10 HEALTH HACKS

Every Mom

SHOULD KNOW

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION

I'm here to help empower you to find your stride on your journey toward and throughout motherhood by focusing on seeking better health and wellness so you can foster the best environment for your family and yourself. I want to support current and future moms in becoming stronger, more vibrant versions of themselves physically, mentally and emotionally. My mission is to be an active partner in developing sustainable healthy habits that meet your unique goals and needs through holistic behavior change practices and programs. I hope this ebook helps you to start thinking about making small changes that positively impact your life and inspires you to take action to improve your health as you embrace this new chapter.

HACK 1: PRIORITIZE YOUR SLEEP

I know what you're thinking--yeah right! But remember when you were tirelessly googling, reading books and asking advice on strategies to prepare and plan for your little one, especially their sleep routine? Well, you should do the same for yourself. It is no secret that there are numerous benefits to getting adequate amounts of sleep. Proper amounts of sleep can lead to better memory, increased productivity, prevent depression, optimize physical performance, improve metabolism, boosts your immune system and can reduce pain and inflammation to name some of the positive outcomes. That being said, it's not a one-size fits all for sleep so it's important to figure out how much sleep you thrive on.

- Be aware of how you feel after certain amounts of sleep each night and find that "sweet spot" where you find yourself feeling extra focussed and energized.

- Aim at creating an environment and daily routine that can prioritize you attaining your ideal amount of sleep. It might seem impossible right now to get your dreamy eight hours of sleep you once got, but think about the small steps you can take to START making progress towards attaining your sleep goal. Even increasing your sleep by just thirty minutes a night can make a difference.

- Set an alarm to start your bedtime routine. It's easy to get caught up in all the items that need to be done in a day, but it's unlikely you can do those as well as you might with a little more sleep. So in case you tend to get lost in your to-do list, setting a little reminder that holds you accountable to your schedule can be helpful.

- Make your bedroom a place that is peaceful, relaxing and extremely comfortable. Do not bring your work, computer, or even stressful conversations into your bedroom.

- Keep your phone away from your bed and ideally, set your settings to do not disturb mode during your goal sleep time window.

- Create a short but effective wind-down routine for yourself. It could be something small, like after brushing your teeth you close your eyes and take ten deep breaths.

Creating habits that queue and prime your body for sleep can be extremely powerful. So, while you will do everything in your power to make sure your sweet baby is home on time for their nightly routine, remember to work on doing the same for yourself!

