

# love your new w-mom body!

OUR EXCLUSIVE THREE-MONTH  
PLAN HELPS YOU LOSE  
WEIGHT AND FEEL GREAT!

BY LESLIE GOLDMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEXANDRA GRABLEWSKI

As a new mom, your confidence takes more hits than the Spears family's reputation: the pre-pregnancy jeans that hang mockingly in your closet; the breasts that leak milk every time your neighbor's Labradoodle whimpers; the aunt who cocks her eyebrow at your swaddling technique. Not to mention the changes in your love life (him flicking a glob of pureed peas off your chest is the closest you've come to foreplay in months) and simply dealing with the sheer exhaustion of new parenthood. All of these things can tremendously impact how you feel about yourself as a woman, a wife, and now, a mom.

Sure, you understand your body is miraculous. And sure, we all like to think that the extra weight we gained during pregnancy or in the first months of caring for a new baby is a small price to pay. But let's be honest. It's still your body, and wanting to be strong and look hot in your clothes doesn't fly out the window the minute you purchase a Baby Björn. And that's true even if you're the rare woman who considers herself immune to society's obsession with physical perfection. Tabloid magazines scream out celebrities' nose-diving postpartum weights like a NASA countdown ("160, 145, 120...we have liftoff!"). Then there are the ever-more-popular mommy makeovers—pricy mix-and-match cosmetic surgeries including breast implants, lifts, and tummy tucks aimed specifically at mothers. In 2006, doctors performed 325,000 of these procedures on women

ages 20 to 39, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons in Arlington Heights, Illinois. That's an 11 percent increase from the prior year.

It's enough to break even the most confident of women. "I think it can happen to anyone," says Maria Rago, Ph.D., a psychologist at Linden Oaks at Edward Hospital in Naperville, Illinois. Of course, a history of anorexia or extreme perfectionism can increase one's risk for postpartum body-image issues, but many otherwise healthy women are "surprised at how much it impacts them when they look at their new body," Rago says. "It's different from the media's ideal in so many ways." A pouchy stomach, rounder hips and thighs, or newly deflated or gigantic breasts can make it very discouraging and scary to look in the mirror, she says. So discouraging, in fact, that a 2007 survey of more than 3,000 mothers found that 67 percent would rather reclaim their pre-baby physique than their pre-baby sex life.

Clearly, new moms are spending a lot of time thinking, worrying, and stressing about the new state of their

GO TO THE GREENHOUSE SPA!

Learn how to win a getaway vacation just for you on page 42. Nobody deserves it more!

## BODY BOOSTER

Check "body checking" at the door. Maybe you hop on the scale a few times a day, or scrutinize yourself in the mirror. Of course you'll find something if you're looking for it. Instead, stash the scale away, and when you look in the mirror, give yourself a wink or a smile. If you start obsessing, say to yourself: "I have better things to do!"

shape—and frankly, that’s energy that’s probably better spent. That’s why *Babytalk* has devised a three-month plan to help boost your confidence from the inside out, no crazy surgeries required. Each month will focus on one topic at a time: body image this month, fitness next month, and healthy eating in June. Whether your goal is to feel at peace with your size for now or to finally lose that last 15 pounds, *Babytalk* will provide the step-by-step advice and support you need.

This isn’t about making over your life in one fell swoop. That would be overwhelming for anyone and completely impossible with a new baby. Instead, it’s about making a

commitment to begin the process of getting to where you want to be. Only you can set the terms. One

### BODY BOOSTER

Try to think back to how beautiful your mother was to you when you were a little girl. You didn’t care about her muffin top or varicose veins—you just wanted to be with her. That’s how your baby sees you, says life coach Barbara Sher, author of *Refuse to Choose!* “This way of thinking gets you in touch with what real beauty is.”

more thing: When you sign up, you’ll be entered to win an all-expenses-paid stay at The Greenhouse Spa in Arlington, Texas! Sweetens the deal, no?! Find all the details on the next page, and say hello to a happier, healthier you!

