed  
so close to the ground.



Visualization also works for the actual act of exercising. While you will not work up quite the same sweat, you can familiarize yourself with the routine. I frequently imagine hiking up the hill my friends and I choose for a good workout. I imagine the smell of the redwoods, the sounds of the babbling brooks throughout the walk. I even 'see' the hardcore mountain bikers, in their brilliant colored spandex, panting as they toil past us, helping me realize that my walk is not so tough. When you near your exercise time, close your eyes and see yourself working out, and more importantly how great you feel afterward. You may recognize this as 'psyching yourself up, one of my favorite sayings from the teen years.

Following is an easy visualization exercise:

- Imagine picking up a dumbbell in each hand. Take a deep breath, exhaling as you slowly begin to lift the dumbbells, and then a nice strong inhale as you lower them.

- Think of the squats you will do and the power developing in your legs with each contracting lift.
- Think of the pushup and begin to feel the strength of your arms, able to carry any sweet child with the greatest of ease.

This is a goal and you can accomplish it. Forget what your family, friends or lady at the local drugstore said. You have a vision and it needs to materialize. You may realize that visualization is a great form of positive self-talk. You are letting your mind see that you can actually do what you set out to do. Studies show that it takes an average of nine months to one year to be at pre-pregnancy weight. For a lot of people, increasing lean body mass and accomplishing a decrease in body fat can take a bit longer. Stick to your Mom Looks Great program and you will be the positive exception.

Another form of visual motivation is to use pictures. A friend of mine cut out a toned body from a magazine and put her head in place of the photo's head and put it in her daily planner. On a daily basis, she would look at this photo and acclimate to it. Seeing the toned body pasted beneath her head led her to a healthy diet plan and more dedication to visiting the gym. She lost her remaining twenty pounds (yes that included the last ten) and also created a heck of a stir in her family, who had plagued her with 'heaviness runs in the family' remarks. You can also cut out pictures of fashionable clothes that you will purchase once you meet your goals. Or even cut out pictures of fresh veggies and fruit and put them on your fridge. Seeing the bright, vivid colors might make you think twice before eating something that is unhealthy, over-processed or containing too many additives.

Another helpful visual is to note in your daily planner what time you will exercise. Treat it as an important meeting that you must not miss. Enlist a personal trainer and then you are even more obligated because last minute cancellations could lead to a cancellation fee. These ideas are great motivators and you can create them to perfectly fit your personal preference and lifestyle.

## Preparation As Motivation

Being prepared is another form of motivation. This time I am not talking about being mentally prepared, but instead physically prepared. Have you ever set your clothes out the night before work? Have you ever planned what you will wear for the following day's activity, whether it is a play date, an important appointment or even a dazzling night out with friends? Both adults and children have been known to set out clothes the night before they are to wear them. Think of what you do for your baby or child. What is in your diaper bag? If your child is older, do you keep extra clothes in the car for them? The convenience of preparation can enable efficiency and success.

One of the best preparation tactics for a fit lifestyle is to keep your gym bag in your car and supplied with all the necessities of a workout: clean change of clothes, shoes, towel or moisturizing lotions for after a post-workout shower. Add makeup if you need to run errands afterward. But, I emphasize the most important thing is to leave it in your car. If you are at home and need something from your bag, you can always travel a couple steps to the garage and access it. But, if you leave your gym bag at home by mistake because it was NOT in the car, and you need it for your workout, you will have to travel any amount of mileage to get it. What is the likelihood that once you get home you will be able to leave again? Think of all your commitments that await you the minute you unlock and open that door. This un-preparedness will most likely lead you to skipping your workout entirely.



Being prepared does not stop at your home. Have your workout planned so that you do not aimlessly wander through the gym wondering what to do next. In fact, in the exercise section of this book, I have provided you with a targeted area workout plan (more on this later). I have also given you an exercise journal that will help you keep track of your weekly routine. A good way to be prepared for your workout is to fill in the exercise information beforehand, then fill-in the intensity, number of reps and sets that you do for each while or after you work out. As a side note, when someone is using a machine or in an exercise area that is on your list for the day, politely ask them if you can “work in” with them. It is gym-speak for mommy terms such as ‘share’ or ‘taking turns’ using the

equipment. You will then perform your repetitions while they rest and visa versa. Over quite a few years of using different gyms, I have never received a bad attitude or response when I ask this question. The serious look that you see on the majority of people working out is nothing but a look of focus – focus on strength, form and persistence, not a grimace of I-don't-like-people. In fact, generally speaking, many people in the gym are very open to working in and who knows, you may even make a new friend or at least an acquaintance, who greets you on a regular basis.

Working out with a friend can also be motivating. If one of you is relying on the other to meet at the gym, the chances are higher that you will keep up your end of the deal. This is where commiserating is acceptable, because though you are venting that toning your body can be exhausting, you are both there working to improve your health and body. With each bead of sweat that drops and each slightly breathless word you utter, you are moving closer to your desired goal! (Notice I said slightly breathless, make sure to check the Glossary of Terms in the back of the book for the term 'Talk Test'.) And afterward, go for a smoothie or other healthy refreshment and converse about how exhilarated you feel and how proud you are to be committed to a post-pregnancy plan of getting fit.

## *Motivated, With Child*

So time for the inevitable question - What about my baby? Right? If you are super lucky, you have a willing spouse or babysitter that will attend to the little cherub while you get a little bit of personal time. However, if you are at home during the week and your baby must be with you due to a lack of available support, there are alternatives. First off, most gyms have daycare centers that offer care for your little one at a nominal price. I know you may be worried that there are millions of germs running rampant just waiting to pounce on your little one; but, from experience I can say that a quality gym is usually pretty clean from highly contagious germs. For instance, I have seen my gym turn away a mother who must have honestly overlooked her toddler's blood red eyes, runny nose and hacking cough. (Maybe she really needed a workout that day.) Okay, sorry to scare you, but while there is a chance that your baby can catch a cold, which is why most gyms will not even allow an infant into the daycare until six weeks of age, I highly doubt that it would be much different than merely taking your child with you into the grocery store, drugstore or even a visit to the doctor's office. For me, my first baby was visiting the gym daycare at six weeks and so was my second. They were no worse off than any other baby as far as sickness. In fact, my firstborn did not have an ear infection until age one, which he caught at his new full-time daycare center, while I worked at my office job.

A couple tips I could offer to reduce exposure as well as actually being able to fulfill your entire workout without interruption is to go during the slowest part of the day. At my gym that time is mid-morning, but check with your gym for its peak hours which may differ. During this time, most preschoolers or school-age children are in class, which could lessen the chance of exposure, especially from fresh sneezes and coughs. It is also more likely to still be tidy from the previous night's wiping and mopping. This is also the time when the sitter will be able to focus on your baby's comfort. If there are other children and your baby is really young, most caregivers are really good about holding and protecting your baby from all the other children's curious little hands and spontaneous whacks. If your child is at least a few months old, bring her toys or baby equipment from home. When my second son was around eight months old, I started bringing his walker and he was able to get some real 'walking' time in since the daycare floor was not carpeted like our home was. (Yes, we had a walker and it worked well for us, but your situation may be different.) If your little babe is eight months or older, sometimes a teething biscuit will keep him busy and also insure that he does not go into a wailing fit the minute you hit the peak of your workout. I would give the biscuits to the caregiver with instructions to give it to my son if and when he became whiny. That way she would be the 'good guy' after mean-ole

mommy left, and there is still plenty of time to teach about not generally taking sweets from strangers. Do whatever works in spacing out the time to enable you to get every minute you can to achieve your fitness goal. And do not be discouraged if your little one cries so bad that you are asked to come get them. Like everything else - habit breed familiarity. Get her, take her home and try again tomorrow. With each of my children I have been asked to come get them at least twice. It was quite amusing and yes, a little stressful as I neared the daycare room. My discontent of not meeting my workout needs was combined with faint little cries getting louder and louder until I opened the door to a magnified “wwaahhh!!!” Aside from the distress of hearing your little one cry, it can be a little disheartening to have your workout cut short, but do not let it stop you from going the next time. Know that your child will eventually come to recognize the gym’s daycare as a familiar place and will accept it. This does not necessarily mean they will be thrilled with the idea but it can mean a little more cooperation when the time comes to part. And some do come to like it, especially if they like the caregiver. I was shocked one day when I dropped off my second baby when he was around eight months old. Afterward, I went to my car and realized that I had taken my running shoes out of my gym bag (yes, preparation mistakes will happen) and left them at home. I went back into the daycare to get my baby and he threw an Absolute fit when he realized that he would not be staying. He was bucking like crazy when I strapped him in his car seat and we drove away.



For office-working mothers (whether your ‘office’ is a desk job, grocery clerk, outside work, etc.), you have another advantage...your lunch break. Brownbag your lunch and eat it after you work out. As you will see with my nutrition chapter, your lunch should not be a time-consuming multi-course meal anyway. A sandwich on whole grain bread, a bag of non-hydrogenated chips (more about this later) and maybe some applesauce takes minimal time to eat. If you have limited exercise resources at your office, go for a walk around the block as many times as it takes to fill a twenty to thirty minute period of time. Buy a set of dumbbells and perform your weightlifting sets outside the building or at the nearest park. At best, you could join the gym closest to your office and go there for a good twenty to thirty minute workout, then shower and make it back to your office in the necessary amount of time. You need to be efficient but I know that it is possible - I did it myself for about three years and I know many others who have done it. You do not need much time to complete your fitness mission. You will see in the exercise section of the Mom Looks

Great program that you will eventually need a forty-five to sixty-minute exercise duration. When you get to that point, you could extend your lunch and come in early or work a bit later, if you have the flexibility. Otherwise, you can use your own creativity to meet your fitness needs.

Another great area of convenience for the office-working mom is the time between the end of your workday and the time you get home or pick up your baby from childcare. I know a lot of mothers who see this time as most advantageous. When you get off work, your energy level goes up. You could have been dragging since lunchtime, but there is something about leaving your office and walking out the door for the day that rejuvenates most all of us. This is a great time to head straight to the gym. You are energized, you have a window of free time and you have a goal to get into shape. And, you know darn well that once you get home you probably will not want to go out again.

If you are a full-time, at-home mother, you also can find the time if you make it a priority. While it would be most convenient to have a spouse, trusted friend or a babysitter watch your bundle of joy, the service is not always available. As previously mentioned, go to the gym first thing in the morning, so that it does not get triaged by all your other daily errands. If you do not make it to the gym that day, at least utilize sporadic moments throughout the day to walk, bike or perform some kind of cardio activity, such as chasing after your newly crawling baby as he nears the pet's food, over and over again. Another good exercise is to take your little crawler to the park and let him get some good distance from a starting point, then make a game of coming up fast behind him (make beeping noises or something fun), grabbing him, springing him up into the air and then taking him back to the start. At this point, he will make a beeline back to where he left off. Do this over and over again, your baby will be laughing and giggling like crazy. I did this about twenty times one day and broke a sweat. I completely melted into my chair when I got home...for about a minute...before getting back up to cook, straighten up and do all those other mom things.

Another idea for any mom to get a good cardio workout is to invest in a three-wheel baby jogger. These are the equivalent of a sport-utility vehicle in the baby stroller arena. I have used mine on my ocean-side cliff walks in Santa Cruz, California as well as on hiking terrain inland. While the better ones can run well beyond two hundred dollars, you may be able to buy one in barely-used condition for considerably less.

Weight lifting is even more convenient than a cardio workout when you have your baby with you, especially if you buy a weight set for your home. There is no traveling involved and you can have your child close by in a playpen, sleeping soundly in her crib or playing

quietly with toys. I know I do not have to tell you to never lift weights with your baby below you or too close to you...okay, just checking! You can purchase a set of dumbbells up to twenty pounds for each hand for as little as forty dollars.

I know this all may sound taxing, but it can be done when you make it a priority. I was able to see both sides of the working situation. I had a consuming corporate job with my first child and with my second child I had my consuming full-time, at-home mother job. So, that eliminates any type of excuse, respectfully, of “Well, you don’t have to work eight to five” as well as “Well, you are able to go to an office and get a little free time here and there.” I lived through both and recuperated just the same. I know you can do it too.

The number one reason given for not working out by new moms or moms with children of any age is time constraints in regard to fulfilling their duties as a mother or fulfilling their duties as a career woman combined with their duties of a mother. As I have reasoned above, anything is possible when you make it a priority. I want you to make good health, meaning exercise and nutrition, a priority. When you have your priorities straight, the method in which you execute those priorities will fall into place. Focus on ‘what’ you want, not ‘how’ you are going to get it. When you know what you want, everything else seems to start falling into place. Your Mission Statement will assist you in determining what ‘it’ is and why you want it. When you understand this, your subconscious mind will set things in order to get the job done.

Through all of this please do not misunderstand me as saying your exercise plan, or anything else for that matter, is higher on the priority list than your little one. I remember after the birth of our second child, I wanted to make sure that my husband knew that our children come before anything and everything. He questioned me if that meant our own relationship as well and this is how I explained it to him. If we were set to go on a three-day weekend and one of our boys came down with a terrible fever, we would most likely have to postpone the trip, hence, put our children first. But, as far as little junior making a fuss about just not wanting to be away from mommy and daddy for the weekend, the planned trip will go on. Hopefully, you understand the similarity in this analogy. Of course, your little ones will always be number one. But, if and when it comes down to a few tears from your baby as you leave the gym’s daycare and you are getting the exercise you need to build energy, burn fat and increase your overall well-being, you need to realize that the tears are extremely temporary. (In fact, they may be dried up and gone within five minutes of you leaving the room.) However, the benefits you gain through your commitment to exercise, nutrition and general fitness goals are long term. These long-term benefits will be very cooperative in your efforts to be the best possible mom you can be

because of the vitality they provide for you. You will see it when you believe it. And you will believe it as you live it.

## *Get Back From Set Back*

In your greatest effort to follow the Mom Looks Great program, you still may encounter a setback. Knowing how to recover from the pause in your program is important toward staying motivated. Whether you catch the flu, you travel or your schedule gets turned upside-down for a week or two, there are ways to reduce the decline in your motivation from the time lapse, and promote the initiative once you have returned from those compromising situations.

Regarding exercise, most experts in the field agree that if you are sick and the congestion is above the neck, it is okay to continue your program. Just be sure to use courtesy and wipe down machines, cough into your upper arm (not into the hand which more easily transfers the germs to equipment, door handles and other people) and wash your hands as often as possible.

When traveling, you can frequently continue exercising. If it is possible stay at a hotel that offers a gym room or has a gym nearby (sometimes a fresh gym atmosphere can be fun). Especially when traveling for pleasure, you will be astounded at the superb feeling you get after your workout. For one thing, you are on vacation, which is usually stress-reducing in itself. Add your stress-reducing exercise to your stress-reducing vacation and you will be floating on cloud nine. It is truly a wonderful feeling to have those blissful moments of sheer exhilaration. If you are traveling on business, a quick exercise routine could freshen up your thinking, spur a creative idea or just improve your overall attitude. It will be great when you make the deal, just because the most important first impression was represented with a relaxed, yet energized and confident expression.

If you are staying with friends or relatives during your vacation, ask them where the local gym is and get a guest pass. You may even inspire some much-needed exercise into their lives. And, if they are not interested in being a mom that looks great, take a solo walk around the block at least after meals. This will keep your initiative subtle while at the same time, keep your fitness fires burning until you can get back home and proceed full-force on your mission.

Schedules can also impede your progress and cause a minor setback. One friend of mine has a corporate quarter-end that scares her accounting expertise right out of her. Of course, this is exaggerative, but her 'day' becomes quite extensive. Six in the morning – yes, Donna is at work. Lunchtime around noon – yes, Donna is probably at her desk. Ten o'clock at night (I kid you not) – for sure, I will try her at work first. These are her most

trying times during the year and to expect for her to meet all of her daily goals during this crunch session would be unreasonable and place too much stress on an already tense situation.

Maybe it is not work which conflicts with your workout. Once in awhile, my first born, my second born and myself all have early morning doctor appointments in the same week. Since my work out time is roughly between 8:30am and 11:00am on any given day, this puts a damper on my workout. Aside from whining to my husband and friends about these various schedule conflicts, I have learned a little something called the 80/20 Rule. This is a philosophy that is most useful once you hit the maintenance stage, a sort of 'light at the end of the tunnel'. Only after you have lost your extra weight, lost your extra body fat and developed lean muscle mass, should you take full advantage of the 80/20 Rule, otherwise, it could lead to more leniency than needed in the earlier stages.

The 80/20 Rule goes something like this – if you exercise 80% of the time, you can rest 20% of the time. This generalization can typically be used with a week or a month. The reason you may use it with a month is that a bad case of the flu, wisdom tooth extraction, minor surgery or other unpleasantness can put you out of commission for a good week or so. This can completely deflate your motivation, unless you look at the 80/20 Rule. With this rule, you may feel new life knowing that you just gave up 20% of your time away to a nasty bacteria or recuperation time, and now, it is time to kick into the 80% exercise period and get back to the Mom Looks Great program again. I do want to reemphasize that this ruled exception should only be used when Absolutely necessary (you are sick or injured) and preferably not used until you have progressed well into the program.

Lightly touching on the nutrition aspect – maintaining your healthy diet is a little easier to deal with than exercise when your fitness program is interrupted. When you are sick and your eating habits slow, you lose weight from the loss of lean muscle tissue. To keep your body properly nourished during these times, soups can be extremely beneficial. Above the fact that soup is a form of liquid, crucial for illness due to hydration, it can also be healthy and satisfying. Just remember to avoid partially hydrogenated selections, if you choose crackers as a side. Also, in reference to proper nourishment, hectic schedules that consist of office-work can be resolved by a brown-bag from home. Usually a home-packed lunch is less costly and more tailored to fit your needs, especially when compared to the hidden ingredients from the local eatery.

Frequently general travel can derail your fitness program. You will find that the healthy foods you have come to love will not always be available when you are out of your familiar territory. When my husband and I traveled from our home in California to Kansas

City, I was shocked by the meals that were being served to me. No offense to those of you wonderful readers who are from Missouri, but the general cuisine I encountered was a little different than what I was used to from the California neck of the woods. I remember one night we visited a pretty nice restaurant and I was shocked at the plate placed before me. The most glaring mistake was the overcooked vegetables. If I moved the fork wrong, it crushed them leaving me the option of scraping them up with the side of my fork or maybe using the straw from my icy beverage. The straw is laying it on a bit thick, but they were definitely a little on the mushy side. Yes, I was appreciative of the hospitality, but I really just wanted to be home in my own kitchen, to cook my foods the way I wanted to cook them. I will add that I really got choked up when I realized the Absence of a non-smoking section, but I digress.

The statistics on today's obesity would support the theory that a lot of Americans eat a high-fat, high-sodium and over processed diet. If you are obliged to eat in this manner when away from home, err on the side of courtesy toward your host. Regardless of the lack of anything remotely nutritious, alleviate some of the damage by keeping your portions small and skip the dessert. You will make amends to this when you exercise, so the sooner the better.

While setbacks are inevitable, your recovery from them is attainable. Remember to make the most of your routine when you are able so that when you do need to take time off from your workout or healthy eating program, you will more easily be able to return to it without losing too much momentum in your progress.

