



the busy
mom's
guide to a
**BEAUTIFUL
BODY**

by Jessica Denay



Jessica Denay is the author of *The Hot Mom Handbook: Moms Have More Fun!* and *The Hot Mom To Be Handbook: Womb with a View*. She is the co-founder of the Hot Moms Club, an organization created to empower women and redefine

motherhood. Her success proves that there has never been a hotter time to be a mom than now!

A single mom frustrated with the image of motherhood, the New Jersey native and former teacher created the Hot Moms Club. What first began as a fun way to boost the confidence of her and her friends, the popularity of the group made Denay realize that a lot of women and moms were feeling like she did. Giving Hot Moms Club a national platform was the logical next step. She was floored by the overwhelming response and opportunities that followed. Jessica credits its success on the timeliness and popularity of their message, “You are not the best mom unless you are the best YOU!”

After resurrecting her own self-esteem and creating balance in her life, it has been her mission to help other moms balance womanhood and motherhood. Jessica has appeared on hundreds of television and radio shows as an expert, including *The Today Show*, *CNN*, *Access Hollywood*, *The Insider*, *Entertainment Tonight*, and *Tyra Banks*, to name a few. The Hot Moms Club charity events have a large celebrity fan base and have graced the pages of *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *People*, *US Weekly*, *Life and Style*, *Child* and many more.

Jessica loves avocados, dislikes clutter, and her favorite thing to do is laugh and hang out with her 8-year-old son, Gabriel (when he lets her).

the busy **mom's** *guide to a* **BEAUTIFUL BODY**

A beautiful body after baby is possible.

I know, I know, your body isn't the same after having one kid or five kids. Of course not! Your body has performed one of the most awe-inspiring human feats. And with supermodels in every magazine and on every billboard, it's tough to maintain a healthy self-image even before your body has been kicked and pulled from the inside.

When our children are born, so is this other person known as "Mom" — this ever-caring, protective, beck-and-call being.

It's easy for new moms to become overwhelmed. All too often, as we try so hard to fit the mold of "good parent" or "perfect mom" it becomes easy to lose our self in the process. Our physical appearance is usually the first thing to go, and mom's needs seem to fall right off the to-do list. But the truth is you are not the best mom unless you are the best YOU! Maintaining your health and style are extremely important, and a beautiful body after baby is an attainable goal. Confidence is one of the greatest gifts you can give your children and you model confidence by first having it yourself. It's not always easy but you owe it to your family to be at your best, to shine. With a little effort, multitasking moms everywhere can look good and feel fantastic.

In this guide, we'll explore just how to achieve that beautiful body goal.

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A. TIME FOR *beauty*



According to a recent study of post-pregnancy moms, the four most common additions to women's wardrobes after baby are oversized shirts, sweaters, sweatpants and one-piece bathing suits.

if mom's not happy, nobody's happy...

That old saying couldn't be more true. Let's face it, mom is the nucleus of the family — the head honcho — and her mood can shift the mood of the entire house. So when mom is stressed, it affects the whole family. But when mom is happy and confident, the whole family benefits. Recognize that doing things for yourself makes you happier about doing things for others. Moms should have absolutely no excuses and no guilt about finding time for themselves. You owe it to your family to be refreshed and recharged. Don't wait for your husband or mom to offer to watch the kids so you can go take a hike or get a massage or get your hair done. Do anything that makes you feel beautiful and alive. How you spend your time is up to you, but plan something just for you once a week. Schedule it and make it an appointment you can't miss.

looking good = feeling good

When you look good you feel good, and conversely when you feel good on the inside you want to reflect that in the way you look, walk and talk. So ditch the sweats! I mean that as figuratively as I do literally. It is so easy to fall into that comfortable rut, what I refer to as your "sweats." Sweats represent choosing convenience but as a result you sacrifice yourself. Take charge of your looks and take charge of your life. When you treat yourself with respect and project an image of confidence and style, you are setting yourself up for success and setting your kids up for success. The goal is to feel good, whether you get there from the outside-in or the inside-out!

quick beauty fixes for the multitasking mama!

There are many simple and inexpensive ways to pamper yourself.

1 Turn your bathroom into a mini home spa. Light some candles and use great smelling body washes, shampoos and conditioners. Often as moms we smell more like a dirty gym sock or baby spit up than we do a woman. When you smell nice, you will smile more. Use scents with relaxing and calming aromas. (Suave's exhale line of body washes are affordable and they offer fragrances such as Lavender Vanilla and Cinnamon Sandlewood.)