HACK 2: PROACTIVELY DISRUPT NEGATIVE SELF-TALK

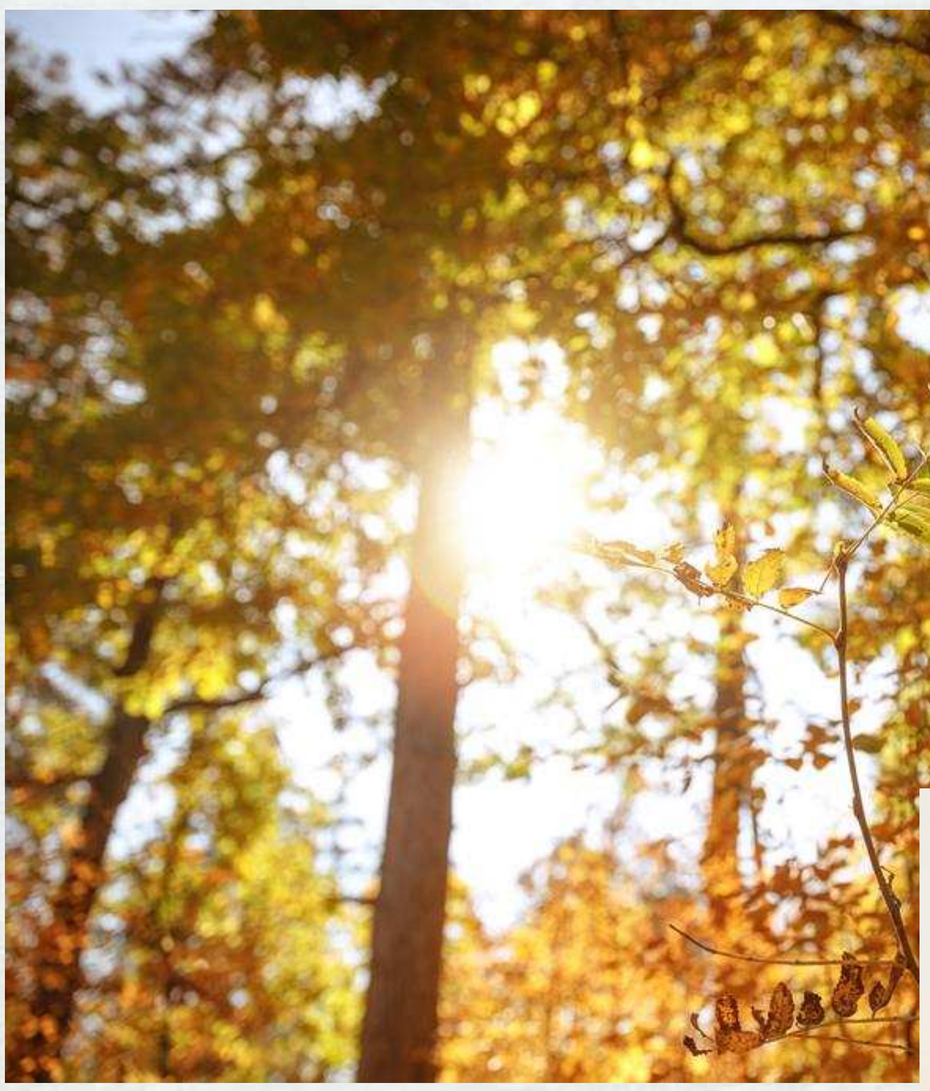
On one hand, It's okay to feel a variety of new, not so pleasant feelings and emotions, especially when you are going through the ups and downs of being a new mom. On the other hand, it is not okay to be extremely critical or negative with yourself over and over again. One hack to stopping the negative thought spiral is to interrupt it by proactively making a plan that you KNOW will snap you out of that mindset.

- This could be as simple as changing the room you're in, going outside for a walk or listening to your favorite upbeat song.

- Choose an "interrupter" that will:
  1) Always make you feel more positive
  2) You can easily accomplish most places

- To take it one step further you can reframe the original negative self-talk to something positive after completing the interrupting activity.

Interrupting negative thoughts and patterns is one of the first steps in changing negative behavior.