# check you out!

## LEARN HOW YOU MEASURE UP IN

**Y**ou may be wondering why we didn’t jump right into workout mode—that’s how to get results, after all. But the truth is, your mind needs to be as ready for change as your body. The way a woman feels about herself has the potential to send her soaring through a 5K stroller race or melting into the couch. Getting in touch with how you honestly view your body is the first step to setting attainable, satisfying fitness and nutrition goals, says Rago. “Angry and anxious is not the way you want to go into a nutrition or exercise plan,” she adds. “It will interfere with your self-esteem, relationships, and the whole point of all this: motherhood. You’ll be a cranky mom who is overexercised and undernourished.”

To that end, *Babytalk* teamed up with Rago and Jennifer Payne, M.D., codirector of the Johns Hopkins Women’s Mood Disorders Center in Baltimore, to create the following quiz. Answer the questions below, then read on for advice and support to shore up any weak spots.

- When I see the stretch marks on my stomach, they
  - remind me of the beautiful baby I carried for nine-plus months. These are battle scars!
  - get me down. I never had stretch marks before, but I know they’ll fade with time.
  - gross me out. I would so get them lasered off if I could.
- When my partner and I get it on, I’m most likely to
  - jump him in the morning. It may be bright out, but that’s the only time we have to connect.
  - get what on? We’re so tired we can barely get our baby’s Onesie on.
  - bolt for the light switch. He doesn’t need to see my shar-pei-puppy belly rippling over him.
- The first thing that pops into my head when I see Tori Spelling or Kelly Ripa in a bikini is
  - “Hahahahahahaha! Ha.”
  - “Well, I’d look like that, too, if I could afford a personal chef and a trainer.”
  - “Why didn’t I just get a tummy tuck with my c-section?”
- When my partner tells me I’m beautiful, I think he’s
  - sincere.
  - just trying to get some action.
  - Huh? My partner does not tell me I’m beautiful.

*Leslie Goldman is author of Locker Room Diaries: The Naked Truth about Women, Body Image, and Re-imagining the “Perfect” Body. She lives in Chicago.*

## THE CONFIDENCE DEPARTMENT

- Breastfeeding makes me feel
  - connected on so many levels.
  - a little damp and sticky.
  - like a cow.
- Before pregnancy, the best way to describe how I felt about my body would be
  - Charlie’s Angels: Full Throttle.*
  - Atonement.*
  - Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas.*
- Now, the best way to describe how I feel about my body would be
  - Enchanted.*
  - Supersize Me.*
  - Invasion of the Body Snatchers.*
- When I think about my body, my inner voice sounds
  - like my best friend.
  - like my mother.
  - like a drill sergeant.
- I can’t wait to
  - take a Mommy-and-Me swim class.
  - do a down dog without my boobs hitting me in the eye.
  - work out hard. I’m so frustrated with my body that it’s all I can think about.
- The most recent postpregnancy outfit I bough was
  - a daring V-neck to show off my fab cleavage.
  - nothing yet. I’m still waiting to see if I fit into any of my prepregnancy clothes and will reassess then.
  - a pair of loose sweats and a hoodie.
- The closest I’ve ever come to a mental health problem is
  - staring at Heidi Klum for too long.
  - general stress and anxiety, but I’ve always been able to keep it in check with therapy, self-help techniques, and chocolate.
  - I’ve been diagnosed and/or treated for anorexia, bulimia, compulsive overexercising and/or depression.

### BODY BOOSTER

Try to spend time with fellow new moms—and don’t be shy about venting. We all have struggles (the bigger sizes, the new lumps, the flabby boobs, need we go on?). “There’s something really healthy about having friends who are going through the same things you are,” Dr. Payne says. “It’s very helpful to know that you’re normal.”

## TOTAL YOUR A, B, AND C ANSWERS

### mostly A’s: Feeling groovy

It seems like you are adjusting quite well to all of the changes your body has gone through, and you have a healthy perspective on what’s important in life right now: experiencing the joy of your new baby without losing sight of who you are as an individual. When your doctor gives permission, have fun getting back into the exercises you love. Continue to take good care of yourself, keep on feeling good about your body and your life...and enjoy!