## *Motivation - In Summary*

As a mom, you are now committed to taking care of another life. It is now more important than ever to build and maintain a healthy body, inside and out. Physically, you need proper nutrition and exercise for the energy to keep up with your children and you need back and abdominal strength to safely execute tasks such as lifting your children from the floor and bending over crib guardrails to put them gently to bed. Mentally, you need the additional serotonin and other mood-enhancing chemicals that the brain releases during exercise. You also need the quality of sleep that exercise has shown to provide you at night. And spiritually, at the very least you need to regain your own personal sense of self through 'time away'. After all, it is during this time in which you focus on bettering yourself and, subsequently, experience a blissful sense of accomplishment that is frequently felt after a vigorous workout. Maintaining these habits far beyond the baby years is going to contribute toward a better quality of life.

The benefits of exercise alone would be enough to motivate us if we did not divert our attention to the negative de-motivators that try and cloud our visions of want. Remember to stay armed with positive responses to negative outside influences, and, to affirm your own positive self-talk with your Mission Statement as well as visualizations of great success in your future health. Your Mission Statement will remind you daily of what your goals are and why you made them in the first place. Keep in mind that while your baby will always be number one, leaving her in the daycare center for a single hour is not detrimental to your mother-child bond. If anything, she will be smiling that beautiful baby smile you live for upon you return. And most of all, remember that when you make the Mom Looks Great program a top priority, and you carry out your commitment to a life of being fit, you will realize that the time constraints that kept you reluctant to start your fitness program in the first place are really not as restrictive as you once thought them to be.

I thought it was important to start with a section on motivation because I truly believe your motivation is the only thing that will enable you to commit and fulfill your Mom Looks Great program. Once motivated to do so there is no possible way that you will not be able to meet the fitness goals that you set for yourself. Deciding you want to be healthy and fit is a lifetime commitment and nobody aside from yourself will benefit more from this decision than those closest to you – your children.

Maintaining a diet rich in nutrition will only lead you down a path of more energy, great overall health and a body that looks and feels great.

## *Rational Nutrition*

In Webster's Dictionary, the word rational is defined as "having or exercising the power to reason; of or consistent with reason". You can bet the majority of the people following the newest trendy diet are not rational about losing weight. They are actually downright desperate to try anything, despite how it makes them feel or what the downside may be. Is it rational to believe that you can eat a certain way for many years, gain a bunch of weight and now, rob yourself of major nutrient groups to drop the weight...effectively...and for good?! Specifically during pregnancy, is it rational to believe that after gaining a healthy weight (and maybe some extra, unhealthy weight) to nourish your unborn baby, it will be gone within a couple months? The answer to these questions and many other irrational diet and weight loss expectations that people work under, is No. To safely and effectively lose extra weight and yet remain healthy enough to nurture a child, you must meet your nutritional requirements and work within the caloric range that is meant for you. Most often, this can be identified through body weight and caloric expenditure. To further guarantee success, especially when following the Mom Looks Great program, combine your healthy diet with a consistent exercise program.

In the area of nutrition, I can give you general nutritional requirements. The main idea here will be moderation. As always, fad diets are running rampant in the media. Yes, they are making money and people are losing weight. But will the lost weight return? There is a saying that hard work pays off in the future, but laziness pays off now. I look at irrational weight loss plans in this manner. You may not think it so easy to go on a month long diet to lose an abundant amount of weight, however, if you look at the big picture, you may agree it is the lazy person's way of losing weight. Instead of "eating right" for a long-term duration, people participate in these starvation diets to lose a lot of weight in a little amount of time. Sorry, but rarely if ever does this method of weight loss pay off. Most often in this case you are losing water and your lean muscle tissue, the very tissue that helps your metabolism stabilize your body. If you deprive yourself of necessary nutrients, whether it is fat or carbohydrates or whatever the current trend is, your body goes into a mode of starvation in which your metabolism begins to slow. To restore your metabolism after a bout of this yo-yo dieting takes an enormous amount of effort. And because your body is deciphering your diet as starvation, it will convert anything you eat into fat (the fuel of life) and hold on to it like you would hold on to your slippery baby in the shower.

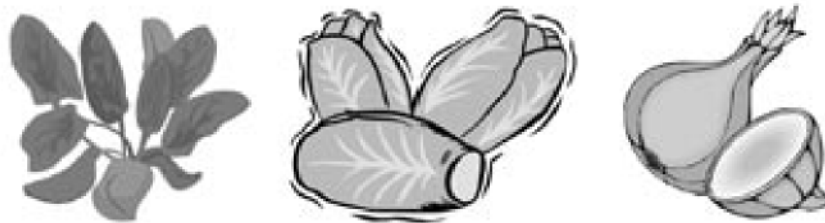
NEW HABITS – 21 DAYS TO GO

The way to take weight off and keep it off is to exercise and follow a rational diet plan. And yes, that is what a beginning health enthusiast would call hard work but, it will pay off in the future and it will stay off in the future. Once you reach this mindset, similar to many who have transformed their lifestyles toward health, you will no longer look at your life of fitness and good nutrition as hard work, but just simply as the way it is. In fact, you will begin to love...yes, love...the feeling you get from your workout and nutritional regime, and you will desperately miss them when you have to forego them for one reason or another. You will begin to willingly eat of the most nutritious foods that make you the healthiest. Could you imagine craving a vegetable for once instead of a bunch of cookies, deep-fried foods or your taboo food? Though, I admit that cookies definitely have their place in my diet, I love the taste of natural foods, unprocessed and in their original packages. Apples, watermelon, cherries, broccoli, brown rice with a bit of spice and even the plump, unsuspecting Tilapia fished out from his vast, salt-water home in my local seaside town. These all have their specific places in the health enthusiast's diet.

Everyone is capable of creating these good eating habits, and it is not so difficult to create a new habit. When you get a moment, try an internet search on the number of days it takes to create a habit, you will find it is a unanimous "21 days". That is only three weeks of consistent action until you begin developing a mind set of healthy habits, whether it is motivation, exercise or nutrition. That is really not so crazy, if you think about it. You know how fast a two-week vacation can escape you. Add one more week and you have just created a new habit. Think of cutting a summer session of college in half; you just made a new habit. Think of the three weeks you have until you celebrate a seasonal holiday in which you must be prepared with gifts...it goes fast, doesn't it?

As an example, I remember when my husband and I first tried rice milk as an alternative to regular milk in our cereal. I thought the taste was horrendous, but would daily sit down to a bowl full of honey shredded wheat cereal, blueberries, chopped pecans and enriched vanilla rice milk. The taste was not pleasant, but I was developing this habit out of an even higher dislike of the accompanying stomachache that I experienced after eating my cereal with regular milk. Within a short amount of time... hey, maybe it was twenty-one days...milk in my cereal was a thing of the past, and rice milk was the replacement, and I began to really like it. (This is merely an example of how my attempt to break an old habit was successful; it is not a recommendation to give up milk.) You can create habits such as this as well. You will also find it amazing of how terrible your former favorite, bad foods taste after you develop your new eating plan. I was shocked that a favorite, commercial-brand cookie now had a dull, yet overly sweet flavor after I began eating the healthier cookies. I also noticed that the healthier cookies did not leave a terrible aftertaste like the former ones did.

After reading this section it would be good for your program to sit down and examine your preferences within the necessary food groups. Choose items that you like and even choose some things that you have not liked since youth. As example, I always hated onions as a child and even as a teenager. Shortly after I married in my mid-twenties, I randomly tried a red onion on my pizza one night and I decided that it was okay. More and more I began to cook with red, green and even yellow onions and I now love onions. I have similar stories about artichokes, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. Unfortunately, sweet potatoes and bell peppers still repulse me, but I get the excellent nutrients they provide in alternative choices. My point here is to get you to try a vegetable, fruit or another nutritious item that you did not like as a kid. A lot of children do not like much of anything in the vegetable department. But as we age, many of our tastes will change. Trying one of the less common fruits or vegetables is a good idea. Recently, I tried pineapple guava for the first time and found the taste wonderful. You will find that consuming new healthy foods of any kind will be great for adding variety to your nourishing eating plan. Break through your food comfort zones and experiment with new foods (have you tried purple cauliflower or dinosaur kale yet) or revisit old foods that have not had a chance to redeem themselves post-childhood.



Another tip, if you are not a big vegetable eater, try cooking with spices. Spices add flavor and can make something like a potato or rice a very pleasing treat. It took me almost thirty years to realize there were more to spices than salt, pepper and oregano. Some of my favorite spices are the pre-mixed ones, such as Spike. A lemon/pepper blend is always good as well as garlic, cilantro or ginger. Just another reason to give once ignored, nourishing foods a second chance. Chose your foods and your spices and then work them together into a rational diet plan that is best for you. Worst-case scenario is you could dip your veggies in a favorite sauce. This idea is compliments of my older son who luckily likes most veggies. However, there have been nights when I had to douse his veggie portions in barbeque sauce in order for him to eat it. This method may add a bit of extra calories to your diet, but if that is what it takes to get you to eat vegetables, it might be worth it.

It is not impossible to break unhealthy eating behaviors. Remember that habits take only twenty-one days to form. Stay rational with your weight loss and body shaping goals. Do not attempt to eliminate entire food groups from your diet in order to quickly drop pounds. A drop of one or two pounds per week is the safest and most efficient way to reduce your weight. Anything more and you are putting yourself at risk for bodily function disturbances as well as disappointing results of a possible yo-yo diet effect. Do not rush into weight loss. Instead proceed into the Mom Looks Great program with dignity and confidence. You will successfully complete your program and you will look and feel great.

## Nutrition And Breastfeeding

According to the U.S. Surgeon General there are now about 64% of women in the United States who are breastfeeding their infants. While the amount of breastfed babies begins to decrease at six months postpartum, 64% is a significant increase from 1990 statistics that indicated only 43% of American women breastfed.



If you are early in the stages of motherhood and are a breastfeeding mom, using your good sense in planning your meals is even more beneficial because you are nourishing not just yourself, but also your baby through the milk you expel. I am grateful to have had the support of Dr. Lonna Larsh of the Santa Cruz Medical Foundation through my second pregnancy. For the Mom Looks Great program, I was able to speak with her on the basic nutrition principles for a breastfeeding mother. She indicated that for a healthy woman without a special needs program, the guidelines are as follows:

- Caloric Intake – should be 500 additional calories when you are breastfeeding. This is in addition to the regular suggested caloric (refer to Appendix A).
- Protein Intake – 3 servings per day. Protein assists with the production of milk and is a must in order to build lean muscle tissue, especially during your Mom Looks Great exercise program.
- Vegetable Intake – 3-5 servings per day. At the very least, two of these servings should be dark, leafy greens or ‘yellow’ vegetables, which include carrots or squash. These will benefit the baby by providing essential nutrients in your breast milk and also meet your essential requirements, including Vitamin A. Fiber, which is always important, especially throughout the pregnancy and postpartum periods, is also abundant in this category. Spelled out, this can mean better immunity to viruses, more energy and overall better health.
- Complex Carbohydrate Intake – 6-plus servings per day. Whole grains and other complex carbohydrates contain B vitamins, fiber and many other minerals that contribute to your baby’s growth.
- Fat Intake – 1–2 servings per day. Be sure to choose healthy sources of ‘good’ fat, such as nuts, dairy products, poultry and cooking oils. Over the years fat has gotten

a bad reputation when in fact, fat is required for a healthy body. Fat is necessary for proper functioning of your hormones (something you definitely want to enable during this intense time of your life), suppleness of skin and silkiness of hair as well as transporting vitamins throughout your body. One aesthetic benefit of fat is that it creates the full, satisfied feeling after a meal. For instance, if you take your time and enjoy your food as you eat it, a little olive oil on your pasta could enable a satisfied feeling of fullness more quickly than without the oil – this should lead to less overeating.

- Calcium Intake – 5 servings per day. Calcium is essential in restoring calcium to your diminished count and incredibly necessary for the production of your breast milk.
- Iron Intake – 30-60 milligrams per day. Giving birth means losing a lot of blood. To restore the resulting iron loss, you must ensure that you consume iron-rich foods as well as continue your prenatal vitamins. If you are diagnosed as being iron-deficient, your doctor will likely prescribe even more.
- Fluids – 8-plus glasses per day. Breast milk is 90% water. If you do not drink water, you will not produce breast milk or if you do, the quality of it will be poor and inadequate in meeting your baby’s nutritional needs. The fluid in your breast milk comes from the fluids you consume. This is important to know not just to encourage you to drink your water, but to consider the types of fluids you will be consuming. Caffeine beverages, such as coffee, tea or colas and alcohol should be avoided. Not only can they lead to dehydration, they could make your baby cranky.
- Supplements – Pregnancy or Lactating vitamin daily.

If you are a vegetarian, mother of newborn twins or have any other special condition, be sure to check with your doctor for a diet plan that is especially suited for you. Otherwise, the above food categories are for the majority of average healthy moms, with only the rations slightly modified from a usual eating plan, as detailed in an upcoming chapter.

## *The Diet Bazaar*

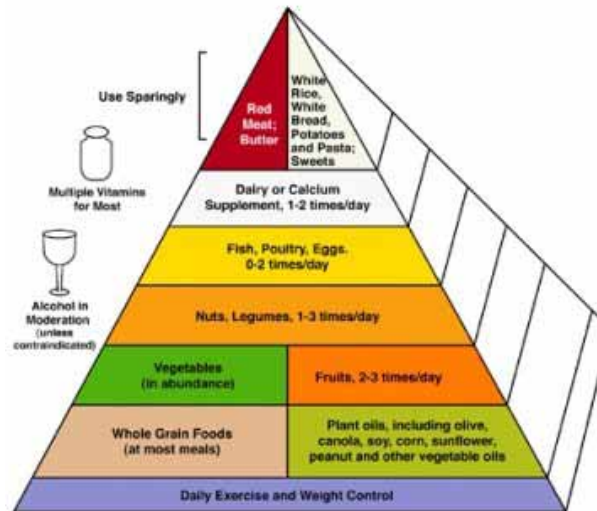
I was tempted to name this chapter “Bizarre Diet Bazaar”, but bizarre is an understatement. New diets abound, grasping for the new edge on gaining the potential weight watcher’s attention. Some offer all the fat foods you can muster. Some boast high protein. Others give free range to bushels full of carbohydrates at every sitting. There are cleansing diets where a cocktail of water, lemon and honey is breakfast, lunch and dinner. A different diet uses a similar cocktail but adds a teaspoon of cayenne pepper. There are shake diets, veggie diets, and diets with portions so small you consider eating the plate afterward. There are diets that promote use of palm oils (virgin palm oils, of course) and diets that have banned the use of anything remotely close to being a palm oil. With all these eating plans vying for participants a person can become quite confused with their options.

Out of respect for the authors and creators of the incredibly extreme diets, I recommend you read their books for a more concise understanding of the diet if you are interested. After all, when looking at the different diets, they all can sound pretty reasonable, especially when you read the book. They all contain evidence of weight loss success and have magnificent reasoning (or less) as to why their diet plan may be the best for your weight loss. I just want to warn you that weight loss does not always equate to healthy lifestyle or ultimate fitness. Your goals in Mom Looks Great should be weight and body fat loss, and most importantly, maintaining your health throughout it all. A lot of diets will sacrifice your lean muscle tissue and water, not body fat. Loss of lean muscle tissue and water will not lead you to ultimate health. I am hoping that you want a better quality of life through increased energy, hypertrophy of lean muscle tissue, decreased body fat and finally, weight loss. This is the aim of the Mom Looks Great program.

Think of the foods that you like to eat. Most likely, you can think of many things you like from each of the food groups. It is not essential that you avoid entire food groups. Be rational in choosing an eating plan and remember that some of the diets and weight loss methods of yesterday have proven to be harmful. With that being the case, what unknown dangers are there regarding the current mainstream diets? What could be discovered about these diets in the coming years? Be rational with your eating plan and weight loss goals and you will be ten steps ahead of the people around you falling for the latest dieting craze.

## The Healthy Eating Pyramid

### Healthy Eating Pyramid



You will find that the Mom Looks Great program does not give strict instructions or ban entire food groups, but instead promotes sensibility and moderation. Instead of condoning a specific diet plan, I usually recommend the use of the Harvard School of Public Health's Healthy Eating Pyramid for my client's eating guidelines, with the approval of their physician. The reason I prefer this pyramid to the USDA's eating guidelines is because of the food specifications within each level. If you are familiar with the Mediterranean or Asian eating pyramids, you will find that the Healthy Eating Pyramid is similar to these other cultural-specific guidelines. What makes this a positive correlation is that these countries are known for their low rate of obesity.



While the foundation of the pyramid is exercise and weight control, the food section of the pyramid begins with the largest, bottom level being split between consuming whole grain foods “at most meals” (at least 6 servings per day) to meet your carbohydrate requirements, and unsaturated plant oils, such as olive and canola oils to meet fat requirements. The important aspect of clarifying whole grain foods from the USDA’s Food Pyramid general rice, cereals and breads is that you are guided into making wise carbohydrate choices with the Healthy Eating Pyramid. Since the media is currently pumping out mass carb-hysteria, I will delve into the specifics of this category a bit later. However, for now it is important to emphasize that carbohydrates are the body’s initial, and main source of fuel. These nutrients are key in your ability to get up and out the door in the morning. They are certainly important for an exercise program, and to lower these nutrients is to lower your energy. Is there really a mom out there who can forego a little extra energy?

Whole grains and wheat bran are great resources of insoluble fiber which swiftly escorts food through your intestines. And, regarding the oil half of this foundation, since a common serving of oil is usually a tablespoon, you can consider this ration being more of a cooking allowance for sautéing vegetables or even a dipping condiment for your whole grain bread.



The next layer is split between “an abundance” of vegetables (they are putting you on the honor system with this one) and 2-3 servings of fruit. With all the great vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and other disease-reducing compounds in produce, it is no wonder that they would be on this second most abundant level within the pyramid. Along with whole grains and wheat bran, your veggies will also boost your intake of fiber, which not only speeds up the digestive process, but also gives you the satisfied feeling of being full after a meal.



As the pyramid continues upward, you will find a full layer dedicated to nuts and/or legumes requiring 1-3 servings. Nuts are usually about 1/5 of a cup in serving size. You can sprinkle on yogurt, toss them into your salad, or add them to pancakes or breads. Or if you like nuts, buy them in bulk and grab a handful for a quick snack on your way out the door.

The legume variety available to you is very plentiful. Aside from healthy burritos or other Mexican dishes, there are soups, stews and quick and easy side dishes that will enable you to meet your legume requirements. For example, green peas make up a great split pea soup, which will also give you a hefty amount of fiber.





Upward, the next layer is fish, poultry and eggs meriting 0-2 servings per day. The specification of this as opposed to USDA's "meat group" directs you to acquire your protein through poultry, fish and eggs, which is most often lower in saturated fats than the red meats. And, you may already know this but an egg is made up of the white which is protein, and the yolk which is fat. If you are already running high on your fat quota for the day, remove the yolk from a hard-boiled egg. For that matter, give it to your baby if he is over six months old. You will be getting your protein without the added fat, and your child will be getting a portion of fat for his growing body. This level of the pyramid, along with legumes is going to be very important in consuming the appropriate amount of protein to complement your strength training workouts. Protein is vital in repairing your muscle tissue after a good resistance routine. We will go more into this in the exercise section.