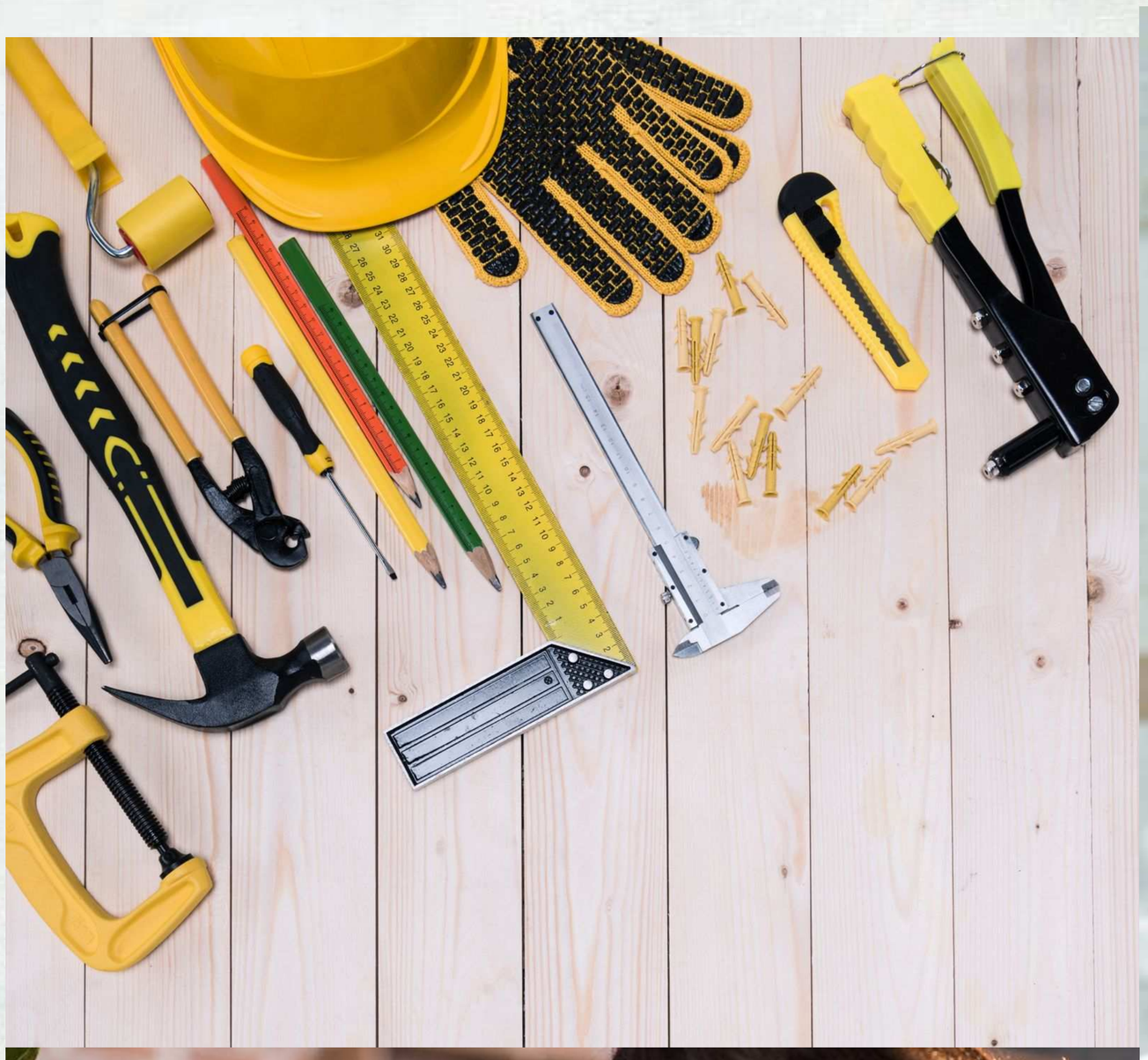
HACK 3: CREATE YOUR OWN SELF-CARE TOOLKIT

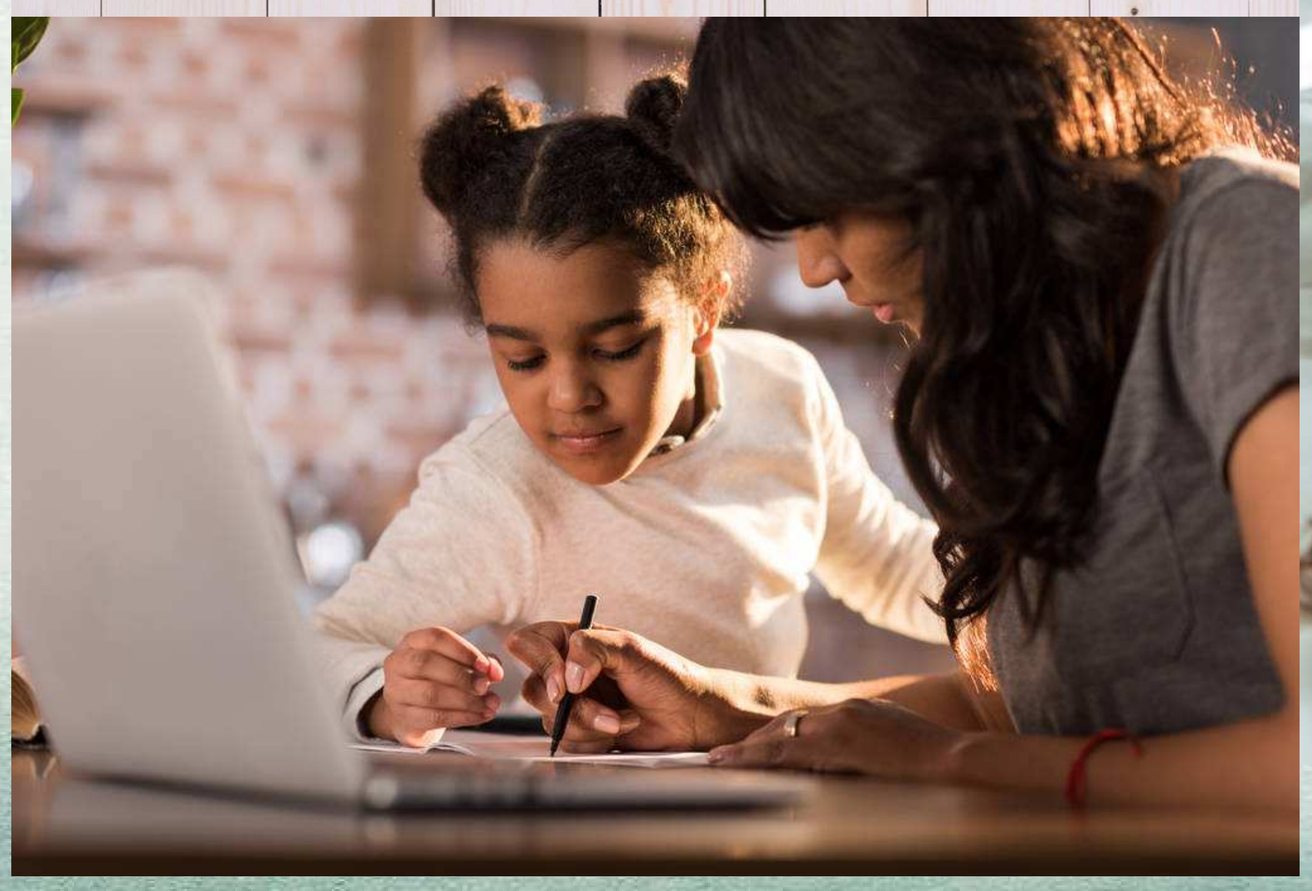
This is something I wish I did for myself well before having my own little one running around. Creating our own personalized “box of tools” that we can use to not only take better care of ourselves, but also build resilience, confidence and perseverance to equip us during difficult times in our life. First off, what do you think of when you think of self-care?

