

# Love your baby, Love your body

By **Tricia Streit Perez, MS, ATC, LAT**

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Let's face it. Your beautiful bundle of joy has arrived, and suddenly all of your priorities have changed. In the process of trying to make the world perfect for your perfect little one, any focus you had placed on yourself is now nonexistent. Sleep deprivation is the norm. Showers are a victory. Sitting down for a relaxing meal is unheard of. And exercise? Who has time for it? If you know what's good for everyone involved, you, new mama, have time for it. It's nearly impossible to be a good mommy if mommy isn't taking care of herself! Here are some reasons to get out and exercise with your baby in tow!

### Lose That Extra Baby Weight

Those pre-pregnancy jeans will fit again. Start by bonding with your baby by going out for a walk using a sling or a stroller. Stop along the way to do some squats, toe raises, and push-ups, and before you know it, you'll have gained back your strength and endurance. Even better, the mommy tummy will be long gone after you begin doing some crunches with baby too! But, do remember, it generally takes 9 months to take off what took 9 months to put on. Don't get discouraged if you're not back to your pre-pregnancy weight immediately - it takes time. Don't compare yourself with those celebrities who are back in their skinny jeans 3 days after giving birth. They have personal trainers, chefs, nannies, housekeepers, and airbrushing on their side!

### Those Baby Blues

If you've been feeling down lately, exercise might just be the solution to get you back to your normal self. Group exercise has been proven to decrease the incidence of post-partum depression, and exercise in general increases confidence in your body image and helps stabilize your moods. Get out there connect with other new, like-minded moms, and start feeling better!

### Hire a Babysitter? No Need!

There's no need to leave your baby at home to exercise. You'll get the exercise your body craves, and you won't need to leave baby behind for even a minute. There's no need to hire a babysitter or personal trainer! More importantly, there's no need to worry about your baby being sad without his mama. You won't have to rush in and out of the gym, for fear that the baby will need something that only you can provide. There will be no reason to subject your not-yet-fully-vaccinated baby to a germ-infested gym daycare.

### Become an Active Role Model

The rate of childhood obesity is growing at an alarming rate. Now is the time to instill in your child the values that you wish them to hold later in life. When they interact with mama while she's exercising everyday, it will be a natural instinct later on to get outside and be active instead of plopping down in front of the couch with a video game!

### New Mommy Network

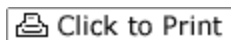
Many times after women have a baby, they tend to feel socially isolated. It could be that they just aren't feeling up to going out of the house, or that none of their friends have children. In addition, many families are extended throughout the country, and family members might not be around to help out after those first few weeks after baby arrives. Dad usually goes back to work shortly after baby is born, and mom is at home, yearning for adult conversation. What better way to meet like-minded moms than to meet them while exercising?

Now is the time to stop making excuses about why you don't have the time or energy to exercise. Rather, you can't afford not to start today!

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