Moving toward the narrower part of the pyramid, it is suggested that you take a calcium supplement or to acquire calcium and other important vitamins through the dairy group. An example of selections would be yogurt, vegetables, skim milk and cheese at a suggested 1-2 times daily. In addition to giving you necessary fat and some protein, the calcium will strengthen your bones, which is so important for helping to lessen the risk of osteoporosis later in life. It will also assist you with the necessary vitamins as you recover from the rigors of childbirth.



Finally, at the tip of the pyramid you are cautioned to use sparingly – butter, red meat, white rice, white bread, potatoes, regular pasta and “sweets”. Butter and sweets may be common sense as far as fat is concerned, but the white-floured breads and red meat may need more explanation as to why the portions should be well controlled. Most often red meat is high in fat. The amount of beautiful white marbling in a choice cut of meat is a great indicator of the amount of fat you are eating; of course, the more white – the more fat. White breads and white rice both have a high insulin spiking effect and yet are pretty low on the bulk of fiber and vitamin content. These are examples of carbohydrate foods that are questioned as to how high a nutrient value they provide in ratio to the amount of fat they could add to your body. They are also a sampling of the foods that are behind the carbohydrate scare so rampant today.

While scientists are always uncovering new finds in the field of better eating habits or improving health, I find that the Healthy Eating Pyramid is the closest thing to rational eating that I have come across to date. While similar to the Asian and Mediterranean pyramid, the Healthy Eating Pyramid does not rely on cultural standards and offers a wider variety of foods. You may find it useful as a guideline to improved eating. One of the biggest challenges of today’s dietary requirements is to get people redirected toward eating carbohydrates. The base of this pyramid emphasizes whole grain carbohydrates, which do

not raise insulin to an extreme level that the refined carbs, such as white rice, potatoes, etc.. This leads me to the declaration that the secret of making carbs work for you, and not against you, is to know which carbs to eat.

## Unsound Carb Hysteria



Even the foggy mentality brought on by motherhood cannot stop the messages coming from all forms of the media, boasting about the increasing popularity of low-carbohydrate weight loss diets. But, you can bet that the majority of these and other dieters have been jumping from diet to diet, year after year, cutting out fat here and stopping all carbs there, only to find that the extra weight does not stay off. With the popularity of the low carbohydrate options on the rise, who can blame anyone needing to lose extra weight for wanting to experiment with the diet? I mean, surely if major fast food restaurant chains, beverage companies and even well-known candy makers are offering a low-carb option, who could resist the notion of the sure bet weight loss? Sadly, we may have to wait awhile, but somewhere down the line, we will see those disappointed faces as they watch all those pounds pile back on again. This may seem blunt, but I am not here to offer you a sugar-coated solution when you are serious about getting into shape. If you really want to lose weight and body fat, you must change the notion that a crash course, no-carb diet is the way to go. I am offering you the realistic knowledge of a proven formula to safely take off extra weight and keep it off. Refrain from erasing carbohydrates from your diet. Instead, evaluate which carbs would be the most beneficial for your body. You do not have to subject yourself to the irrationality of trying these restrictive diets if you educate yourself on the validity of any and all of the major nutrients. If the all or nothing approach to general food groups were to cease, there would surely be a drop in the amount of yoyo-ing weight loss that I am sure you have read about, if not experienced for yourself.

Make carbohydrates work for your body and you will not have to banish them from your diet. I am not saying to ignore all the details in the new diet claims around you. Occasionally, you may find me mixing up a batch of one of the low-carb double chocolate muffin mixes. Though as usual, I modify them to fit my own requirements – in this case, by adding 1~2 cup of pecans. Just remember to fully educate yourself and do not go down the crash course of all or nothing derailment. All the major nutrients must have their place in your diet.

### FROM CREATED EQUAL TO OVERLY PROCESSED

While all carbohydrates provide the main source of fuel to the body, whole grain carbohydrates go a step farther. Like all carbs they give you energy, but they also contain

generous amounts of B vitamins (which is excellent for postpartum blues or other female hormonal issues), contain higher amounts of fiber, are not as easily digested (which means less insulin spiking) and give you quite a variety of trace minerals. Further, they contain a lot of bulk for fewer calories, which means your hunger is satisfied with less of a quantity in consumption. I will add here that quite a few dieters that I have spoken with have quit low carbohydrate diets, not only because of lethargy issues, but also because they get so hungry and, subsequently, irritable from the lack of carbohydrates. This is not good for work productivity (be it office-work or home-work) and not good for social interaction. Plus, I feel that as new moms, and moms with kids of any age for that matter, we can be grouchy enough without adding starvation to the list of unpleasantness.

### NOT JUST FOR DIABETICS...

So the question is how do you know which carbohydrates to select? I would like to introduce you to the Glycemic Index (a sample chart can be found in Appendix B). The Glycemic Index measures how high your glucose level goes in the period after eating any given carbohydrate. A high spiking of your glucose paired with a sedentary or low frequency of exercise is completely detrimental to weight loss and lean body mass. While this spiking misleads your insulin reactions, it will also indirectly produce premature hunger signals. If you follow up with yet another high glycemic snack, it can end up a vicious cycle. Simply put, it can make you fat – and so balks the rebellion of the low or no carbohydrate dieters. However, what these no-carb followers are failing to realize is that simply choosing carbohydrates wisely could have a similar effect of their diet extremes, without decreasing the carbohydrate intake that is recommended for good health. While trying to lose extra fat, do not forego your nutrition in spite of it. Spoken in mommy terms - Do not throw out the baby with the birth water.



Surprisingly, it is not obvious which foods are lower on the index than others; lower, being the more desirable effect of a chosen food. For example, white table sugar is lower on the

index than a slice of white bread. Plums and peaches are significantly lower on the index than potatoes. Applesauce is lower than oatmeal, and so on.

There is not a specific number prescribed for glycemic response levels. However, knowing that high glycemic foods will spike your insulin level should better prepare you to choose your next carb-of-the-day wisely. For instance, if you desire a higher indexed carb at dinner, such as a potato (a good complex carb to choose), you may want to select your other daily carbs on the mid to lower end of the glycemic scale to balance out your reaction accordingly. Speak to a nutritionist for a better understanding of a specific eating plan.

If you are even the slightest bit interested in a no or low carbohydrate diet, consider referring to a Glycemic Index for guidance. Choose whole grain carbohydrates with the exceptions of a higher indexed carb after vigorous exercise or maybe even used as a “sweet” at the tip of your Healthy Eating Pyramid. You will find that you do not have to banish even the higher glycemic foods as they too can be an important part of a well-balanced meal. And truly, what is a well-balanced meal without some kind of health-wise glycemic-spiking treat poked in somewhere?

While the Glycemic Index can be a very useful tool, as with anything, I suggest that you use it wisely. Even the Glycemic Index, like the USDA pyramid can be manipulated toward wrong choices. For instance, carrots and ripe bananas have a higher insulin response than ice cream or some chocolate candies. As well, potatoes have a higher insulin surge than jellybeans. Need I really tell you the correct nutrient-rich choices here? Remember the main idea when choosing the healthiest choices for your diet is most always moderation mixed with a little rationale. It is a proven sensible formula for success.

## The Fat Appeal

Getting off the carbohydrate tangent, fat has also gotten a bad reputation over the years.

When in fact, fat is also vital in creating good overall health within your body. It promotes healthy skin, regulates your hormones, and transfers fat-soluble vitamins (i.e., Vitamins A, D, E and K) throughout your body. Another very important factor is that fat is necessary for proper cell membrane formation, as it is the foundation of the cell's structure. If your body is lacking fat, the cell's formation and functioning can be compromised. Research indicates that this may lead to a susceptibility of inflammation, which is a big heart disease hotspot among scientific studies.

Turning toward the exercise arena, fat calories are necessary in sustaining exercise that spans beyond the initial twenty minutes. For those of you who run or take a one-hour aerobic class, such as step, kickbox aerobics or spinning, you need fat to sustain you through the entire vigorous duration. While your carbohydrate intake is your initial fuel source, it is fat that carries you on toward the hour-long mark.

The suggested amount of fat is 20-30 grams per day for an average healthy individual. I would suggest that while trying to trim down from having children, you stay toward the low end of that number, but check with your doctor if any doubt exists.



Fat Cells

### THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY FAT

There is no question that your body needs fat, but knowing which types of fats are beneficial to your diet is important for planning your daily fat intake. There are three types of fats – polyunsaturated (like flax seed oil – great for increasing metabolism and contains Omega-3's, which lessens the risk of postpartum depression), monounsaturated (peanut butter, olive and canola oil, avocado) and saturated (animal products, palms). Saturated fat intake must be monitored the closest, as it is the most notorious of the three. High intake of saturated fats can among other things, increase your cholesterol and Low Density

Lipoproteins, the latter of which is made by the body and takes fat through the bloodstream. (LDL's are suspected of depositing plaque on the arterial walls). These actions can lead to obesity and a plethora of other afflictions, including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. As a side note, this is one of the differentiators of the older, more well-known Food Guide Pyramid and Harvard's new Healthy Eating Pyramid. The Food Guide Pyramid does not differentiate your meats, and subsequently allows more of this saturated fat into your diet. Red meat is usually much higher in fat than poultry and fish. Blindly following the USDA pyramid, you could eat a fatty piece of meat, white bread with butter, a potato with butter, drink a glass of soda, and follow it up with the allowed dessert of the day and be well within the guidelines. When in fact, you ate too much fat and mixed it with high glycemic carbohydrates. You do this enough and your body will surely show it.

#### TRANS-FATTY ACIDS – AVOIDING A SNAKE IN THE GRASS

While on the topic of fat, I want to review with you and caution you on the hidden saturated fat – trans-fatty acids. A trans-fatty acid is the result of a process called hydrogenation, performed to preserve the freshness of the food while they sit on shelves, in warehouses or any other obstacle between production and your dining table. During this chemical process, hydrogen atoms are added to an unsaturated vegetable oil in its liquid state, transforming it into a solid, saturated fat. Currently, you can identify this process when the label reads “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated”. In the recent years, the safety of this fat has come under much scrutiny. The concern is that it is a chemical process, which is performed outside of the body, and therefore, it is foreign to the body. It enters the body as a hardened and rigid form of fat, whereas, natural fats are recognized by your body as being pliable and soft.

Subsequently, your body has no idea of how to break it down and process it. It is therefore stored somewhere in the deepest darkest depths of your fat cells, and supposedly not even recognized as a usual source of energy for fat-burning exercises. Forget about the extra squats or sprints for the nasty trans-fatty acids, they remain hard and rigid within your body, and remain a nuisance for the long-term.

Aside from the visibly physical annoyance, trans-fatty acids are known to be detrimental to your internal systems. They raise your cholesterol, raise LDLs and lower HDLs (High Density Lipoproteins), all of which can contribute to the risk of heart disease. Of special interest to a breastfeeding mother, trans-fatty acids have been known to lower the cream

volume in breast milk, thus, lowering the quality of healthy nutrients that your baby ingests. And for postpartum issues, know that it has been studied that the intake of this fat adversely interacts with the plant Omega-3's. You may remember the more foods you consume with Omega-3's, the more you reduce your chance of experiencing postpartum or other depression symptoms.

The misleading fact about trans-fatty acids is that they are not presently identified on food labels as saturated fat. In order to determine the amount of trans-fatty acids in a product, you must do the math. First, add the specific listed fats (i.e., saturated, poly or mono-unsaturated) together. Do not count the Total Fat in the product in this initial number. Now, deduct the total of the specific fats grams from the number of 'Total Fat' grams in the product and you will have the amount of trans-fatty acids. Sometimes the total of trans-fatty acids can double your saturated fat, making your overall saturated fat intake much higher than you had factored. For instance, if you just ate three cookies that had 5 grams of saturated fat listed on the label, then you calculate the difference of listed fats and find a total of 5 grams of trans-fatty acids, you have now eaten ten grams of saturated fat, half of your daily allowance. Unfortunately, you may also come across a label which only notes Total Fat and Saturated Fats, which is why the upcoming measure to identify trans-fats on food labels is all the more necessary, but more about that in a bit.

This formula is an important tool in maintaining the right amounts of fat requirements in your daily diet. Be aware of this hidden fat and be sure to scan the label for the words "partially hydrogenated", "hydrogenated" or "shortening". Sometimes you will find, there is more saturated fat in the product than what was listed on the label.

On a positive note, effective January 2006, the FDA made it mandatory that manufacturers list trans-fatty acids on their food labels. The FDA expects this measure to save hundreds of lives per year from heart disease. This beneficial decline in health-related problems will come from people being more educated and therefore more evasive of the fat. As well, those who are unaware or just do not care about this health hazard will at least benefit from the manufacturers reducing the amount of trans-fatty acids due to all the negative press associated with it. To date, some food companies have already introduced newly modified foods as "non-trans-fatty acid foods". Any way you look at it, it is an ingredient that you should reduce your intake.

Aside from trans-fatty acids, it is still important to remember that naturally saturated fat intake must also be well monitored. The FDA suggests only 10-12% of your daily fat intake be saturated and the rest be poly or mono-unsaturated. I believe that even the 12% is

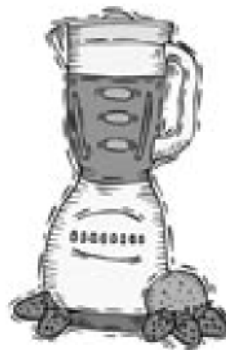
too generous for initial fitness goals, and would suggest a more conservative intake of animal and/or palm fats.

Like the carbohydrate dilemma mentioned previously, fats are crucial for well-being, despite the bad press of causing undue weight gain. Arming yourself with the knowledge of healthier choices of fat is crucial to fulfilling proper nutritional requirements, without placing the physical health risks on your body.

*Building, Repairs And Maintenance*

No, I am not talking about architectural plans for the redwood play structure you plan to eventually buy or build for junior. I am talking about the final major nutrient, protein, and its indispensable role within your body. Protein is Absolutely necessary in the process of your body's ability to build lean body mass.

When you think of lean body mass, think of this tissue as an instrument used to burn fat. In fact, what warms up when you exercise? Your lean body mass (i.e. muscles). What is important to first warm up in order to avoid injury? Your lean body mass. And what, oh what on earth is the figurative fire that will burn the fat within your body? Your lean body mass, of course! Lean body mass helps you to develop a better physique by burning calories in order to maintain the muscles you build, even while relaxing at night, stroking the soft fine hair on your little babe's head while he rests gently in your lap. This equates to what is known as an efficient increase in metabolism. With the Mom Looks Great exercise program, I emphasize the importance of a weight lifting program. But crucial for fulfilling this part of the program and making it physically evident is the amount of protein, be it meats, poultry, nuts or protein shakes that you include in your daily diet.



In order to build lean muscle tissue, you must include sufficient portions of protein in your daily diet. It is generally recommended you get 12-20% of your daily caloric intake from protein. Another equation is to consider a figure of approximately 1.2 – 2 grams per kilogram of your body weight. (To calculate the appropriate protein intake in grams, see Appendix A.)

To achieve the physical fitness and body you want, you must understand the complex web of nutrients and the necessity of you consuming them. First, protein must be used for the building and repairs of lean muscle tissues, and not as a primary source of energy. Therefore, you must insure that you are eating the required amount of other nutrients –

carbohydrates and fats, to fuel your body. If your body does not have fat and carbohydrate requirements readily available for your daily caloric levels (which can include chasing down your toddler with a capless, black Sharpie well on his way to big sister's bedroom), protein must be used as energy. Consequently, its intended job is then forfeited, and you actually burn the very muscle that you are trying to build. A low amount of lean muscle tissue can mean lower metabolic activity.

As mentioned, protein is mandatory in building and repairing muscle tissue after weightlifting (this includes a day of lifting or constantly holding your baby, an overstuffed diaper bag or any other miscellaneous baby paraphernalia...simultaneously) as well as running or other cardio activities. This process of building and repairing includes hypertrophy, where the muscle cells not only grow in size, but also grow in number. Hypertrophy also increases the connective tissue surrounding your muscle fiber. Finally, the building and repair process improves your tendons and ligaments and synthesizes hormones, enzymes and antibodies.

And for good measure, you may be interested to know that protein is made up of twenty different amino acids, nitrogen building blocks that create protein in the body. Eight of the twenty are not supplied from within the body and therefore, must be consumed through adequate protein sources, such as lean meats, poultry, dairy products or legumes.

Like the carbohydrates and fats, you must remember that excess consumption of protein is stored as fat. Know your needs and meet them on a daily basis.

## *May Your Cup Floweth Over*

I am sure you have heard the importance of drinking your daily water, with 8 eight-ounce glasses being the usual suggested amount.

Aside from knowing you should be drinking water, have you ever wondered why? Aside from the fact that your body is made up of a lot of water, 70% to be exact, there is more to the story. Studies show that without proper hydration, you will fatigue earlier and lose necessary coordination. To a postpartum mom, fatigue is already an uphill battle. For that matter, what mom out there has a never-ending supply of energy that is not completely drained out of by her children of any age? If you fairly recently had your baby, adding the insult of dehydration to your postpartum injured body could cause a discouraging setback. This is also important because your joints are also beginning to regain their strength. Lack of coordination could lead to a disheartening joint injury that could set you back even further.

The amount of water you stock for yourself should initiate an interest in investing in public water companies. Keep water everywhere. Keep a six-pack of water in your car, with an open water container in your cup holder. Start your day with one full glass of water and then fill a pitcher of water and leave it in a conspicuous place, where every time you see it you drink it. If you have a desk job, keep it in clear view by your computer. I started this after my firstborn and found that while working, I was even more likely to drink my daily water requirements more so than when I was at home on the weekends. By the end of the day no matter where you are, your pitcher should be empty. If breastfeeding, always bring a bottle or glass of water with you when nursing your baby. Personally, I was triggered into dire thirst every time my second child latched on during his first month. By then, it was a little too late to run back upstairs and get a glass without causing major infantile meltdown in his royal little highness. By month-end, the new water bottle was religiously placed on the nightstand before the next feeding.

You may also know that exercise programs can lead to dehydration, if you do not hydrate properly before, during and after your workout. Always be sure to replenish your body with water or some other low-sugar, low sodium fluid. The formal guidelines for hydration with exercise are as follows:

- Weigh yourself before you exercise.
- Drink 1-2 cups (8-16 ounces) of fluid one hour before starting exercise.
- Drink 1 cup of fluid one hour before starting exercise.
- Drink about 1 cup of fluid every half hour during your exercise.

- Weigh yourself post-exercise and drink 2 cups of water for every pound of body weight lost during your exercise.



Some people just love the refreshing feeling of ingesting tons of water, however, if you are a person who finds it hard to drink water or loses track (postpartum memory loss, maybe?) of your intake, you may want to follow these guidelines on a regular basis until your assimilate them into your subconscious.

I know some people have to force themselves to drink water simply because they do not like the lack of taste. Others think it is ridiculous to buy water, but find it hard to ingest the yellow-tinged fluid coming from their own kitchen faucet. In this case, flavor-infused waters or fruit-sweetened juices are also a close second in quenching your thirst and satisfying your need. With the juice, try adding a bit of water to cut down the glycemic response of regular juice. You will still find it to be more refreshing than a glass of plain water to your fussy palate.