2 The next time you have to clip the kids' nails, set up a little at-home nail care station for yourself. As a ritual when it is time to clip my son's nails, I set out four warm sudsy bowls for us to relax and put our hands and feet in before clipping and buffing. This is a great opportunity to bond while soaking and resting your feet!

3 Mud masks help rejuvenate our skin, so the next time you put on your mask make a game out of it. I become the green monster and chase my son around the house. It's the perfect way to blend play time and revitalize your face.

Only 11% of new moms say they get their hair cut or colored at least once a month.

If you are not feeling good about your body, a great way to shift the focus is to get a new haircut or change your hair color. A fabulous new cut will make you feel great and turn attention away from your body and up toward your head.

For those active moms, instead of tossing your hair back into a boring old ponytail, why not put two pig tails or create a high ponytail slicked back sleek sitting on top of your head for style? Braids are very trendy this season as are cute headbands – all chic alternatives.

B. YOUR wardrobe

post-pregnancy and beyond — the ever-changing shape

Women's bodies don't bounce right back to pre-pregnancy size following childbirth, or even weeks to months (not to mention years) afterward. Almost half of the women that we surveyed said they were unprepared for the changes to their bodies. The body goes through several changes after having a baby, and women can become frustrated with the body's lack of response to limited diet and exercise.

Clothes are a great tool for expressing your personality. Let's face it, it's hard to feel good when you are covered in head-to-toe sweats you've sniffed and pulled from the hamper. Now I am not suggesting you prance around all day in heels and a gown, but let your outside reflect your inside. Wear clothes that show off who you are that are fun and make you feel fun. Give your appearance the attention it deserves because you deserve it!

what to highlight and what to hide

The good news is that big blousy tops, trapeze and baby doll tops are in style again. These styles are perfect for moms that want to disguise their post-baby bump and other problem areas. Clothing and accessories that divert attention can work in your favor too. Patterns can draw attention away from flaws, and a nice, chunky necklace can draw the eyes to your face instead of your body.

throw a clean-out-your-closet party!

Invite your most stylish friends and give them two weeks to go through their closets and drawers. Get together with wine, cheese, chocolate and your bags of clothes and exchange. It's a great time to laugh, connect and give style tips. Everyone ends up with something 'new' to add to her wardrobe and whatever is left over gets donated to a women's shelter. This turns a tedious task into something fun.



summer is not scary!

swimwear doesn't have to be momwear. In our recent survey of mothers, nearly half said they wore a bikini before pregnancy, yet less than 10 percent say they wear one after baby. Understand bathing suits are available in more options than ever before. A two-piece bathing suit no longer means wearing a string bikini. Boy short bottoms are back in style in a big way. The tankini is Hot, Hot, Hot this summer, and there are more unique designs on the market than ever.

the keys for buying a swimsuit:

know your body type. For example, a bandeau top works better on women with smaller busts, and colors and patterns are very important as they can make your body look better or worse. To de-emphasize your behind, solid colors are better as they draw less attention, and play up your bust with patterns and colors.

fit is crucial. There should be no bulges or pinching. Always tie the bottom strap snugly and then adjust the top. This actually affects the way it fits and looks. Never go swimsuit shopping when you are in a bad mood, you will think NOTHING looks nice and leave more discouraged. We are our own worst critics.



functional and fashionable

Summer can be fun and flattering at the same time. Long oxford cotton or linen tees (aka your significant other's shirt) with the sleeves rolled up are perfect over a bathing suit and hanging at the pool. Accessorize with fun bangle bracelets and a great sun hat and you are stylish while fully covered! Taking the look into night, toss on a belt and palazzo pants, if the top is long enough, add sandals with a small heel.

fashion to-dos

The best place to start is with the clothing they can't see ... your underwear.

Wearing sexy panties will make you feel more glamorous. You don't have to give up your comfy bra and panties, but on those occasions when you want to feel like more than a mom

Layering with current styles can be an easy way to conceal specific areas.

Accessories are a quick way to enhance and change any outfit. Carilyn Vaile (<http://www.carilynvaile.com>) has mastered multifunctional apparel. Her pieces are wrinkle free, machine-washable and can be worn several different ways.