### mostly B’s: Making progress

Having a baby is hard on your body, and it can be tough on your self-esteem, too. It sounds like you may need a little extra attention right now. Go out of your way to obtain support from family and friends. Talk to other moms, or start a journal about your feelings relating to your body and motherhood. Sometimes women unconsciously punish their body as a way of coping with other more complicated problems. Could you be overeating in response to feeling isolated? Are you trying to diet away your new-mom insecurities? The more you know about your true feelings and desires, the more successful you can be when you decide to make some changes. Once you are ready to resume (or start!) your exercise routine, be sure to listen to your body. Don’t push too hard too fast, and try to keep balance between workouts and relaxation.

### mostly C’s: Time for some TLC

You could be experiencing the body-image blues. But, remember, negative self-talk doesn’t help anyone. “An old monk said, ‘When you judge yourself, you break your heart,’” says life coach Barbara Sher. You will be more successful and have higher self-esteem if you nurture, encourage, and respect yourself. You may also want to consider adding professional counseling to your self-care routine and to watch out for the ever-so-common problem of postpartum depression. For extra support, there’s always the web—definitely consider logging on to the Love Your New Mom Body message boards at

Parenting.com/babytalk to connect with other women. Be watchful when you return to exercising: Obviously, one of the great boons of working out is that it can improve your outlook. But if you are frustrated with your body, you only add stress and risk overdoing it (or not doing it at all). Life is a marathon, not a sprint, and with a little determination, you will reach your goal!

Still snug? Who cares! Go ahead and treat yourself to a new pair.



# YOU COULD BE HERE!

Arlington, Texas (it's women only!). For three days, you'll be treated to breakfast in bed, lunch beside the gorgeous pool (above), a candlelit dinner, two massages, two facials, a manicure, and more! You'll even have the option of taking your trip during Baby & Me week. What's more, the airfare is on us (we'll buy one roundtrip ticket from your nearest major airport). For rules, visit our website.\*

**1.** All you have to do is log on to Parenting.com/babytalk and click on Love Your New Mom Body. Fill out the form, hit Reply, and you're done! What you'll get:

**2.** Class discounts! All participants receive a 10 percent discount on StrollerFit gear, workout clothes, DVDs, or classes (available in 100 cities nationwide) during May and June. Find one near you at Strollerfit.com.

**3.** 24/7 support! Swap stories on our new message board and get expert advice on your personal questions (log on for the schedule). The whole program will be available online, too, so you can check back whenever.

**4.** Weekly newsletters! Tips and motivating quotes help you stay on track.

**5.** More goodies, prizes, and extras to come in May and June!

## BODY BOOSTER

Don't mistake being pregnant with getting fat. "This idea of just gaining weight in your belly is hogwash," Dr. Payne says. Different people experience different changes. One may escape stretch marks while you now have a map of the stars' homes. Focus on the new positives, like your mesmerizing breasts or the booty you never had!

# look 10 lbs. lighter instantly

TRY THESE SUPER SLIMMING TIPS FROM DRESSINGWELL.COM'S MARY LOU ANDRE

## BYE, BAGGY

■ Make sure all of your clothes fit properly. Clothes that are too big, too small, or too bulky can add weight to your frame. Treat yourself to a couple of fresh, basic pieces that fit now—even if you don't plan to be this size for long. Looking put-together is a confidence booster. For cute, affordable buys, consider Forever21.com or StyleViolet.com.

■ Pay particular attention to your sleeve length. Cuffs that hang too low can draw unwanted attention to your hip line.

■ Light colors enlarge. Want less focus on your bottom half? Go bright on top.



## HELLO, SEXY!

■ Layer an open button-down or cardigan over a tighter camisole or tank. The fitted layer will draw the eye in, highlighting a narrower shape.

■ Go monochrome. This creates a more slimming silhouette than an outfit with several contrasting colors.

■ Minimize with dark colors such as black, chocolate-brown, navy, and dark gray. Wear these shades to conceal the areas of your body where you are least confident. This is especially true for jeans, a wardrobe staple: The darker the rinse, the trimmer you'll look. Try them long with a heel for legs that go on and on.