Finally, nothing cools the body down after exercise better than a nice cool beverage. In the case of post exercise, it would be very beneficial to not only hydrate your body, but also to replenish your glycogen stores. This is where a good carbohydrate infusion comes into play. Approximately 120 calories or 30 grams of carbohydrates will begin this process. You could have water and, say, a fruit strip or you could drink a sports beverage and fulfill your calorie and fluid demands with one single ingestion swipe. As the title says - Water - may your cup floweth over.

## Supplements And Merriment

Referring once more to the Healthy Eating Pyramid, you will note that a good multi-vitamin approved by your doctor or the one you were taking during pregnancy will carry you through your lactating period. After this period of time, women are typically allowed to take their pick of a good multi-vitamin. Not much to elaborate on here, as we all probably know that a daily vitamin is beneficial in supplementing the missing ingredients from our own daily food intake. Scientists knew this for decades before they even began to realize that smoking and pregnancy are a harmful combination, and it seems like eons since that became evident. A bit of trivia here for you – have you ever wondered what happened to Vitamin F, and did you know there was a vitamin F? We have all heard of Vitamin A (e.g. carrots), Vitamin B (whole grains), Vitamin C (citrus fruits), Vitamin D (milk) and even Vitamin E (commonly found in gold-nugget form in grandma’s medicine cabinet), but, what about Vitamin F? Well, turns out that Vitamin “F” stood for Fatty Acids. And since fatty-acids were actually a part of fat, they were taken off the vitamin list and defaulted to the major nutrient group.

Finally, completing the subject of the importance of a multi-vitamin, be sure there are sufficient amounts of calcium, iron and folic acid along with the many other essential vitamins and minerals that are so important to, in particular, a woman’s (and thus, a mom’s) diet.



Also on Harvard’s Healthy Eating Pyramid, you will see that “alcohol” has been noted. This is due to Harvard’s research that shows alcohol to reduce the risk of heart disease. While I acknowledge their innovation and daringness to suggest alcohol as part of a healthy lifestyle, the only alcohol that I have heard to reduce risks of heart disease is a glass of red wine. (Perhaps the consideration is that beer/hard liquor is more of a depressor for some people, rather than a vessel harboring healthy nutrients.) Even with this in mind, researchers such as those at the University of Connecticut have identified that it is actually the grape skins that contribute the anti-oxidant factor in wine. In this case, while I occasionally relish in a glass of fine Merlot, I would suggest to the general population to enjoy a glass of grape juice instead. The polyphenols and anti-oxidants are found in both

and you are probably more likely to stay out of trouble with grape juice. Unless of course, you and your significant other deem it appropriate for an evening of merriment.



This is a good time to bring up that other subject in your life that seems to take a far backseat when children enter the picture. Aside from the personal time needed and recommended for your new and indefinite healthy lifestyle, remember that getting away for some enjoyment with your significant other or even with your friends is important for a healthy recovery too. This may sound a little ridiculous if you are in the early months of the postpartum phase, getting very little sleep and really stretching your comfort zone as far as being in control and sane. I am talking a little further down the line. Some moms become so obsessed with their new baby that the rest of the family can become as transparent as the countryside air. If you are able to get out for at least a couple of hours for a lunch date with your husband, significant other or even a close friend, it serves your health very well. Think of when you used to study as a student and the words on your binder paper all began to swirl around, meaninglessly in your head. In fact, I learned in college that the best way to study is in thirty-minute increments followed by a 10-30 minute break. In relation to mothering, if you get an occasional two-hour excursion out with your husband, you will be benefiting the relationship as well as yourself.

From my own personal experience to the many stories well told by women I have talked with, husbands can feel rather jilted when it comes to becoming the new daddy. They do love their new addition, but it is sometimes difficult to adjust to the sudden lack of complete attention from their best gal. My husband was able to explain on more than one occasion that it was as if he was “standing outside of a window” (I picture cold, wind and rain) “looking in” at the baby and I (on a faux-fur rug by a large warm fireplace, no doubt), and he felt isolated from us. It is natural to be smitten with your cherub otherwise, how would we ever be able to cope with the shrill cries, the two-hour night’s sleep and constant demanding behavior? Dear ole daddy can become a very large and clunky third wheel. For that matter, new moms have this sense of protecting their little ones so strongly that even the father will lose credibility as a safe bet. This sort of treatment toward your spouse can be very discouraging and can lead to marital discord if not resolved. When you add

neglecting your spouse together with letting him know how inadequate he is as a daddy, you are sure to encounter a bit more drama than you expected.

Aside from awareness of the aforementioned problem, nothing helps to alleviate new parent stress more than a little merriment with your spouse to rekindle that foundation of parenthood – your relationship as a couple. Phone a trusted babysitter and go on a date with the one without whom, your bundle would not have been. Even if you are protective and do not plan on leaving him and the baby alone together anytime soon (do daddies really wash babies with the dishes in the sink?), schmooze your partner with the positive ways he contributes as a father over a delicious dinner at your favorite restaurant. Try this at least once or twice a month. I know I got a little off subject and editorialized with this topic, but I believe it plays a big part in creating an overall happy mom.

Just think, staying dedicated to your lifestyle of fitness as well as getting an occasional outing with your loved one, without Precious, will only add to your ability to function effectively. At the very least, it may head off an underlying marital rift of neglecting your partner.

## Nutrition – In Summary

When first starting out, planning a well rounded, nutrient-rich diet can seem overwhelming. However, the residual benefits are astounding. Like anything, starting a new routine can be cumbersome, clumsy and inconvenient. Think of when your baby will start his solids. Will she take to it right away or will she reject the newness of it and rebel through crying, pushing it away and spewing it right out of her messy little rosebud lips? Like your baby must learn about the right foods, so must you. Feed your body a healthy and nutrient-rich diet. Like your baby will thrive on his diet, so too will you. With practice, your new eating plan will become a healthy lifestyle from which you and your family will ultimately benefit. Remember, it only takes 21 days to create a new habit.

As time is a question that almost all moms pose, you may wonder how on earth you are going to find time to plan these new, healthy meals. In my experience, I found that while I breastfed, reading was a convenient tool to relax and educate myself on better foods. For new moms, sitzbathes are a convenient time to read...and feel free to doze off due to sleep deprivation; you can always pick up where you left off later. Otherwise, those of you with children of older ages can always replace reading hostile media fodder or celebrity gossip with discovering new ways to cook a healthier meal, and do not forget to write them down for later reference. (Actually, I once read in a well-known parenting magazine, that it is a good idea to stop watching or reading the news until your child turns eighteen. As a mom who used to daydream about having to save my child's life on little less than frequent basis, I took it to heart and did just that.) It is important to realize that exercise and nutrition collaborate in creating a fit body and mind. Each one is necessary in maintaining optimum health. Along with many benefits, exercise is needed to keep the heart healthy and your body mass supplied with lean tissue. Nutrients are needed to fulfill energy and maintenance requirements in order to execute exercise in an efficient manner. To perform a cardiovascular exercise, you must first have carbohydrates to fuel you with initial energy. Then, you must tap into fat stores to sustain you beyond the initial twenty minutes of a cardio workout. After lifting weights, you must supply your body with protein in order to repair the muscle fibers and then build them to create a toned body.

In addition to nutrients you need vitamins and minerals to act as catalysts between nutrients and your body as well as armoring your blood cells, body tissue and even your nervous system against harmful external free radicals. Vitamins and minerals also aid in metabolism functions such as Absorbing nutrients and ensuring the release of energy during exercise.

Water, the most immediate nutrient for human survival, is essential for replacing your body's water supply that is lost during exercise or expelled through everyday activities that even includes the simple act of breathing. It also aids you in coordination and coherency. And contrary to popular belief, you do not get side cramps from drinking too much water prior to exercise.

Do not get caught up in mainstream hype and eliminate important nutrients from your daily food consumption. It is so important to stay rational when beginning your fitness program. Do not expect a year's duration of accumulating body fat to become a couple months' duration of losing it. Remember that, most always, the quick-fix weight loss plan is a safe bet of sure failure. Your best bet for supreme physical fitness and healthful longevity is to assimilate a healthy diet plan and stay with it... indefinitely. This eliminates any kind of yo-yo dieting, which confuses the body's ability to metabolize efficiently. The Healthy Eating Pyramid is one of the available eating plans that does not eliminate entire food groups in order to eat healthy, it has a lot to offer in the way of choosing the proper carbs, fats and proteins for a balanced diet. If you are ever unsure of an eating plan and whether it is safe for you, be sure check with your doctor.

Above all, while assimilating a new way of eating and living may seem uncomfortable and overwhelming at first, keep in mind that habits form in an average of 21 days. Stay strong and resilient by reviewing this book faithfully and any other pertinent literature and I am positive that you will be successful. When you meet your goals of losing your weight and building a lean body, determine to implement the Mom Looks Great program into a lifestyle, and subsequently, the life of your children. In the long run, the lifestyle they are raised with can sometimes be the one they fall back on in their adulthood. Start today by making a positive difference in yourself and further reap the great rewards as your children follow in your healthy footsteps in the many years to come.

While learning to walk, a baby will fall again and again. As a mother, you must learn from this persistence that with determination, desire and constant practice, you too will prevail in conditioning your body.

## *An Experience To Learn From*

When I came home from the hospital after the birth of my first son, I was so ridiculously dedicated to getting back in shape that at four weeks postpartum, I signed up for a new class at my gym. Spinning was all the hype and was supposed to be quite the “butt burner”. Unfortunately, my foolishness seemed to have overlooked another recent butt burner that I had endured. Yes, a spinning class paired with a foot-long episiotomy (this barely seems an exaggeration) is grounds for no biking of any kind...ever again! I know, common sense would usually caution a person to stop a minute and realize that sitting on a bike seat, pumping away for a good half hour with a fresh ‘battle’ wound is quite silly, but, I think when we get foolishly caught up in goals, sometimes we overlook the obvious. That is, that our bodies need time to heal from our nine-plus month venture before we jump into an exercise program with full force. And further, that it might be a good idea to step back, look at the big picture and realize that we do not have to, and probably will not be able to rush back into our pre-pregnancy jeans. Do not get overzealous to your own detriment. Healing takes time and reshaping your body takes longer.

As with any break from your normal workout, you must wisely progress to where you left off while pregnant. And, if you have never had an exercise program, it is even more crucial that you start within safe boundaries. Even the most seasoned exercise enthusiasts will forget this standard rule. It is quite common that a fit person will forego visiting the gym for up to two weeks or so, then upon their return, will strain a muscle trying to begin training at the highest weight they had last lifted. This risk is magnified when you slowly digressed from your normal gym rituals while pregnant. It is also imperative that you not jump into a vigorous and jarring training routine, because your relaxed joints are still recovering from the huge infusion of the hormone, relaxin. And, quite often, personal trainers actually do have to caution new moms on this; as common sense is not always obvious...take my first, and last, spin class experience as an example. I realized by recovering quite well after my first child, that I did not have to be so anxious about getting into shape immediately after giving birth to my second child. I want you to realize this as well and lighten up on the self-imposed burden that we moms seem to create for ourselves.

Though most doctors allow their patients, who are used to a routine of higher-impact exercises to continue at least into the second trimester, I did not want to take any chances of a difficult pregnancy when I became aware of my second pregnancy. I quit all running, kickboxing and any kind of high impact exercise to begin a low intensity program of walking and yoga. Not only was this program very effective in keeping

me in good health while pregnant, it was also a fresh and exciting new approach to my workout. Fortunately, I later found out it was also a great way to re-introduce my body to physical fitness in the postnatal phase, as both exercises are low impact, stress reducing and very appropriate for the weeks following delivery. A nice guideline is the exercise you were doing late in your third trimester is a good place to start up again, when approved by your doctor.



In my situation, my pregnancy program of walking was able to prepare my cardiovascular system for the more intense exercise routines to come such as kickboxing at four months postpartum and then running at the six-month mark. You will find the right combination during your introduction. If you are still in question, consult with a professional on your exact situation.

My first twenty-minute walk was at nine days postpartum with my five year old and newborn at a park. It was not easy, as the postnatal hormone flood had made me a complete wreck. I was extremely fatigued from the whole three hours of sleep (which were not consecutive) from the night before and I was worried that the baby would start crying (a frequent anxiety of mine during the first six weeks with both my children). While I let this concern control me with my first child, I decided it would not dampen my enthusiasm the second time around. My first journey out of my house with son number one came at four weeks. With my new baby, it was just over a week. The postnatal feelings were all the same, however, this time I knew it would be okay and turned on my 'auto pilot' of reason, rationale and sanity (the subconscious answer to 'don't want to; but need to') to motivate me. Well, a couple minutes into the walk my newborn did start crying. By ten minutes into the walk he was downright livid at the idea and crying had become wailing. As suspected, I did get anxious and promptly left. This action offended my older son, and he promptly contributed to the drama of it all.

Yes, there I was driving frantically, yet safely, my sons crying in unison with the newborn hitting the highest notes all the way back to our happy little home in the hills, so I could break down in private. A similar scenario happened the second time, minus big brother who happened to be in preschool. But, this time I pushed the issue a little longer. By time number three, we were able to get a full twenty minute walk. The point is what I did, and

what I want you to do, is to be tenacious in hitting the pavement every time you think about it, regardless of what happened the previous day. Like the daycare gym example I explained earlier in the book, your baby will eventually recognize the habit, and usually, the little sweetheart will accept it and may even fall promptly to sleep, as you leisurely stroll.

## Beginning Recovery

It is hard to believe that you could have started your very first exercise on day one, post partum. As you rested in your hospital bed you could have started your deep breathing exercises. You should have had this one down real well as most of us could inflate a jumpy-house with the amount of breathing we perform during labor. If you did not start deep breathing do not worry, what matters is what you do starting today.

Since the Mom Looks Great program is basically directed toward the three-month or beyond postpartum women, I will only lightly touch on early (under three months) postpartum exercise. As mentioned, the breathing exercises can be performed without too much concern. In the weeks following childbirth, I found simply lifting, rocking and carrying my son was a great re-introduction into lightweight resistance exercise. A doctor will usually have you wait four to six weeks before beginning a typical fitness program, but allow light walking and simple recovery exercises such as Kegel exercises (more on this later) or pelvic tilts, in the interim.



As mentioned, walking was my exercise for the first four weeks. You can start with a slow-paced stroll for 10-20 minutes on your first day and increase by five-minute increments about every other day or so that you are able to walk. Continue this initiation into the cardio plan until you have reached at least a thirty-minute walk.

For the early days of strength training, start with a more formal weight lifting set up with your baby. Instead of routine picking up from the crib and carrying across the room, you now want to start using better form with your body and plan to perform actual exercises using your baby, light weights or stretch bands as resistance for a specific duration of time. For instance, Baby Lifts are a good way to start work on your shoulders and arms. The exercise begins with you sitting up tall, yet relaxed on the floor with legs crossed. Remember to keep your stomach sucked in tightly, shoulders back, and your spine aligned in neutral position. Hold your baby securely (remember to support the sweet little bobble head with your index fingers) and slowly raise her up until your arms are straight in front of you. This exercise will work your shoulders and arms.

Many floor exercises can be performed while your baby is positioned beside you. Simple Leg Raises as you lay on your side (remember not to rock hips forward or backward during movement), Pelvic Tilts as you lay on your back and slowly lift your buttocks away from the floor, or other calisthenics are static in position, allowing no movement away from your baby. I only offer these exercises with your baby during his 'awake time', because goodness knows that when that little one goes to sleep, you better darn well follow suit.

During your exercise sessions, be sure to watch for signs of stress from your body, which include nausea, increase in bleeding or any other associated pain. For training that includes strength and flexibility, yoga can be great at this time. However, be sure to use a specific post-natal program (I had a yoga video that was pre and post natal, depending on whether you followed the instructor or one of her pupils.) Of course, these post-natal programs are more careful about not overstretching the joints, due to the need of regaining their stability. Based on my own experience, you should always warm-up your muscles even when doing yoga. This can be achieved by five to ten minutes of cardio movement. Otherwise, if you are at least three to six months or well beyond the initial postpartum phase...you can begin the actual Mom Looks Great program.

## Three Elements Of Exercise

There are three elements in the Mom Looks Great exercise program – cardiovascular training, strength training and flexibility training. While I have included some tips of how to include your baby in your workout, most of the Mom Looks Great program is better performed while your little one is sweetly napping or in the care of a trusted person, and you are left with a few moments of much needed personal time.



### CARDIOVASCULAR TRAINING

Cardiovascular training has a significant number of benefits for you. First, it is a major factor in shedding excess body fat, which after almost ten months of a pregnancy appetite, you are sure to have a bit extra to spare. Additionally, to aid in the loss of body fat, cardio exercise has actually been shown to reduce your appetite. Other benefits include: better quality of much needed sleep, increase in cell sensitivity to insulin (less insulin required to regulate your blood), lowered blood pressure, increase of your high density lipoproteins (the good cholesterol which transports protein throughout your body), increase of your joint range of motion, and finally, weight bearing cardio such as walking, running or other like activities increase the strength of your skeletal system (lessens risk of osteoporosis). And, as I noted earlier in the book, a great amount of endorphins and other uplifting brain chemicals (dopamine, serotonin, etc.) are released during exercise. I do not know about you, but this last goody was reason enough for me to get with the program, because I was in real need of some positive attitude adjustments during my postpartum periods.

Listed in Appendix C, you will find a variety of activities, including water, gym and outdoor sports which will fulfill your cardio requirements in the Mom Looks Great program. You will also find a chart of Lifestyle Cardio activities, which I utilize in the first few weeks of the program for new moms and the unconditioned individual. I have created these tables to provide you with the activity and average number of calories that are burned per hour. The numbers are based on the weight of a 150-pound person. You can calculate your weight difference using the number from the METs column (the term used for amount of oxygen uptake measured during a given activity) times your weight. If you

performed the exercise less than one hour, the total would then be divided by the difference in duration of which you performed. For example, if you weigh 145 pounds and performed Kickboxing for 30 minutes, the formula would be as follows:

$$145 \text{ [pounds]} \times 4.8 \text{ [METs]} = 696 \text{ calories}$$
$$696 \text{ [calories per hour]} / 2 \text{ [less 30 minutes]} = 348 \text{ Total Calories Burned}$$

Notice that the category is “Average calories burned per hour”. You can figure if you have a little papoose bundled on you while you are walking, your intensity is going to be greater, and therefore, you will be burning more calories. If you are walking uphill and pushing an infant, toddler or preschooler in your three-wheeled stroller, you can bet the calculations will be quite a bit higher than a normal stroll on a flat sidewalk.



### STRENGTH TRAINING

The second component of the Mom Looks Great exercise program is strength training. There is no need to bulk up like the body builders you may come across on ESPN at odd hours of the night. For that matter, I seldom see people that massive in my local gyms, but the fact remains that building muscle has many benefits that will improve your quality of life and enhance your body. These benefits include increased muscle fiber size (visual muscle definition), increased muscle contracting strength (great for holding and hugging baby), increased bone strength (an ally against osteoporosis), increased ligament strength (reduced risk of sprains), lower resting blood pressure level, and some relief of arthritic pain. Another great benefit to muscular strength is the lowered rate of injury risk. Muscles help us Absorb shock, such as the force of your feet against the earth as you chase after a mischievous child chasing after a mischievous dog. This shock Absorbency can alleviate being bedridden from an injury that could have been caused from an activity as simple as stepping wrong, a quick, misguided jump or a twist, stoop or bend to help your little guy up from his tumble. Speaking of bending, stooping or twisting, according to American Council on Exercise, 80% of low back problems are due to lack of muscular strength in the core area. This can be greatly improved through ten to twenty minutes of abdominal and lower back low-intensity back strengthening exercises 2-3 times per week. Mom Looks Great encourages the higher in this instance, since cardio sessions utilize some strength building exercises toward the end of the class.