Nothing is more stressful for a mom than having to find something to wear under pressure of the impending event. Have your "go-to outfit" ready – a classic black dress that can be worn to a wedding, graduation, last-minute business dinner or, if dressed up right, a fancy date with your significant other. Being prepared will make you feel much better should an invitation arrive. You can shop for something new, but if you can't find anything, you have your trusty standby.



fashion to-don'ts

Wearing a bigger size than you are can have the opposite effect that you intended.

Don't wear sweatpants or maternity clothes post-pregnancy just because they are comfortable. It's easy to find clothes that are fun and functional.

Baby spit happens, but don't leave the house covered in it. Burp rags and a go-to outfit can save the day when you have to go out in public.

C. YOUR shape & skin

bouncing baby, but not-so bouncing-back body

Post-partum hormones can cause body and skin changes, but there are several ways to tackle and treat those changes.

BABY BELLY, LOVE HANDLES AND THE OTHER C-WORD (CELLULITE)

Even with a healthy diet and exercise, some moms cannot minimize the effects of the baby belly. In fact, 58 percent of moms claim the body part they are most concerned with is their flabby stomach, or as they call it, “jelly belly”.

Non-invasive treatments like VelaShape™ (www.velashape.com) can literally take inches off the waist, butt, thighs, upper arms and more in as little as four treatments and with no surgery or downtime. The treatment combines heat, massage and suction to literally shrink the size of your fat cells, providing a decreased circumference of the treatment area. VelaShape is also very effective on the lumps and bumps we see on our backside, thighs and belly after baby – cellulite!



Post three VelaShape treatments.



Post five VelaShape treatments.

Photos courtesy of the Laser & Skin Surgery Center of New York.

BREAKOUTS

Moms with kids of any age routinely experience stressful moments. Stress causes your oil glands to overcompensate. Inefficient cosmetics create bacteria-laden pores. Post-pregnancy hormones cause overactive sebaceous glands, and birth control pills with androgen can cause breakouts.

To combat this issue, take what you learned when you were young. Wash your face with a mild cleanser twice a day and avoid touching your face. Remember what your mother said: “Don’t pick at it or it will only get worse.”

Also, look for noncomedogenic cosmetics that won’t clog pores. Don’t forget that good health means good skin, too. Drink lots of water and eat a healthy diet. This doesn’t affirm that myth that chocolate causes acne, but that good foods can help remove toxins in the body.



BATTLE SCARS (STRETCH MARKS, WRINKLES)

Along with motherhood comes the battle scars. However, you don’t have to settle for what life throws at you. You can remain or regain the hot factor at any stage.

Before and during the time when the dreaded stretch marks appear, you should be moisturizing early and often – not just your face, but your body, too. Splash your face with cold water before applying makeup because the coolness can temporarily shrink pores. Also, body and hand lotion should include sunscreen year-round.

If you are a road warrior, be sure to move the visor in your car to the left side to block ultraviolet rays. Experts say the left side of a woman’s face tends to look older because it incurs more sun damage from driving.



HAIRY SITUATIONS

It may not be a popular topic at dinner parties, but many people have hair on some part of their bodies that they'd rather not have to deal with. Hormonal changes of motherhood can bring new crops of problems that were never seen before. Following are some hair removal options:

razor. You can shave without razor burn. Be sure to always use shaving gel and shave in the same direction of the hair growth.

laser. Save the costs of repetitive shaving and waxing and explore laser hair removal. With laser hair removal, an initial investment means you may never have to shave again. Look for a physician-supervised laser hair removal provider and new technology, such as elōs™ based technology (www.syneron.com), that can safely and effectively treat all skin types.

waxing. Waxing can last longer than a shave, but know how to avoid ingrown hairs by applying tea tree oil or a bikini wax lotion to the area following the procedure.

fast never-fail-you skin savers

A swipe of lipstick or blush at a red light can do wonders for your looks and your attitude. Here are some other quick tips for good skin:

- Seek out affordable luxuries. A great-smelling body wash can cost a dollar or two, or stretch the more pricey lotion by mixing with a non-scented lotion.
- Whatever you do, don't not do it. Take five or 15 minutes and make a mini-spa at home. Get the kids involved. Soak your kids' feet before clipping their nails or put your baby in his/her bouncy seat (not on the counter) to watch you while you give yourself a facial.
- When putting sunscreen on your children, don't forget your skin, too. It's even easier when your daily moisturizer already contains sunscreen.