Finally, along with all these astonishing facts, maintaining lean muscle mass directly affects metabolism. As we age, metabolism naturally begins to slow. Lean body tissue, the result of a good weight training program, requires a great amount of physiological inner energy to maintain and build muscle mass. Therefore, your metabolism will increase. This means after a great morning workout, you could be home, rocking your baby to sleep at 9:00 pm, and your metabolism is still burning calories in order to rebuild your muscle tissue. Subsequently, when your lean body tissue decreases and fat begins to accumulate, your metabolic rate decreases. This is in addition to the normal metabolic slowdown of 5% per decade.

With all this information, there should be no doubt you are in agreement that the Mom Looks Great program will lead you to a healthier lifestyle. With that, let us get started with a few weight training pointers. When you first look at the weight training and cardio demands of the Mom Looks Great program it may seem a little overwhelming, so the first tip I can offer you is to invest in a small set of weights, preferably a set that increases to 10-15 pounds per dumbbell for your home. You may be very surprised at how little time it actually takes to complete your weight training requirements for the day if you cut out travel time. Along the line of time management, limit your rest between sets to only 30 seconds to 1 minute. This will keep your time well-managed and will alleviate the knack for floating off into mental space that harbors your 'to-do' list for the day. The latter of which can be extremely deflating to your motivation and can actually tap into the feelings of fatigue or even anxiety.

Moving along to the actual workout, always began with a light warm-up. The warm-up could be a ten-minute cardio exercise, such as walking or biking. Or you could perform a low intensity version of your workout, such as 10 repetitions of a weight that is 10-20 pounds lighter than you usually lift. Other guidelines that will assist you include, always perform your exercise sets, whether lifting, squatting, raising or lowering at a slow and controlled pace. There are two main reasons to do this. Number one: when you perform at a faster rate, you are using momentum and not your muscles to lift the weight. Using momentum will not lead to lean body mass. Only when you are using the muscle will the muscle build. Number two, and more importantly, when you perform at a faster rate, you become vulnerable to injury. Believe it or not, there are quite a few people in the gym who are performing their lifting wrong and it will eventually lead to an injury. It shocks me that I have not yet seen some of my local lifters carted out on a gurney, moaning and grimacing from the result of a poorly performed exercise. If you go into a gym and see people lifting weights in a full motion, rapid manner, remember that it is the slow and controlled motion that is best.

During your set of slow and controlled contractions, there is one thing that will make the difference in your Mom Looks Great weight lifting program as opposed to other programs – the Pause-and-Squeeze. This action takes place when you have reached the fullest point of the contraction. In most exercises you pause and squeeze at each point of the full range of motion. Some examples are listed below.

**Bicep Curl** – When you have brought your hand up toward your shoulder, your Bicep is in its full contracted position. It is at this point that I want you to pause and squeeze your hardest for a 5 second count.

**Chest Press** – When you have extended your arms out in front of you, and your pecs are in their full contracted position, pause and squeeze your hardest for a 5 second count. Then slowly return to the starting position.

**Leg Extension** – When you extend your legs out in front of you, and your Quads are in their full contraction, pause and squeeze your hardest for a 5 second count. Then slowly return to starting position.

**\*\*Exception – The Squat** – When you lower to the squatting position, pause and squeeze for a 5 second count. THEN, when you rise to starting position, pause and squeeze your hardest for another 5 second count. This exception is to show that some exercise will enable you to take advantage of both points to better compliment your strength.

Above, are examples of exercises that work well with the Pause-and-Squeeze action. Another variation that you can progress to is the Pause-and-Pulse. In this instance, you want to squeeze and perform a very subtle pulsing movement. This action keeps the muscle contracted but places extra resistance with the slightly dynamic motion. If and when you choose to try this, replace the ‘Pause’ with the ‘Pulse’; both are effective, both give you a good muscle burn for good measure and both are extremely effective in toning your muscles.

Another must of performing proper weight training is to keep good posture and form throughout the exercise. A good rule of thumb is that your stomach is almost always tightened (if not sucked in), your butt is tucked under, your shoulders and neck are relaxed with your shoulders resting slightly back, chest is out and knees and/or elbows are always unlocked with a slight bend when in extended form. Finally, if you do any type of squatting or lunging exercise, your knees should never jut beyond your ankles (think 90° angle as ideal), while at the lowered position.

## MOMS AND POOR POSTURE

Speaking of posture, I would like to touch upon the poor postural habits that being a mother can subject you to when you lack strength. They start in the immediate postnatal stage and can last a lifetime out of habit. There are three that come to mind immediately: Cocked Hip Hold, Tummy Holds and the Mommy Slump.

The Cocked Hip Hold is derived from holding your baby on your ‘cocked’-up hip and the Tummy Hold is from holding your baby in front of you on your intentionally pooched-out stomach. The below-pictured pediatrician is giving a great example of the Cocked Hip Hold (ironic, isn’t it). Another example is when you have a hand-held baby carrier and you attempt to carry it with your arm hanging down by your side, practically contorting your body into a candy cane to counter the weight. The Cocked Hip and Tummy Holds are both usually implemented to accommodate your fatiguing arms or balance out weight proportion, but both of these postures are very taxing to your Core, especially the spine and its surrounding muscle tissue. The majority of these types of postures can work directly against any form of abdominal exercise, due to tightening of the Abdominals in an extended position. And, even more important they are detrimental to your spine and posterior muscles.



To counteract these habits, you will need to be especially conscientious when holding your child. Make sure you use your arms to hold your baby, child and maybe even grandchild, not your hip or your stomach. Think of keeping your spinal column in neutral alignment. As you strengthen your arms through exercise, you will be able to better achieve the task of withstanding your child’s weight in your fatiguing arms. On a side note, since most of us have a dominant arm, you may even want to perform a couple extra repetitions on the weaker arm when using free weights.

The Mommy Slump is another mom posture that you must offset. It is inevitable that you will be holding and adoring your child well into their later years, whether breastfeeding or just gazing into their innocent eyes as they lay in your lap. The posture held during these moments has a tendency to draw your neck and shoulders forward, lurching toward the

precious treasure in your arms. While I would never encourage you to be a rigid, upright robotic mommy, there are ways to correct and alleviate the kinks of being a loving mother after your adoration session has taken place.



After you have subjected yourself to the Mommy Slump, perform a little stretching routine. Clasp your hands behind your back, keeping your shoulders low and relaxed, push your chest out and keep your tummy sucked in. Then raise your arms over your head and give a static stretch. This stretch actually works after you have been sitting at a desk for awhile, after a good meal and even first thing in the morning after an attempted good night's sleep. This can become your physiological reminder that your body's correct posture is 'this way'.

The Mom Looks Great program has many helpful exercises that will build your arms for holding your baby and will tone your back to offset the Feeding Slump. Being conscientious is half the battle. When you notice yourself in one of these positions, remember to correct it as soon as possible. If you doubt your ability to improve your posture, I would like to refer you back to the Habits...21 days chapter.

### THE ROTTEN CORE

I would bet eight out of ten moms say their stomach is their greatest postnatal trouble spot and that is being conservative. Therefore let's focus a bit on building a strong Core. We will start off with something easy and something that can be done anywhere and anytime – that is to keep your stomach sucked in. That seems pretty simple, right? Keep your stomach sucked in any time you think about it, and since we are on the subject, try it now. Suck your belly button as far back as it can go and just hold it. It does not fatigue you as much as if you were doing crunches but it does take a bit of focus and muscle contraction to keep it sucked in. In fact, keep it sucked in throughout this topic, remembering to breathe normally, until you read it is time to stop. This contraction works your Transverse Abdominus which is the deep inner wall of abdominal muscle that supports your spine. This non-moving contraction is known as isometric, which can be just as effective as an isotonic contraction which involves the movement of the muscle. Think about it, you can do this at your desk, in your living room, standing in line and even while driving your car.

The Mom Looks Great program places a generous amount of emphasis on the Core area. Unlike a typical and general “stomach” routine, you will alternate your focus from Obliques to frontal Abdominals (aka Rectus Abdominus) throughout the week. I found that focusing on the different parts of the core area actually brought more definition to the area than I had ever encountered. Ideally, you can even progress into an exercise program of day 1 and 4 focused on Obliques and day 2 and 5 focused on your Abdominals. This can be accomplished by doing the Core exercises on your Strength Training days as well as taking advantage of the short bout of Abdominal work usually offered at the end of a common cardio class. I would suggest that you start Phase I with at least five minutes of Core exercises, then progress to a solid ten+ minutes by the time you reach Phase II and if possible fifteen to twenty minutes when you reach Phase III and forward. To balance out building the strength in your Core, also be sure to perform back exercises, on either your Obliques or Abdominals day.

Do not feel discouraged if this sounds like a lot, a few of the exercises for this area can be executed at almost any time in less than ten minutes, if you are efficient. Otherwise, as mentioned above, it will be easy to integrate a few extra crunches at the end of your cardio routine. If you are able to perform ten, and eventually up to twenty minutes of exercises for these postpartum trouble areas by Phase III and into the maintenance period, you will be amazed at how great your stomach muscles will feel. You may agree that the more time you put toward toning your stomach, the more toned your stomach will be. While maintenance guidelines are not apparent in the phase charts of the Mom Looks Great program, you should aim to reach a higher level of exercise competence after you have completed Phase III. This can be accomplished by continual progression until you reach a comfortable routine that does not allow extra body fat to accumulate, yet does not send you into amenorrhea or to the local hospital with too low of a body fat percentage. This, combined with the overall Mom Looks Great program will inevitably reduce your pregnancy fat, build the lean body tissue that will boost your metabolism and sculpt you into a mother, that is not only able to live life as a dynamic mom, but also be the envy and inspiration of all her friends and family members.

As for the extra tummy skin that remains after you deliver and after you have lost your weight...well personally, mine was pretty forgiving the first time around. The second time was a little more stubborn to shrink down to pre-pregnancy size. Working out may not entirely erase the visual history of carrying a child, but it can drastically improve the presentation of your stomach by defining the Abdominals and Obliques area more clearly (aka 6-pack Abs). By following the Mom Looks Great program, you will lose fat and tone muscle but the elasticity of skin and your associated age will also add another unforgiving factor (the older you are the less elasticity) in overall recovery of any tummy sag. By the

way, are your Abdominals still tightened? Excellent job, if so. If not, go back and try it again. Work on staying conscientious in tightening your Core whenever you think about it.



### FLEXIBILITY TRAINING

This leads us into the final piece of the Mom Looks Great exercise program – flexibility training. Stretching seems a little arbitrary in the spectrum of gaining great health and fitness, but there is much more to stretching than simply reaching your clasped hands skyward, breaking into a tired yawn. Effective stretching in exercise offers the following benefits:

- Reduces risk of injury to muscles – studies have proven that tight or stiff muscle increase the risk of injury.
- Increases physical efficiency and performance – flexible joints require less energy to act through range of motion
- Increases blood supply and nutrients to joints – also improves circulation and better connective tissue elasticity
- Improves normal degenerative processes by increasing the joint’s synovial fluid viscosity – allows better distribution of nutrients.
- Improves balance of muscle tissue and promotes postural awareness (key for mothers) – helps realign your body that has settled inappropriately to habit and effects of gravity.
- Decreases risk of pain in lower back – several stretches are provided for targeting the lumbar spine.
- Decreases lifestyle stress – relaxation is emphasized for proper stretching.
- Enhances your exercise program – stretching after a vigorous workout can alleviate some of the delayed onset of muscle soreness, usually experienced the following day.

If nothing prevents you from doing so, I would recommend you include a yoga class into your weekly exercise program. This will enable you strength-building techniques via poses utilizing isometric contractions as well as flexibility for releasing muscle tension post workout. However, even with yoga classes I highly recommend that my clients

perform a ten minute warm-up routine that will physiologically prepare your muscles (warming and softening them) for a more effective session.

It is important to remember that when you execute a good stretch, you are stretching your muscles, not your joints. Never hyperextend or 'lock out' your elbows or knees, most especially when recovering from pregnancy. Usually the best type of stretching is a static stretch. Static stretching is the slow and gradual elongation of the muscle. For instance, if you need to stretch your quadriceps (front of your thigh), you would secure one hand on a stable surface and bend your opposing leg at the knee, then pull the bent leg's foot up toward your buttocks with your free hand on the top of your foot where you typically find shoelaces. Performing this stretch correctly, with both knees side by side and in a vertical line, will elongate the muscle in the front of your thigh, creating a great stretch. This static stretch is low intensity and can be held for a moderate (15-20 seconds) duration.

One other method of stretching is referred to as ballistic or dynamic stretching. Kickboxing and some martial arts will utilize this kind of stretching for their warm-up. This type of stretching is performed in quick, high-force movements and thus, allows only a short duration of the stretch. While this method can be helpful if you participate in the specified activities, I would recommend that you stick with the static stretching in the Mom Looks Great program. Ballistic stretching can lead to injury if you are not properly prepared or conditioned to perform it.

While stretching benefits everyone, there are limitations that you may face, the age factor being the most unforgiving. According to the American Council on Exercise, women reach their greatest range of flexibility between the ages of seven and twelve...long before child bearing years. Thereafter, your flexibility begins to drop in range of motion. By age twenty-five, the aging of the connective tissues begins to accelerate, leading to decreased extensibility. While we cannot stop this process, the sooner we begin flexibility training the longer we will retain our joint elasticity.

With the three elements of the Mom Looks Great exercise program – cardio, strength training and flexibility training – you are sure to be pleased with the variety of exercise selections. The aim of Mom Looks Great is to keep you motivated with a wide selection of exercises that you choose and have you stay persistent in pushing toward your fitness goals. Whether getting your heart pumping through cardio exercises, making the muscles burn through weight training or giving a long, thorough and welcomed stretch during post-workout flexibility training, you will be achieving better fitness everyday.

## *Mission Received...Action!*

Having given you an abundance of information on the advantages of exercise, you can move forward with the Mom Looks

Great exercise program. Be sure to pace yourself throughout your workout and do not push yourself to hard, especially when first starting the program. When combining exercise with Phase I postnatal physiology, be aware of any signs that you may be overexerting yourself. Watch for the following symptoms and inform your doctor if you are experiencing them:

- Dizziness or faintness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Increase in vaginal bleeding or spotting
- Joint pain

As a reminder, Phase I is a low key introduction slanted toward the new mom around six to twelve weeks postpartum or the unconditioned or obese mom who is starting an exercise program for the first time. For postnatal purposes, I chose this as the beginning time as most doctors have released their patients and will approve an exercise plan at this time for their patients with no apparent health risks. Also, bleeding has stopped or is only spotting and infrequent, you have developed some semblance of a schedule and you may actually be getting a little more sleep than you did in the earliest weeks. All these factors enable you to be more likely to fulfill your following day's planned activities.

Phase II is for the mom at about four to six months postpartum and/ or for the mom who has already begun to exercise and is familiar with the basics of a fitness routine. For postnatal purposes, this is a time when you are regaining your zest for life and may even like the thought of venturing back into civilization again. You are more familiar with your baby as far as patterns and may even be more confident that the baby will be okay if left in the gym's daycare center. For the mom who is new to exercise or has not worked out for a period of time and would like to slowly introduce an active lifestyle back into her own life, this phase bypasses the 'fragile' stage and puts more demand on building strength and tonality.

Phase III is for the well-conditioned mom or the mom who has followed Mom Looks Great throughout the different phases and has progressed up to this point, which is usually six months postpartum and beyond. At six months you may notice that your baby has really developed quite a personality and is more fun and cute as a bug rather than the scary little alien that first came home with you and overwhelmed you on a daily basis. Considering these changes, you may be more able to assuredly leave him with a sitter while you work out, knowing that he will smile and squeal with delight when you come to pick him up

after working out. Also, you have gotten back into the groove as far as general strength and energy, as well as regained confidence that life does return to a somewhat usual routine. Ideally, you will be the individual that follows the progression of the program through each of the phases so that you are sure to build your lean muscle tissue in a way that is gradual and healthy. To begin Phase III it is especially important that you have gradually progressed, and not bypassed and jumped directly into the higher intensity level.

When performing the different exercises, make sure you actually know the proper form of the exercise you choose. I have had clients who thought they knew how to perform a push-up, when in fact they were putting undue stress on their elbows due to poor positioning of the hands, and subsequently, arms. A squat may look simple, but review your form in the mirror to make sure. Every gym on this beautiful earth should have a trainer or three close by to assist you. They usually don't mind showing you a few things about the equipment. Just remember that Trainers are for hire, so please be respectful of their time and reasonable with the depth of your questioning. Otherwise, enlist them for an hour's session and reap the benefits that their expertise can grant you.

If you have already started a program similar to Phase I that included a light re-introduction into exercise, or if Phase I seems easy and predictable and you feel eager to progress, you can move ahead to Phase II. Likewise, if you have been slowly regaining physical fitness for at least the last six months, have reached a training plateau and would like to take it up another notch, you can progress into Phase III. This is especially noted for you wonderful moms with older babies, preschoolers or grade school kids who have maintained a fitness routine of one kind or another consistently. Basically, what it boils down to is that you should be able to gauge by the first week of performing the workout plan if the phase suits you.

*Phase I – Mom Looks Great Exercise Program*

Phase I is created for the time when you are possibly anxious about your new baby and all the associated vaguely possible things that could happen to the fragile little bundle, leaving you flustered, concerned, restless and even fearful. Since it is also a time when a woman could be harboring a bit of postpartum depression, the mentioned anxieties are not so far fetched. It is at this time, that you can use your home or nearby park as your exercise spots if you are overly worried about leaving your baby for any amount of time. I also recommend a home video instructed cardio class as well as the weight set for weight training days. This convenience factor is to provide you a safe and familiar haven in a time of hormonal chaos. There is not a lot of travel involved which enables you more rest if necessary. It also prompts you to take small manageable steps toward a valid and effective exercise program that you want to integrate into your lifestyle on a long-term, and lifetime, basis.

Phase I is also for the unconditioned or obese mom who may be experiencing apprehensiveness about trying a new program. You may also be hesitant about performing exercise in front of other people or have to work at a lower impact than what is offered at the local gym. This stage will allow you a gradual introduction into exercise that will not compromise your motivation and physical ability.

The Mom Looks Great program begins the week on a Monday. This leaves the more convenient weekend at the end of your workout week, enabling a catch-up day if you had to skip one. I find this preferable, as a spouse, babysitter or other trusted person is more likely to be available to watch the baby; and, this could save you the cost of the gym's daycare. Remember, it is best to schedule your workout as a meeting during the most likely available time of your day so that it does not get triaged and left for last, which usually means left out completely.

Finally, very important in this first phase of your exercise program is to make sure a couple bodily areas have healed well if you are in the immediate postnatal phase - the first being your abdominal muscles. During pregnancy, your Rectus Abdominus softens and separates down the center. This is known as 'diastasis recti'. To figure out if your abdominal wall has healed correctly, evaluate as follows:

- Lie on your back with feet flat on floor about hip-width apart.
- Place two fingers vertically along your mid-section just above your belly button.
- Slowly raise your head and shoulders.

- You will feel the strand of muscle that runs along either side of your fingers.
- Your fingers should fit well between these muscles. If the gap is larger than your two-finger width, you will need to modify your abdominal activity until there is more closure of this muscle.

Check with your doctor if you are concerned.

The second area of concern in immediate post pregnancy phase is diastasis of the pubic area. Although the ‘pubic bone’ seems to be one solid area, it is actually made up of four separate bones (coccyx, sacrum and the two hip bones), all jointed in the middle of the pubic area. As with most of your joints during pregnancy, relaxin softens the joint in this area in preparation for the birth of your baby. While the normal gap is around 4-5mm between the two pubic points, pregnancy widens it by at least another 2-3mm. In some cases, it widens further which creates pain and more discomfort than usual. While there is not a formal method to evaluate the healing of this area, I recommend that you perform calisthenics instead of using heavier weights for the lower body, especially inner thigh sets. By Phase II, you should be able to perform exercises a little more efficiently as the diastasis will have further improved.

One last area I will caution you about is the hand and wrist area. As with the aforementioned, these are also joints, and thus may be affected by relaxin during pregnancy. Some women have even been known to develop pregnancy-onset of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome or deQuervain’s Syndrome (aka Mommy’s Thumb) during or after the baby is born. The latter develops from picking up your child by hooking your hands under their arms, especially when lifting from a downward position. We all know how much a baby or a child of any age for that matter, needs or wants to be picked up, and all this lifting leads to an excessive amount of thumb hyperextension. To put this in perspective, think of how your lower back would feel by bedtime if you had performed several weighted backbends throughout the day – not so good! While this syndrome can occur even long after childbirth (it is an affliction caused by repetitive motion), the irritation is especially prevalent for moms in the coming months to a year after you deliver your baby.

Exercises such as push-ups or yoga’s Plank position places force on your wrists as well as thumbs and fingers and will make your unstable wrists and thumbs susceptible to further injury. If you think you may have either of these ailments, check with your doctor, who may recommend anything from ibuprofen to physical therapy. Otherwise, there are a variety of ways to work the individual muscle groups without having to use a method that compromises your comfort and safety. Be careful not to push yourself, time will heal all your wounds literally, and then you can proceed to the more challenging positions.



Before you begin each phase of the Mom Looks Great exercise program, take stock of your current fitness level by performing the tests listed in Appendix A. If possible, have someone take your circumference measurements for body fat. These are taken around your Bicep, your waist and your hips. If no one is available, it is possible to do these measurements yourself. Do them in front of a mirror so that you can make sure the tape is straight all the way around the area being measured. Just be sure to take the measurements in the same place every time you measure. If you are like many women, your weight loss will seem to affect your upper body first. So, once you start losing inches in the lower body, you know you are really beginning to make great progress. The results of these measurements will also provide your starting point at the beginning of the next phase of your Mom Looks Great exercise program.

#### PHASE I – EXERCISE SELECTION

- Cardio Days - Choose an activity from the cardio activities listed on the Calories Burned Chart in Appendix C. Begin Phase I with 15-20 minute cardio sessions. Strive for 20-30 minute sessions by the end of this phase.
- Weight Training Days - Choose at least one exercise for each muscle group. Choose a weight of which you can perform 2-3 sets of 15 repetitions. Work larger muscle groups first. For instance, if you are working upper body, work your back and chest before you work your triceps and Biceps. Begin Phase I with 15-20 minute weight training sessions. Strive for 20-25 minute sessions by the end of this phase.
- For Abdominal exercise, I would recommend choosing at least 3 to 5 different exercises and try to accomplish 10 repetitions each. If you can do more with ease, great!
- Cardio Lifestyle Days – Use the Cardio Activities listed in Appendix C. Choose an activity that will fulfill the time requirement for the day. Duration of session for Phase I is 30 minutes.
- Flexibility Training – Post workout, be sure to stretch the muscle groups worked on that day. A 5-10 minute session will allow you to cool down and gain better flexibility.

#### TIPS TO REMEMBER IN PHASE I

- Be sure to hydrate your body! Remember that the side cramp you get while exercising is not from too much water.
- Remember the Pause and Squeeze technique during your weight lifting sets

*Phase II – Mom Looks Great Exercise Program*

Phase II is created for the mom who is comfortable with exercise, and regarding postpartum stage, this is the time that you are feeling better and recovering nicely from your delivery. During this phase you will have two weeks of a low intensity succession toward a regular fitness routine. On the third week, you will increase the duration of your weight training program which will further your progress. This is also where the abdominal exercises increase with intensity, so if you are recovering from pregnancy be sure that you are fully healed from the associated diastasis before you progress. If Phase I indicated pelvic diastasis, you may want to reassess the healing in Phase II by using an extremely light weight, such as thirty pounds on the Adductor (inner thigh) machine. As previously mentioned, perform a couple repetitions and you should be able to sense if there is a blunt, pulling sensation in the pelvic area that is going to compromise your safety. If there is no associated pulling or pain, increase the weight in low increments until a comfortable resistance is established. If there is discomfort (as described above) at this light of a weight, you should postpone the inner thigh machine awhile longer. Try the assessment again later in Phase II or at the beginning of Phase III. It has been my personal experience that at ten months post partum (2nd pregnancy) I was still at a much lower weight than usual (pre-pregnancy) on the Adductor machine. It gradually improved for me, and it will for you too with a little patience.

Remember to perform your assessment fitness tests in Appendix A to determine your current fitness level. Look for progress in each of the categories, such as the ability to perform more crunches, more push-ups, etc. A good way to psyche yourself up for these tests includes visualization of the number you want to meet as well as counting down from that number while performing your repetitions

**PHASE II – EXERCISE SELECTION**

- **Cardio Days** - Choose an activity from the Cardio Activities listed on the Calories Burned in Appendix C. Begin Phase II with 20-30 minute cardio sessions. Strive for a full 30-minute session by the end of this phase.
- **Weight Training Days** - Choose one or two exercises for each muscle group. Perform 3 sets with 10-12 repetitions in each set – note that this type of set will change in Phase III. Work larger muscle groups first. For instance, if you are working lower body, perform your squats before you narrow in on quadriceps (front of thigh). Begin Phase II with 20-30 minute weight training sessions. Strive for a full 30-minute session by the end of this phase.

- For Abdominal exercises, I would recommend choosing 6-8 different exercises. Try to accomplish 10-20 repetitions each. If you must break them down into two sets of ten, with a rest in the middle, that will be fine for now.
- Cardio Lifestyle Days – Choose your exercises from Appendix C. This will be the last phase that offers this convenient ‘exercise’ toward your workout. Duration of session for Phase II is 40 minutes.
- Flexibility Training - Post workout, be sure to stretch the muscle groups worked on that day. A 5-10 minute session will allow you to cool down and gain better flexibility.

#### TIPS TO REMEMBER IN PHASE II

- Hydrate!
- Be sure that you are stretching after your workouts. Be careful not to hyperextend. When stretching the muscle, hold for ten seconds, slightly ease up, take a deep breath and as you exhale, slowly push the stretch a little further than you had previously done.
- By this second phase, you should have progressed your weight lifting, at the very least, ten pounds heavier on major muscle groups. For instance, if you began at 30 pounds on the Chest Press, you should be up to 40 pounds when you hit Phase II. The same resistance rule applies in that the proper weight amount will enable you to perform at least 10 repetitions without complete muscle fatigue.
- Remember to warm up with a lighter version of your intended activity. For instance, a short five to ten minute walk or low intensity run if you plan to run for cardio, or a weight that you can perform 10 repetitions without any sign of muscle fatigue for weight training. If desired, you can warm up for most exercises with a ten-minute walk.
- It is at this point that I would highly recommend a gym membership, if you have not gotten one already. This will provide you with a diverse selection of equipment or classes to meet your different muscle group needs and it will also give you access to baby care when those you love and trust the most are not available. As a side note, I met my second son’s nanny at our gym daycare. After I saw how good she was with him time and again, I offered her the position and she accepted. To this day, I would say she was the best nanny between both kids that ever worked for me (except for family members, of course).
- Remember the Pause-and-Squeeze technique during your weight lifting sets.

*Phase III – Mom Looks Great Exercise Program*

Phase III is the portion of the program that can indefinitely send you on your way toward a new lifestyle. This phase was created to give you the guidelines that incorporate fitness into your life on an ongoing basis. Gone are the cardio lifestyle days. From this point forward, those activities will become unnoted bonus points of calories burned during the day. During Phase III, your weight-training program will progress toward at least a forty-minute duration. I know, and have even experienced, that a person can Absolutely achieve a toned body within this timeframe, especially with progression of resistance. You do not have to spend excessive hours lifting and performing cardio exercise to be fit.

In Phase III you will also begin a more challenging strength-training session, implementing pyramiding of weight during your sets. Not only will this advance you in strength, it is also a great way to bust through a training plateau in which you begin to lose momentum in achieving your healthy weight and body fat goals.

Remember to begin Phase III by testing your fitness level. You may be pleasantly surprised at your increase in strength and endurance since the very beginning of your program. Remember to count down from the number that you wish to execute and visualize a successful jump in your ability.

**PHASE III - EXERCISE SELECTION**

- **Cardio Days** – Choose a class, video or other activity with a runtime of 45/60 minutes. The cardio portion will most usually be approximately 30 minutes in between a warm-up and cool down period. During this phase, your cardio sessions should be of a higher intensity. The thirty-plus minute days (see charts in Appendix D) are your last remaining ‘wild card’. Use them as you see fit, but now is the time to safely push yourself just a little farther in your intensity.
- **Weight Training Days** – Choose one to three exercises for each muscle group. This is where your weight-training program will intensify. At this point, you should be able to lift up to twenty pounds more than when you started. For instance, if you started with forty pounds on the Leg Press machine, you should now be up to approximately sixty pounds. Begin Phase III with a 30-40 minute weight training session. Strive for a full 40+-minute session by the end of this phase.
- Now begins the change in execution of your weight lifting program. The following pyramiding guidelines are to coerce your body to adapt to varied resistance. Sometimes getting complacent in a routine will lead to a training plateau and sudden cessation of progress. Your new lifting guidelines are as follows.

- Set #1 - Begin at your usual weight resistance and lift for 12 repetitions. Rest for thirty seconds to one minute.
- Set #2 - Increase your weight by ten pounds and lift for 8-10 repetitions. Rest for thirty seconds to one minute.
- Set #3 - Increase your weight another ten pounds and lift for 6 repetitions. Pause and pat yourself on the back, the first time you accomplish this is to be acknowledged because it is hard and something few people ever even try.

*If this new method seems difficult, perform the least amount of repetitions required per set and work your way up to the highest number of repetitions noted for the set. And as always, stop if there is pain, other than usual muscle burn.*

- Every 2-4 weeks you should work on increasing your resistance by five to ten pounds. For instance, graduate from 50-60-70 to 60-70-80. For some people, working the upper body is a little more difficult than the lower body and visa versa. If this is the case for you, it may take a little more time to increase the resistance. Stop at a weight combination that you feel comfortable with but remember to aim high on your goal. (As an example, in my postnatal phase, I began the Adductor machine at 50-60-70 and slowly progressed for the duration of the year to 80-90-100. In the maintenance stage, I am comfortable fluctuating between 100-110 pounds for 2-3 sets of 10-12 repetitions.)
- For Abdominal exercises, I recommend you choose about 7-10 different exercises and accomplish two sets of 10-20 repetitions for each exercise. You may break it up however you want.. It can be a little monotonous doing 30-40 repetitions of the same exercise in a row. At this point, you should be able to perform at least twenty consecutive repetitions of each exercise. If not, keep trying – I know you will get there...soon!
- Flexibility Training - Post workout, be sure to stretch the muscle groups worked on that day. A 5-10 minute session will allow you to cool down and gain better flexibility.

#### TIPS TO REMEMBER IN PHASE III

- Hydrate!
- With the intensity increasing in your program, the warm-up before as well as a good stretching session after your workout is key to alleviating some of the muscle soreness, DOMS (Delayed Onset of Muscle Soreness), associated with your

routine. When stretching the muscle, begin the stretch, take a deep breath and as you exhale, push the stretch just a little further. Pause. Again, take a deep breath and go even deeper into the stretch as you exhale. Relax.

- Remember to always warm up with a lighter version of your intended activity. As I mentioned earlier, even a short walk or stationary bike ride can prepare you for most exercise routines.
- Remember the Pause-and-Squeeze technique during your weight lifting sets.

## *Exercise – In Summary*

There you have it - the exercise program created to transform your body and your life.

This is where the whole Mom Looks Great program got started – the exercise portion. Now, it has been detailed for you, along with the accompaniment of motivation and nutrition. Hopefully, it has satisfied your interest in making it a quality package for a life of renewed vigor. Just purchasing and reading this book has gotten you many steps closer to your goal of supreme health and fitness.



The benefits of exercise abound. But you must remember that only with proper nutrition, which provides your body with the necessary nutrients, will you be able to perform at top ability. For your energy, carbohydrates are the key, which include systemic operations of your body (i.e. breathing), normal daily activities and twenty minutes or less of cardio routines. For long-term energy, which includes sustained exercise for twenty minutes or more, fat is important. And, for building and repairing lean muscle mass resulting from your weight-lifting sessions, which may include lifting, bouncing or giving piggy-back rides to your growing child, protein is essential.

Remember to allow at least ninety minutes between meals and vigorous workouts. Hydrate your body with plenty of refreshing water or healthy alternative sports drink, at the very least drink your eight 8-oz. glasses per day.

One final note, be sure to invest in good shoes. Digging out your tennis shoes from yesteryear is not in your best interest of effective exercise. Soles of shoes get worn over time (would you drive with bald tires?), and there are new innovative designs for proper ankle and arch support in today's shoes that were not available even a few years ago. Protect your heart, protect your cells, protect your mind, and yes, protect your feet.



If your schedule is tight on the number of days that you can get to the gym, combine your exercises on the days that you do workout. (For instance, after your twenty, thirty or sixty minute cardio routine, perform your weight training sets.) It actually can work out well because you are already in the zone. You are already perspiring and your muscles are about the warmest and softest they can be which means you can skip the associated light warm-up needed before lifting. Also, remember to keep your rest between sets about thirty seconds in order to alleviate unnecessary loss of time. You can modify the exercise agenda to fit within your time requirements. There are as many ways to build your beautiful body as there are many ways to build a better mousetrap.

Most importantly, know that Mom Looks Great does not end after Phase III. Thereafter begins your maintenance phase, which is your path to indefinite health through exercise, nutrition and motivation. If you find that you begin to slip in any of these categories, refer back to the appropriate chapter. As with anything, a good review on the topic from time to time will only refresh your memory as to why you thought it was so important to better educate yourself in the first place.

*Part IV - EPILOGUE*

One way to become enthusiastic is to look for the plus sign. To make progress in any difficult situation, you have to start with what's right about it and build on that.

*-Norman Vincent Peale*

## *Final Thoughts*

It is so very important that you stick to your goals of living a healthy and fit lifestyle. While the Mom Looks Great program may seem like hard work in the beginning, you will experience the greatest rewards that good health has to offer, which includes an energy level most suitable to healthily, as well as happily raise your child and still have enough stamina to get a good punch in for your own wellbeing. Stay positive and committed and you will assimilate the motivated mentality, the healthy eating habits and the daily activities into your very existence, without question. Instead of worrying about how tired you are and how much weight you have to lose, remember to talk in the present about how great you feel and how much energy you have – it will come when you are confident in yourself and expectant of the outcome. Instead of eating good food but longing for junk food, you may actually begin to feel repulsed by the over-processed, commercialized foods and look forward to your healthy well-prepared meals. Instead of dreading going to the gym, you will dread the day that you will not be able to get to the gym.

When you feel this good, you will look even better. Compliments from friends, family and even strangers will acknowledge your progress on a regular basis. Do not be embarrassed about positive feedback, be receptive and accept it with a courteous smile and a gracious ‘thank you’. Aside from the multitude of comments on how adorable and sweet your baby or child is, you will be recognized on your obvious ambition toward fitness and pregnancy recovery. You will not believe how wonderful your life can become when you feel this great.

I am confident that you can do this. You have already taken the first steps toward self-improvement – having the interest, getting to the bookstore and completing the book. An old adage claims that once the mind has expanded to new ideas, it cannot go back to its original form. As my mother used to tell me as a child, “You can do anything that you put your mind to”. She did not make these words up; they are words that have traveled through many generations, prompting the receiver to put forth their greatest tenacity in making a difference. Now I say those words to you – You can do anything that you put your mind to! Look in the mirror, smile and know that you are about to embark on your life-changing mission. Know that it is something for you and something for your child, and children to come (going into another pregnancy when you are already physically fit lowers your chance of quite a few pregnancy complications). Everyone in your family – whether speaking of your spouse, supportive relatives, your older children or the other babies to

come will all benefit from your life-enhancing decision to follow the Mom Looks Great program. Who could resist being a part of your life when you are full of positive energy and in great health!?

Good luck to you and feel free to contact us via the web anytime. I would surely love to hear all about your struggles of the past, your decision to begin anew, your persistence in staying committed and your elation of finally reaching the goals you wrote down of living a healthy and happy life of personal success.

# Appendix A

## Daily Caloric Intake:

1. Take your healthy body weight (what you should weigh after the program) x 10. This number accounts for the calories needed to sustain normal bodily functions – your RMR, Resting Metabolic Rate.
2. Take half that number and add to total. These calories are what are needed for normal daily activities.
3. Add 200 additional calories for each 30-minute increment of exercise you perform for the day.
4. Add 500 additional calories if you are breastfeeding.
5. Now deduct 15% for weight loss.

Example:

“Healthy Body Weight” 130 x 10  
Resting Metabolic Rate (1300)

+ 1/2 Resting Metabolic Rate 650  
Normal Daily Calories = (1950)

+ 30 minutes of Cardio 200 = (2150)  
+ Breastfeeding Needs 500 = (2650)

15% weight loss 400

= 2250 “Total Calories Required”

## Body Mass Index

Weight (kg) Height <sup>2</sup> (m)	-Convert weight from pounds to kilograms by dividing 2.2:  Example $\frac{200 \text{ lbs}}{2.2} = 90.2 \text{ kg}$  -Convert height from inches to centimeters by multiplying 2.54, then to meters by dividing by 100:  Example $67.7 \times 2.54 = 172 \text{ cm}$  $\frac{172 \text{ cm}}{100} = 1.72 \text{ m}$
Reference Chart 19 to <25    Normal Weight 25 to <30    Overweight 30 to <35    Obese ≥ 35        Seriously obese	BMI = $\frac{\text{Weight}}{\text{Height}^2}$ $\frac{95.2}{(1.72)^2} = 32.2$  <b>32.2 = Classification of "Obese"</b>

Protein Requirements

Your weight in pounds divided by 2.2 = your weight in kilograms  
Your weight in kilograms x .8\* = your least amount of protein per day

MOM LOOKS GREAT

*Example:*

$$140 / 2.2 = 63.6$$

$$63.6 \times .8 = 50.9$$

**51 grams of protein per day**

*(\*Note - .8 – 1.0 grams of protein are required per kilogram of bodyweight.)*

ENDURANCE TESTS

UPPER BODY STRENGTH -- Modified Push-ups -- Place hands on the floor with thumbs aligned to nipple-line. Keep elbows straight with a slight bend to maintain a stabilized trunk through the movement. Keep knees hip-width apart and lower the chest to approximately 3-4 inches from the floor. Push up to starting position. Perform as many of these as you can without stopping.