D. YOUR health

put “you” back on the to-do

Taking care of mom teaches kids to take care of themselves. You’re not the best mom unless you’re the best you and that requires a little “me” time. It’s hard to step back and take five, but once you do, you’ll be able to handle the rest of life’s issues just a little bit better.

The quality of life begins at the nourishment level. What you put on the inside absolutely effects how you look and feel on the outside. As moms, we sometimes focus so much on making sure our kids are fed, we often forget to eat ourselves. And no, a stolen bite or two of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or wolfing down your son’s leftover pizza scraps don’t constitute a healthy lunch.



Quick tips to help take off the pounds:

- Forget the soda with its empty calories, drink lots of water instead. It’s the fastest way to boost your energy, and with summer coming, it’s fun to drop frozen strawberries, blueberries or kiwi into your glass. Keep a pitcher with sliced lime, lemon, cucumber and oranges for a yummy refreshing treat.
- Substitute green tea for coffee. It’s a natural metabolism booster and antioxidant. Try honey as a sweetener.
- Keep lots of fruit in the house and bring trail mix during your errands to snack with nuts, berries and dark chocolate chips for an all day pick-me-up.
- Eat six small meals rather than the traditional three square. You’ll maintain a balance in your blood sugar level and the level of nutrients in your body.

a mom’s gotta eat

You may think that sit-down meals are a thing of the past but with a little pre-planning, you’ll be able to grab something healthy for you and your family instead of stopping for fast food at the last minute.



kicking back vs. kicking butt

As a mom, it is more important than ever to take care of your body. Regular exercise will not only help you get your pre-baby body back but regular fitness will alter you in ways you would have never thought. Many gyms have day care programs. But if you would rather workout from home or with your baby get the FitandGiggles DVD (<http://www.fitandgiggles.com>) which guides you through workouts to do with your baby. Make exercise time bonding time.

If your kids are too old or big to lift, throw a dance party workout. Dance is one of the most social ways to get your aerobics in. It instantly boosts your spirit and vitality. So turn up your favorite songs and go for it!

And the next time you are tempted to drive three blocks to the park (don't laugh – we have all done it!), grab your stroller and walk. This is the ultimate exercise for mom. You don't need a fancy gym membership, just a pair of sneakers and enthusiasm. It is the ideal way to clear your head and tone your muscles.

Belly dancing is another fun way to work out and feel sultry again. Many yoga and health spas are now offering belly dance classes.

Less than
10% of
new moms
say they
exercise
every day.



sleep: it's not just for babies

Resist the urge to get major cleaning done while baby sleeps. It's OK to lie down and take a power nap, too. In fact, recharging your batteries will give you the energy needed to tackle that pile of laundry when you're awake.



don't be afraid to ask for help

Take up your family and friends that offer to help: they really mean it! If you're nursing and your significant other cannot help in the feeding process, offer up other suggestions. They'll want to help and would rather have you ask now than be frazzled later.

there's never been a hotter time to be a mom

Maternity clothes and bathing suits are more stylish than ever. Today's fashions are forgiving for most body flaws. Celebrities are basking in pregnancy and parenthood. Nonsurgical treatments are making it easier, safer and more affordable to make cosmetic changes. All of these factors make it a hot time to be a mom.

other online resources to looking great

- HotMomsClub.com is social network where moms share, connect, laugh, network and encourage.
- VelaShape.com has free downloadable guides to looking and feeling great as well as a "Find a Doctor" tool to help you find a VelaShape provider in your neighborhood.
- iVillage.com is a site with active forums and a host of beauty tips.
- Sheknows.com is fun site with great articles.
- MommieswithStyle.com has the latest tips and trends for new moms.

a little confidence goes a long way in regaining the energy and focus to take small steps in getting your post-baby body back in shape.

- Small sprints can reap big rewards. Five minutes of dancing around and entertaining your baby every day can make an impact.
- Take the time to unwind. If you take a nap when baby naps, or take that friend up on the hour-long babysitting offer, you can set up an inexpensive mini-spa in your own bathroom and relax.
- Body after Baby is attainable. Eating healthy, fitting in time for exercises with baby in the stroller and taking care of your skin can all mean a fitter, more confident you.

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