- 33 or more - Excellent Condition
- 22 to 32 - Good Condition
- 10 to 21 - Fair Condition
- 0 to 9 - Improvement Needed
- 0 - Much Improvement Needed

LOWER BODY STRENGTH -- Squats -- Choose a sturdy lower chair with which to perform this test. Begin by sitting on the edge of the chair with feet hip-width apart and knees at a 90 degree angle. Rise to standing position. Fold arms across chest for stability. Tighten stomach and sit back as if you were going to sit in the chair. As your buttocks tap the chair, rise and repeat as many times as you can. Do not let weight rest on chair during this test. Perform the squats in a slow and controlled motion.

- 25 or more -Excellent Condition
- 20 to 24 -Good Condition
- 15 to 19 -Fair Condition
- 10 to 14 -Improvement Needed
- 0 to 9 -Much Improvement Needed

ABDOMINAL STRENGTH -- Crunches -- Lie on your back with knees bent and feet resting on floor shoulder-width apart. Align arms straight up thighs with fingertips on kneecaps. Tighten Abs and exhale as you slide your fingertips beyond kneecaps. Lead with rib cage, not the neck. These crunches can be performed in a pulsing motion, just be sure to complete full movement as explained. Perform as many as you can in one minute.  
*\*Caution – Remember to make sure that your abdominal wall has healed from pregnancy before performing this test*

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50 or more	-Excellent Condition
35 to 50	-Good Condition
23 to 34	-Fair Condition
11 to 22	-Improvement Needed
0 to 10	-Much Improvement Needed

Appendix B

GLYCEMIC INDEX	By Score
Instant rice	124
Cornflakes	119
Rice krispies	117
Russet potato	111
sweeteners, 25g, sucrose	110
Soda crackers	106
White bread	100
Couscous	93
Orange Gatorade	89
Honey	87
Oatmeal	87
Potato, baked, no fat	85
Chocolate Power Bar	83
sweeteners, 25g, table sugar	83
Popcorn	79
Cake Donut	76
Cheerios	74
Oat bran bread	72
Golden Grahams	71
Life Saver's Peppermint	70
Raisins	70
Cranberry Juice	68
Croissant	67
Life cereal	66
Flan	65
Spaghetti pasta	64
Ice cream	62
Rice noodles	61
Bran muffin w/o raisins	60
Cheese pizza	60
Orange juice	60
Soup, split pea	60

GLYCEMIC INDEX	By Food
Apple	40
Apple juice, unsweetened	40
Apricots	57
Banana	51
Banana, overripe	48
Beans, black	30
Beans, pinto	40
Boiled sweet corn	60
Bran muffin w/o raisins	60
Bread, 9/multi grain	43
Cake Donut	76
Cappuccino	53
Cheerios	74
Cheese pizza	60
Cherries	22
Chicken nuggets (frozen)	46
Chocolate Power Bar	83
Cornflakes	119
Couscous	93
Croissant	67
Egg noodles	47
Flan	65
Golden Grahams	71
Grapefruit	28
Honey	87
Ice cream	62
Instant rice	124
Kidney beans	23
Kiwi	58
Lentils	28
Life cereal	66
Life Saver's Peppermint	70

GLYCEMIC INDEX	By Score
Split pea soup	60
Sweet corn, boiled	60
Kiwi	58
Vanilla Met Rx	58
Apricots	57
Sweet potato	54
Cappuccino	53
Orange	52
Tortilla, corn	52
Banana	51
Banana, overripe	48
Egg noodles	47
Chicken nuggets (frozen)	46
Juice, Pineapple, unsweetened	46
Skim/whole milk	46
Soy milk	44
Bread, 9/multi grain	43
Pears	41
Apple	40
Apple juice, unsweetened	40
Beans, pinto	40
Beans, black	30
Tortilla, wheat	30
Grapefruit	28
Lentils	28
Peanut butter	26
Sweeteners, 25g, lactose	25
Plums	24
Kidney beans	23
Cherries	22
Peanuts	22
Sweeteners, 25g, fructose	11
Sweeteners, 25g, xylitol	10
Sweeteners, 25g, lactitol	3

GLYCEMIC INDEX	By Food
Oat bran bread	72
Oatmeal	87
Cranberry Juice	68
Orange	52
Orange Gatorade	89
Orange juice	60
Peanuts	22
Peanut butter	26
Pears	41
Pineapple Juice, unsweetened	46
Plums	24
Popcorn	79
Potato, baked, no fat	85
Raisins	70
Rice krispies	117
Rice noodles	61
Russet potato	111
Skim/whole milk	46
Soda crackers	106
Soup, split pea	60
Soy milk	44
Spaghetti pasta	64
Split pea soup	60
Sweet potato	54
Sweeteners, 25g, table sugar	83
Sweeteners, 25g, fructose	11
Sweeteners, 25g, lactitol	3
Sweeteners, 25g, lactose	25
Sweeteners, 25g, sucrose	110
Sweeteners, 25g, xylitol	10
Tortilla, corn	52
Tortilla, wheat	30
Vanilla Met Rx	58
White bread	100

**APPENDIX C**

**CARDIO ACTIVITIES**

ACTIVITY	Avg Calories Per Hour	
	Mets	150 pounds
Running – 8-min mile	6.00	900
Bicycling – 16-19 mph	5.77	865
Swimming - Butterfly	5.28	792
Swimming – Vigorous Laps	4.80	720
Step Aerobics – High Impact	4.80	720
Kickboxing	4.80	720
Elliptical Training - General	4.32	648
Running – 12-min mile	3.83	575
Circuit Training	3.83	575
Bicycling – 12-13 mph	3.83	575
Tennis – general	3.37	505
Step Aerobics – Low Impact	3.37	505
Rollerblading- outdoors	3.37	505
Bicycling - Stationary	3.37	505
Walk/Jog – 10-min mile	2.88	432
Skiing - Downhill	2.88	432
Hiking – cross country	2.88	432
Golf – carrying clubs	2.64	396
Kayaking - single	2.40	360
Walking – 15-min mile	2.16	324
Yoga - Stretching	1.92	288
Walking – 17-min mile	1.92	288
Weightlifting - General	1.44	216

**LIFESTYLE ACTIVITIES**

ACTIVITY	Avg Calories Per Hour	
	Mets	150 pounds
Gardening	2.16	324
Housecleaning	3.83	575
Lawn Mowing	2.16	324
Moving Boxes	3.37	505
Raking Lawn	1.92	288
Sex	1.92	288
Shopping, General	1.45	217
Shopping, Groceries	0.60	100
Washing Car	2.16	324

# Appendix D

Phase I, II and III Exercise Routine Sample Charts

PHASE I	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	Cardio - 20 minutes	Strength Training (10-20 minutes) Upper Body / Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	Strength Training (10-20 minutes) Lower Body / Obliques	rest	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	rest
Week 2	Cardio - 20 minutes	Strength Training (10-20 minutes) Upper Body / Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	Strength Training (10-20 minutes) Lower Body / Obliques	rest	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	rest
Week 3	Cardio - 20 minutes	Strength Training (15-20 minutes) Upper Body / Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	Strength Training (15-20 minutes) Lower Body / Obliques	rest	Cardio - 20 minutes	rest
Week 4	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training (20 minutes) Upper Body / Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	Strength Training (20 minutes) Lower Body / Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30 minutes	rest
Week 5	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training (20 minutes) Upper Body and Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	Strength Training (20 minutes) Lower Body and Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30 minutes	rest
Week 6	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training (20 minutes) Upper Body and Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 30 minutes	Strength Training (20 minutes) Lower Body and Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30 minutes	rest

\*\*\* Phase I of the Mom Looks Great program is for very early stages of post partum recovery or for an unconditioned individual. If you are not in this classification you can advance to Phase II.

Sample Workout - Phase I	
Monday	Cardio
Tuesday	Upper Body / Abs
	20 minute walk Dumbbell Bench Press Dumbbell Lat Pulldown Dumbbell Butterfly Raise Dumbbell Bicep Curl Body Weight Dips
Wednesday	Cardio Lifestyle
Thursday	Lower Body / Obliques
	30 minute vacuum Squats Pelvic Tilt Hamstring Lifts Abductors Adductors
Friday	Rest
Saturday	Cardio Lifestyle
Sunday	Rest
	30 minute general shopping
	Abs - Standard Crunch Abs - Reverse Crunch Abs - V-wall Crunch
	Obs - Rotation Trunk Crunch Side Bends Prone Back Extension

PHASE II	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training - 20 minutes Upper Body / 5 min. Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 40 minutes	Strength Training - 20 minutes Lower Body / 5 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30 minutes	rest
Week 2	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training - 20 minutes Upper Body / 5 min. Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 40 minutes	Strength Training - 20 minutes Lower Body / 5 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30 minutes	rest
Week 3	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Upper Body / 10 min Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 40 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Lower Body / 10 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30 minutes	rest
Week 4	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Upper Body / 10 min Abdominals	Cardio Lifestyle - 40 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Lower Body / 10 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30 minutes	rest

Sample Workout - Phase II			
Monday	Cardio	30 minute walk/light jog (alternating)	
Tuesday	Upper Body / Abs	Bench Press	Abs - Standard Crunch
		Lat Pulldown Machine Push Ups (modified) Scapula Adduction Range of Motion - Deltoid Raise Alternating Frontal Raise Double-Sine Punches Bicep Curls Tricep Extension Tricep Lifts	Abs - Swiss Ball Crunch Abs - Flank Abs - Shoulder to Knee Crunch Abs - Leg Lifts (with knees generously banded) Abs - Straight Leg Crunch
Wednesday	Cardio Lifestyle	40 minute House Cleaning	
Thursday	Lower Body / Obliques	Squats	Obs - Rotation Trunk Crunch
		Lunges Leg Press Leg Extension Hamstring Lifts Hamstring Crossover Abductors Abductors - machine Abductors - Swiss Ball	Obs - Twisted Side Crunches Obs - Side Crunches Obs - Side Bends Superman Prone Back Extension
Friday	Rest		
Saturday	Cardio	30 minute light jog	
Sunday	Rest		

PHASE III	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Week 1</b>	Cardio - 45/60 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Upper Body / 10-15 min Abdominals	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Lower Body / 10-15 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30+ minutes	rest
<b>Week 2</b>	Cardio - 45/60 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Upper Body / 10-15 min Abdominals	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Lower Body / 10-15 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 30+ minutes	rest
<b>Week 3</b>	Cardio - 45/60 minutes	<b>UP YOUR WEIGHT</b> Strength Training - 30 minutes Upper Body / 10-15 min Abdominals	Cardio - 30 minutes	<b>UP YOUR WEIGHT</b> Strength Training - 30 minutes Lower Body / 10-15 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 45/60 minutes	rest
<b>Week 4</b>	Cardio - 45/60 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Upper Body / 10-15 min Abdominals	Cardio - 30 minutes	Strength Training - 30 minutes Lower Body / 10-15 min Obliques	rest	Cardio - 45/60 minutes	rest

SAMPLE WORKOUT - PHASE III			
Monday	Cardio	45 minutes yoga	
Tuesday	Upper Body / Abs *Refer to manual for change in sets/repetitions	Bench Press	Abs - Standard Crunch
		Lat Pulldown Machine Pec Dec	Abs - Swiss Ball Crunch Abs - Plank Abs - Shoulder to Knee Crunch
Wednesday	Lower Body / Obliques *Refer to manual for change in sets/repetitions	Push Ups (modified) Scapula Adduction	Abs - Leg Lifts (with knees slightly bent)
		Range of Motion - Deltoid Raise Alternating Frontal Raise Double-time Punches Bicep Curls Hammer Curls Tricep Extension Tricep Lifts	Abs - Leg Lifts w/pulse Abs - Straight Leg Crunch
Thursday	Cardio	30 minute jog / run	
Friday	Rest	Squats	Obs - Rotation Trunk Crunch
		Plies Lunges Leg Press Leg Extension Dead Lifts Hamstring Lifts Hamstring Crossover Abductors Adductors Abductors - machine Adductors - machine	Obs - Twisted Side Crunches Obs - Leg Raises Obs - Side Crunches Obs - Side Bends Superman The Bow
Saturday	Cardio	45 minutes kickboxing	
Sunday	Rest		

### Urinary Incontinence Analysis

OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this analysis is to educate postpartum women in the benefits of pelvic floor exercises.

#### OUTLINE

- I. Introduction
- II. Incontinence – What is it?
  - a. Population affected – in percentages
  - b. Definition
  - c. Problems associated
- III. Incontinence – What causes it and why?
  - a. The Traumatized Body explained
    - i. Pregnancy / childbirth
    - ii. Women and exercise
  - b. Types of Incontinence
- IV. Incontinence – What can help cure it?
  - a. Exercise
    - i. The Kegel Exercise
    - ii. Other exercises – Awareness training, Area training, Bladder training
    - iii. Nur exercise and Incontinence
  - b. Medical cures
    - i. Bio-feedback
    - ii. Medication
    - iii. Surgery
    - iv. Alternatives
- V. Summary – Do Not Fear Urinary Incontinence

By now you know from reading Mom Looks Great that one of my biggest concerns was not necessarily being able to lose those “last 10 pounds” that so many new moms talked

about. I really wanted to just fit back into my jeans. I obsessed on it - aside from how uncomfortable I felt, all I could think about was “I PRAY I get back into those jeans”. Fortunately, five years and two kids later, I can fit into those jeans; however, since the fashion trend has changed, there they hang untouched in my closet. Nevertheless, the option to wear them is thanks to a good diet and a moderate exercise program. Mission accomplished, right? Well, maybe in the area of fitness. Unfortunately, there is a little subject that all these complaining mommies never warned me about that happens for a few months and up to a year, and for some women well beyond a year after childbirth. In fact, studies show that this topic is rarely even discussed with doctors.

In pregnancy alone, it is estimated that 53% of women experience Urinary Incontinence during their first pregnancy; the numbers rise to 85% with each subsequent pregnancy. The numbers do not stop there. Five percent of young women with no apparent health issue suffer from Incontinence. And, when you delve into the retirement-age community the numbers jump even higher.

So what is this embarrassing problem we call Incontinence? Urinary Incontinence can be defined as the urethra’s failure to contain urine when stressed by increasing pressure to the intra-abdominal area, which can be anything from coughing to pregnancy. Another definition is simply an involuntary loss of urine.

When a person has the involuntary loss of urine, the backlash can be disheartening. The embarrassment of the possible smell or the actual need to leave a social setting in order to clean oneself, can lead to social isolation. Another associated problem can be the loss of desire to maintain fitness. A friend of mine was shocked when she went out for her first postpartum morning run. She was just down the block when she realized it was not morning dew dampening her jogging suit. Also, sexual activity can be affected, either out of discomfort or just the ultra-sensitivity of thinking about using an area that has been traumatized. Sometimes not leaving the house at all becomes the choice of those who suffer, depending on the severity of the case. With the above situations comes shame. From shame comes depression and with depression comes a plethora of negative conclusions.

So what can be done to avoid an unhappy end result? To find a cure, we must first review the problem. Incontinence can be caused by a variety of problems. In pregnancy, it is not hard to realize that the weight of a 6-9 pound baby can be quite a burden on your pelvic floor, literally. The bladder, bladder neck, pelvic floor muscles, urethra and urethra sphincter all lie below the uterus, which greatly expands and increases pressure during pregnancy. The bladder neck enables urine to enter into the urethra and the urethra

sphincter contracts to hold the urine in the canal and will relax to let urine leave the body. The pelvic floor muscles hold all these organs in place to function properly. During pregnancy, childbirth or even low estrogen, the muscles weaken and allow these organs to shift. This could cause Incontinence and that feeling you get when you are very pregnant and feel like everything is about to fall out. With this stress, two possible injuries may occur. One - there is an actual separation of the muscles and fascias. Two - there could be a separation of the individual muscle cells from the motor nerves, by which they are innervated (Kegel, 1948).

Pregnancy alone is not the only matter leading to Urinary Incontinence. The actual normal delivery (cesarean is actually a lower risk factor) can take its toll as well. Studies show that there is an increased occurrence of Urinary Incontinence if the baby is larger than the average seven pounds, if the delivery is traumatic, if the labor lasts for a long duration or if the doctor must use forceps.

With all this pregnancy/delivery talk, know that moms are not the only sufferers. One third of all women that exercise experience Incontinence with those that participate in high intensity exercise such as running, dance aerobics and tennis facing the brunt of it. This can be attributed to pregnancy, prolapsed organs, menopausal and post-menopausal conditions. As a mom and a fitness enthusiast, it is doubly feasible that you may experience Urinary Incontinence. Therefore, when recovering from the lasting effects of delivery, you must start your exercise plan at a lower intensity and gradually increase to the higher intensity as all your muscles, inside and out, slowly regain their strength. Weightlifting, swimming, racquetball and bicycling are good examples of lower intensity fitness, with walking averaging the middle of the intensity scale.

So with the variety of those adversely affected by Urinary Incontinence, which also includes men and the elderly, there are different types of Urinary Incontinence. Stress Urinary Incontinence is characterized by urine release when coughing, sneezing, laughing, heavy lifting, getting up from a seated position and even upon rising in the morning after a full night's sleep. Stress Urinary Incontinence is the most common among pregnant/p postpartum women due to the weakened pelvic floor muscles and organs that were under the duress of an enlarged uterus. Other examples are menopausal women, women who have had a hysterectomy and even men who have had surgical procedures (e.g. prostatectomy). And finally, a common factor in many health problems – obesity. Just another great reason to shed extra pounds!

Urge Urinary Incontinence is the 2nd type and is most often associated with bladder spasms and reduced muscle control (another post-pregnancy symptom). Causations of this

type can range from urinary infections to central nervous system disorders and the release of urine upon fecal impact. With this type of Incontinence you may wet yourself while trying to find a restroom, need to 'go' every two hours, hesitate to drink diuretics for fear of increase in urination, wet bed at night or make several nightly trips to restroom. And, finally, a couple remaining types of Incontinence are: Overflow - associated with prostate problems in men or a prolapsed pelvic organ (bladder) in women; Functional - associated with mental diseases (will not go); or disabled individuals (cannot get to a restroom). Even medications can cause one to be incontinent.

In this day and age, medications can be a 'cure that's worse than the disease'. That is why I am happy to inform you that a lot of the treatments for Urinary Incontinence are natural and low, if not completely un-invasive remedies. Let us start with the word 'Kegel'. Dr. Arnold Kegel was a physician, who in 1948 learned of an African tribe's effective postpartum rituals, which utilized pelvic floor exercises to strengthen the area after childbirth. The success rate showed 86% of the women's condition improved with the exercises. So why is this problem so common if the exercises are effective? One of many studies indicates that 51% of individuals are given very brief instructions and do not correctly contract the pelvic floor.

Being a fitness enthusiast, you know the benefits of strengthening and toning a muscle. So as you regain your healthy body through strengthening your Biceps, Quads and Glutes, you must also begin to strengthen your pelvic floor muscles. Like any muscle, you must use it or lose it, and in this case losing it can be really embarrassing. At the end of this analysis, you will find the instructions on how to perform a few different Kegel-type exercises.

Aside from the Kegel exercises, there are other methods from which you can improve the strength of your pelvic floor. Awareness exercises help pinpoint muscles in the general vicinity of the pelvis and how they feel when contracted. When tightening just your inner thighs, just the buttocks or just your Abs, your awareness is heightened as to where these muscles are located. It is important you do not contract these muscles when Kegel-ing, because it lessens the contraction of your pelvic floor. Another exercise, pelvic tilts provide a dual benefit, by strengthening the pelvic area and working your Glutes a bit as well.

Bladder training can be effective while treating Urge Urinary Incontinence as well. Most commonly used for the elderly population, it can also be used by the under 60 crowd by simply sticking to a routine of bathroom visits in order to avoid a sudden, and long-overdue, urge to eliminate (think shopping marathons for new baby clothes). This process helps to train your urinary reflexes and it is usually recommended that you start with an

hourly elimination and progress in 30-minute increments to an eventual two to four-hour time lapse.

Okay, here's a curve ball. Remember when you broke up with your sweetheart, or HE broke up with you? You feel the pain...the misery...and the need for good friends to distract you from the 'Dear Marsha' letter and anything other than him. Well, that strategy works for Urge Urinary Incontinence as well. Thinking of your grocery list, the street names of the route to your favorite place or even remembering your easiest, so 'important', yet seldom used algebraic formula can meet this demand, while you seek out your nearest lavatory.

And yet another non-invasive approach is to keep your diet in check. Foods such as grapes, citrus and chocolate can increase urination – look for healthy alternatives. Limit diuretics to a minimum - this includes colas, coffee, tea and alcohol. Choose high fiber foods – check food labels. Eliminate artificial sweeteners - they irritate your bladder (and don't even get me started on the other negative stuff with this one). And, if lung cancer, bad breath and public ostracizing has not yet stopped you from smoking – perhaps knowing that nicotine irritates your bladder can get you to kick the habit. And aside from bladder irritation toward Urge Urinary Incontinence, don't forget about that associated smoke-induced hacking (see Stress Urinary Incontinence if you need a reminder).

Setting aside the non-invasive techniques, Biofeedback gives visual and audio feedback to enable proper Kegel-ing. Though it may be invasive (bulb inserted in vagina or rectum), complete urinary control has been reported in 20-25% of patients, with another 30% greatly improving. As well, Biofeedback can electrically stimulate the muscles, which strengthens them. This approach is frequently used for men recovering from a prostatectomy, and has shown a favorable conclusion in over half the cases.

Going back to 'cure is worse than the disease,' medications are also used for treating Urinary Incontinence. Bladder relaxants help with Urge Incontinence, neutralizing the sidesplitting urge (bladder spasms) to urinate and also increase bladder capacity. Bladder outlet stimulants can be used to tighten the bladder outlet muscle – these include Actifed, Sudafed and other cold remedies. And finally, Estrogen is used to increase the bulk and pliability of the vagina, pelvic floor muscles and urethral lining. With this knowledge, always consult with your doctor about the side affects and warnings of any medication.

Closing the treatment circle, you have surgery (pretty self-explanatory) and alternative treatments. These alternative treatments include weighted vaginal cones (an analogy could

be like a dumbbell for your Bicep), collagen injections into the urethra to help narrow and close it and the Viva® Urethral Plug. The latter has been newly introduced in Germany and has shown promising results. However, it is not yet available in the United States.

So there you have it – a surplus of information regarding something you may have thought was worth more worry than it truly is. Treatments abound and all you need to do is start with the most practical and inexpensive – the Kegel exercise – they truly work for the majority of cases (living testimonial here!). Begin these pelvic floor exercises when you begin your regular fitness routine. Since there is no visible flexing involved, do them during the 30-second to one-minute rest period between your weightlifting sets or during any exercise rest period. It is up to you to start today and hopefully, after this analysis, you now understand that the shame and fear associated with Urinary Incontinence is completely unfounded and not to be feared at all.

## KEGEL EXERCISES

Tips for an effective Kegel:

- Keep body relaxed while tightening the pelvic floor muscles.
- Exhale on the contraction and inhale upon relaxation - maintain breathing for entire set.
- Always start off with your Awareness exercises (refer to page 3) - keep Abs, inner thighs and buttocks relaxed.
- When you contract these muscles, think of lifting upward,
- pulling up or tightening. You will know the contraction from
- the relaxation because it will not be as easy to maintain. Kegel Exercise Plan:
- Start with two rounds of the Facet exercise for awareness of the contraction (explained below).
- 1st – 2nd week - Perform your exercises 3-5 times daily with 9-15 repetitions in each set.
- 3rd week – Perform your exercises 4-6 times daily with 10 repetitions in each set.
- 4th week – Perform your exercises 7-10 times daily with 10 repetitions in each set.
- Maintenance Plan should be everyday 10 times daily with 50-100 repetitions.

### **EXERCISES:**

- Facet Exercise – Sit on the toilet with knees shoulder-width apart. Begin to pee for 1-2 seconds, then voluntarily stop urination for 1-2 seconds. Perform this 2-3 times throughout the elimination. This will enlighten you as to how the contraction feels.

*Note of caution: Once you have recognized the contraction, it is best to avoid the Facet Exercise for two reasons. One – it can biologically send confusing signals to the sphincter adding to your Incontinence condition. Two – it can cause urine, through the contraction, to be sent back into the Urethra which can lead to a kidney infections.*

- The Kegel Contraction – With feet flat on an even surface these contractions can be performed sitting, standing or lying down. Perform contraction as indicated above. If helpful, insert finger into the vagina and contract. You will feel the contraction tighten the muscle around your finger. By this, you know you are contracting correctly. Remember to keep all surrounding muscles (abs, buttocks and inner thighs) relaxed.
- Elevator Exercise – Begin with instructions from the “Kegel Contraction”; however, think of riding an elevator. Start with a light contraction (Basement to 1st floor), tighten a bit more (2nd floor) and then completely tighten and hold (3rd floor, passengers get out). SLOWLY, relax slightly (down to 2nd floor), relax a bit more (down to 1st floor) and full relaxation (back to basement). This exercise creates a great visual for the pace at which you contract as well as the intensity of each contraction.
- Bracing Exercise – Sit comfortably with feet flat on floor. Inhale through your nose, exhale and contract your pelvic floor muscle and hold for 2-3 seconds. Relax. This exercise prepares you for times of lifting (like your new baby), jumping, pushing, coughing, etc.
- Bracing w/Cough Exercise – Sit comfortably with feet flat on floor. Place one hand on abdominal wall and cough. Notice how your abs bulge out for a brief moment. Next ‘brace’ yourself for this cough. Inhale through your nose, exhale and contract your pelvic floor muscle and hold for 2-3 seconds; now cough. Relax and do another set. This Bracing exercise is useful with sudden pelvic floor stressors, such as coughing, sneezing and even laughing.
- Sit and Raise Exercise – Sit in a chair, ‘Brace’ your pelvic floor with a big inhale, exhale and hold breath. Raise to a standing position. To assist, also place your foot underneath the chair, shift your body weight to that foot and push to standing position.

## Glossary Of Terms

- Abdominals – The group of muscles That cover the front of the Core.
- abduction – Movement of a body part away from the midline of the body.
- adduction – Movement of a body part toward the midline of the body.
- aerobic – With, or in the presence of, oxygen.
- amino acid – Nitrogen-containing compounds in protein that build muscle.
- amenorrhea – The Absence of menstruation, thought to be caused by one or a combination of the following factors: over-exercising, nutritional inadequacy, physical stress, energy drain or a hormonal alteration.
- anaerobic – Without the presence of oxygen.
- anterior – Anatomical term meaning toward the front. Opposite is Posterior.
- antioxidant – Substance that boost the body’s ability to defend itself against free radicals that cause damage. Examples of antioxidants include: Beta Carotene, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Selenium and Sulfur.
- atrophy – Decrease in muscle size resulting from inactivity of sedentary lifestyle or injury.
- ballistic – Quick, high-impact jerking movement.
- ballistic stretch – High force, short duration stretch. Also, a bouncing stretch to the muscle.
- barbell – A five or six foot bar with weighted plates on both ends. Used to perform exercise and referred to as free weights.
- Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) – Energy needed by the body while at rest to perform normal bodily functions.
- Biceps – The prominent bulging muscle located in the front, upper arm.
- blood pressure – The force of pressure by your blood against the walls of your arteries.
- body composition – The ratio of body fat against fat free body tissue in your body.
- Body Mass Index (BMI) – A ratio of height opposed to weight to evaluate obesity.
- Calisthenics – A system of exercise movements, without equipment, for the building of the strength and flexibility. Usually performed as floor exercises.
- calorie – The amount of heat required to raise the temperature of one kilogram of water to one degree Celsius. Also called a kilocalorie.
- carbohydrate (CHO) – An essential nutrient that provide your body with energy. One carbohydrate equals 4 calories. Simple and Complex are the types of carbohydrates.

- cell membrane – The protective capsule of a cell comprised of lipids, proteins and carbohydrates.
- certification – An individual’s merit of meeting specific standards to effectively perform a given task.
- cholesterol – A fatty substance found in blood and some body tissues. High content in animal products. Essential for hormone, steroids and other bodily productivity. Too much cholesterol can lead to excessive and life-threatening plaque on arterial wall.
- chronic disease – A conditional disease that lasts over a long-term period.
- concentric contraction – A contraction in which the muscle shortens and exerts force to overcome resistance.
- connective tissue – The tissue that supports and holds together various structures in your body, such as joints and ligaments.
- Core – The trunk of the body, focusing on Abdominals, Obliques and Spine.
- Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) – The most advanced form of cardiovascular disease most often of which is cause by plaque build-up narrowing in the arteries. Also known as Coronary Artery Disease (CAD).
- dehydration – A shortage of sufficient water throughout the body.
- Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness (DOMS) – A soreness in the muscles that occurs a day or two after the associated workout. Thought to be the result of elongation in the muscle as well as microscopic tears in the muscle and connective tissue.
- Diabetes – A disease that fails to metabolize carbohydrates normally due yo deficiency of insulin.
- diastasis – Separation of normally joined parts, such as the separation of certain abdominal muscles during pregnancy.
- diuretic – A formula that elevates the volume of urine and sodium that is expelled from the body.
- dumbbell – An eight to twelve inch bar with weighted plates on both ends. Usually come in a series of two, one for each hand. Often referred to as free weights.
- duration – How long you perform your exercises during a session (i.e. you work out for one hour).
- eccentric contraction – A contraction in which the muscle lengthens through muscular force in order to overcome resistance.
- elasticity – Temporary or recoverable elongation of the connective tissue.
- endorphins – Brain chemicals that ease or suppress pain. Also referred to as natural painkillers.
- Erector Spinae – The muscle located along your spine: Longissimus, Spinalis and Iliocostalis. Enables extension of your Core.

- essential amino acids – The eight amino acids that are not produced in the body and therefore are needed through consumption of proper proteins.
- extension – Engaging two sections of a joint to form a straight line. Such as knee extension where the lower leg can extend and form a straight line with the thigh.
- fat – An essential nutrient that provides long-term energy for the body. Also adds insulation and contour to the body. One gram of fat equals nine calories.
- fat-free mass – The lean body mass parts of the body that represent everything except fat, including bloods, bones, muscles, connective tissue and organs.
- fatty acid – The important nutrient of which provides energy during long-term, low-intensity exercise.
- flexibility – The range of motion performed from a joint.
- Food Guide Pyramid – Published in 1992, this dietary guideline provides a method of which to choose foods. A product of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services.
- free radicals – These highly reactive molecules target your cells' membranes and initiate a process, which leads to destruction of that cell. The more exposure, the more cells that are damaged. Several age-related maladies are attributed to free radical activity.
- frequency – How often you perform a given exercise (i.e. four to five days per week).
- Glycemic Index – A system that measures the breakdown of carbohydrates to glucose in the body. The quicker the breakdown, the higher the rating. The slower the breakdown, the more steadily glucose is infused for steady energy.
- Gluteus Maximus – The muscles underlying your buttocks.
- grazing – To eat small amounts of various foods several times throughout the day. This form of eating has been shown to be more efficient in providing energy, storing less fat and keeping your body satiated throughout the day.
- Hamstrings – The group of muscles that run along the back of your upper leg, which extend from above the hip to below the knee. The individual muscles are: Biceps Femoris, Semitendinosus and Semimembranosus.
- High-density Lipoprotein (HDL) – A complex plasma of lipids and protein. The HDL has more protein than cholesterol. HDL's are the good because they remove excess cholesterol from the body. High levels of HDL's in the body can lower risk of coronary heart disease.
- Healthy Eating Pyramid – University of Harvard's Public School of Health introduced this new guideline for eating in 2001. It is known for being an updated alternative to the original Food Guide Pyramid.
- hydration – Keeping the body properly supplied with water.

- hydrogenation – To add hydrogen to an unsaturated organic compound.
- hyperextension – Excessive extension of the joint. Can lead to injury.
- hypertrophy – Increase of the fibers within a muscle making it larger with more tonality – a result of resistance training.
- Impingement Syndrome – A condition of the shoulder area, in which the rotator cuff muscles are inflamed due to the scapula ‘pinching’ the muscles as it abducts.
- incomplete protein – Food that has less than the nine to ten essential amino acids.
- intensity – Indicates how hard your body works to achieve a training effect. Also, the measure of stress placed on the body during exercise (i.e. amount of weight / resistance).
- isometric contraction – Contraction in which the muscle exerts force without movement.
- isotonic contraction – Contraction in which the muscle exerts force with movement through a range of motion of a particular joint.
- Kegel Exercise – Contracting the pelvic floor muscles to gain strength, possibly to overcome Urinary Incontinence.
- ketone – Organic compound with a carbonyl group attached to two carbon atoms.
- ketosis – Abnormal amount of ketones in the body which is the result of low-carbohydrate intake, fasting or starving oneself.
- lactic acid – Waste product produced by anaerobic energy commonly felt when the muscle fatigues with resistance training.
- Latissimus Dorsi – Large muscles that cover the mid-lower back and wrap under the arms. Cause movement of the shoulder joints.
- Low-density Lipoprotein (LDL) – A complex plasma of lipids and protein. The LDL has more cholesterol than protein. LDL’s are ‘bad’ because they deposit cholesterol on arterial walls. High levels of LDL’s in the body can increase the risk of coronary heart disease.
- ligament – The connective tissue that connects bone to bone in a joint.
- Metabolic Equivalents (METs) – A system for classifying physical activity. One MET is equal to resting oxygen consumption.
- metabolism – The total of all the chemical and physical processes in the body which build and maintain by breaking down substances for the production of energy.
- mono-unsaturated fats – An unsaturated fat which is liquid at room temperature. Moderate intake of this fat is associated with a lowered risk of heart disease. These generally healthy fats include olive or oleic acid.
- muscle fiber – Another term for muscle cell.

- muscular endurance – The extent of ability for a muscle to exert force repeatedly against resistance or hold an isometric contraction over an extended period of time.
- muscular strength – The maximum force a muscle can produce against resistance in one extreme effort.
- obesity – The excessive accumulation of body fat which is equals 30% or above in women.
- Obliques – The muscles on both sides of the abdominal wall, which rotate and flex the Core of the body.
- Omega-3 – Being or composed of polyunsaturated fatty acids that have the final double bond in the hydrocarbon chain between the third and fourth carbon atoms from one end of the molecule. Found especially in fish, fish oils, vegetable oils, and green leafy vegetables
- osteoporosis – A disorder of the bone, which decreases density and increases risk of fractures. Mostly affects women in post-menopausal phase of life.
- Pectoralis Major (Pectorals/Pecs) – Muscle in the chest, most notably covering the breast area and wrapping upward under the arm.
- plateau – The time during your training at which you stop losing weight and body fat. This is a result of your body becoming accustomed to the exercises you perform. A good way to break through a plateau is to change the intensity, duration and/or frequency at which you perform.
- plyometrics – A sports-specific method of teaching muscle to react to maximum force movements, such as hops, bounds and jumps.
- poly-unsaturated fats – An unsaturated fat, which is liquid at room temperature. A better alternative to saturated fats. Examples include corn, safflower or soybean oils.
- polyphenols – Potent and wide ranging in their physiological properties. They are antioxidants, cancer preventatives, cavity and gingivitis preventatives, prebiotics and even internal deodorizers.
- posterior – Anatomical term referring to the back of an area.
- postpartum – Term referring to after delivery of a baby.
- progression – The process through a connected series of workouts toward a higher state of fitness.
- prolapsed organ – A medical condition in which an organ has moved down out of its usual position.
- prone – Anatomical term similar to facing downward. Example, your body would be in the prone position if you were lying face down on the floor.
- protein – An essential nutrient that builds and repairs muscle. Protein is comprised of 22 amino acids.

Pause and Squeeze – The isometric contraction held at one or both ending points of the isotonic contraction.

Quadriceps – The generalized term for the large group of muscles at the front of the thigh that attaches to the tibia, surrounds the knee cap and move up toward the hip. Individual muscles include: Rectus Femoris, Vastus Medialis, Vastus Inter-medius and Vastus Lateralis.

range of motion (ROM) – The number of degrees that a joint will allow one of its sections to move.

Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) – Used as guideline for the intake amount of vitamins and minerals in order to achieve optimum health.

repetition – An individual completion of an exercise movement. Repetitions are usually done in multiples of 6-15. A series of repetitions equals one ‘set’.

Resting Heart Rate (RHR) – The numbers of heartbeats per minute when the body is at rest. Best taken first thing in morning.

Resting Metabolic Rate (RMR) – The number of calories expended per unit at rest.

saturated fats – Fatty acids, which carry the maximal amount of hydrogen atoms. Examples include animal fats. Intake should not exceed 10-12% of your daily intake.

sedentary – Non-active.

serotonin – A chemical derived from the amino acid tryptophan, and widely distributed in tissues. It acts as a neurotransmitter, constricts blood vessels at injury sites, and may affect emotional states.

set – A group of consecutive repetitions performed for an exercise.

sprain – Traumatic twist of a joint, which results in a tearing or over-stretching of connective tissue.

strain – A stretch or tear of the muscle or the adjacent tissue, such as the fascia or tendon.

supine – Anatomical term similar to facing upward. Example, your body would be in the supine position in you were lying on your back.

talk test – This test is to measure the intensity of a cardiovascular exercise. An individual should be able talk and provide at least brief answers without too much breathlessness during a given exercise.

trans-fatty acids – An typically-liquid fat that has been hydrogenated in order to make it solid at room temperature, for longevity of store product. Many drawbacks to ingesting this ‘hidden fat’.

Tween-ager – a child in the middle school years.

Urinary Incontinence – The inability to retain a stream, leak or droplet of urine in the body.

yo-yo dieting – The act of eating poorly and, subsequently, gaining body fat, followed by a stint of starving the body of major nutrients in order to lose excess weight. This type of dieting is not advised

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