- Make sure you understand what truly fills your tank and makes you feel refreshed. Maybe it's taking an extra long shower, taking a walk to your favorite coffee shop, going for a run, listening to your favorite music, etc. It doesn’t always have to be something for just you either! It could be helping a friend or someone else in need.

- Start by making a list of the items that fill your tank. You can think of this list as a defense system against you running on fumes and eventually burning out. When you start to feel yourself getting rundown, consult the list and take your pick to best refill your tank considering your current situation.

Taking care of yourself is not selfish. If you do not take care of yourself adequately you cannot be the best parent or provide the best environment for your family and children so that they can thrive and learn how to take care of themselves.





HACK 4: STRESS MANAGEMENT IS POSSIBLE

Stress is the most common reason that people abandon their plans to change behavior. Stress in excess can deplete self-control, lower feelings of self-efficacy, and decrease energy and motivation. Learning how to process and manage the stress in your life can make all the difference when trying to improve your health. You could be doing every single other thing right and not reach your wellness goals because you have not addressed how much negative stress is impacting your day to day.

Stress management starts well before we react to a specific circumstance. It starts with our thoughts about the specific kind of stress we are experiencing. Going for a run or teaching a class puts stress on your mind and body but if you enjoy those things you tend to not think of them as "stress" right? So what if you shifted what you used to call a stressful situation into a learning opportunity? Or changed your mindset of "I am so stressed" to "how can I best deal with and learn from what is happening?"

Here are some good practices to start with:

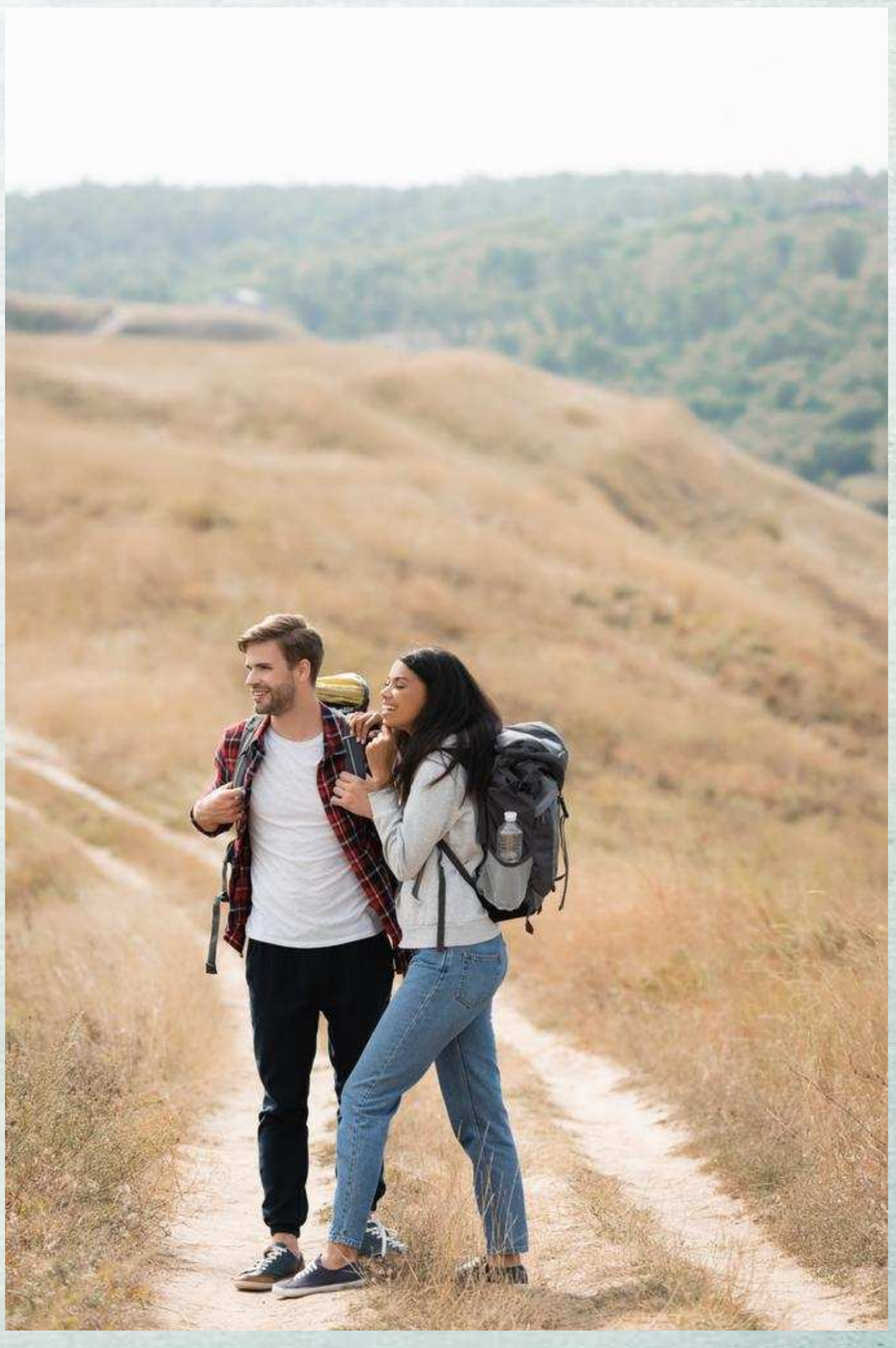
- Understand the types of stress that can impact your holistic health

- Practice reframing stressors in your life. What if you looked at the "stress" of making dinner or finishing that work project in a similar way you think about the "stress" of the pilates workout you're going to do in the morning? Your mentality around stress plays a massive role in the positive or negative impact it has on your life.

- Be intentional with your thoughts around stress and start by building awareness of your own negative stressors. If you start to see a pattern of specific actions from yourself and others, or situations that continuously bring negative stress into your life, consider ways you can create boundaries to avoid those situations. If there are unavoidable stressful circumstances you must put yourself through, come up with a plan on how best to deal with them and focus on positive takeaways.

- Try not to dwell on the negative.

Remember, stress management takes patience and practice.



HACK 5: EXERCISE TO BOOST MOOD AND ENERGY

It's not always the two hour insane weight lifting workouts or the three-day backpacking trip that will make us feel like superhumans, but rather the workouts that we need to rebuild whatever is lacking in our mind and body. Every individual has a different body and therefore, each person will thrive off of different movements and exercises depending on the day, time of year, what is going on in their personal life etc. and that is bound to change at different stages throughout their life as well. It's important to pay attention to the changes in your physical, emotional and mental needs when it comes to physical activity. Ask yourself the following:

- What type of exercise do I do often?

- Do I like this exercise?

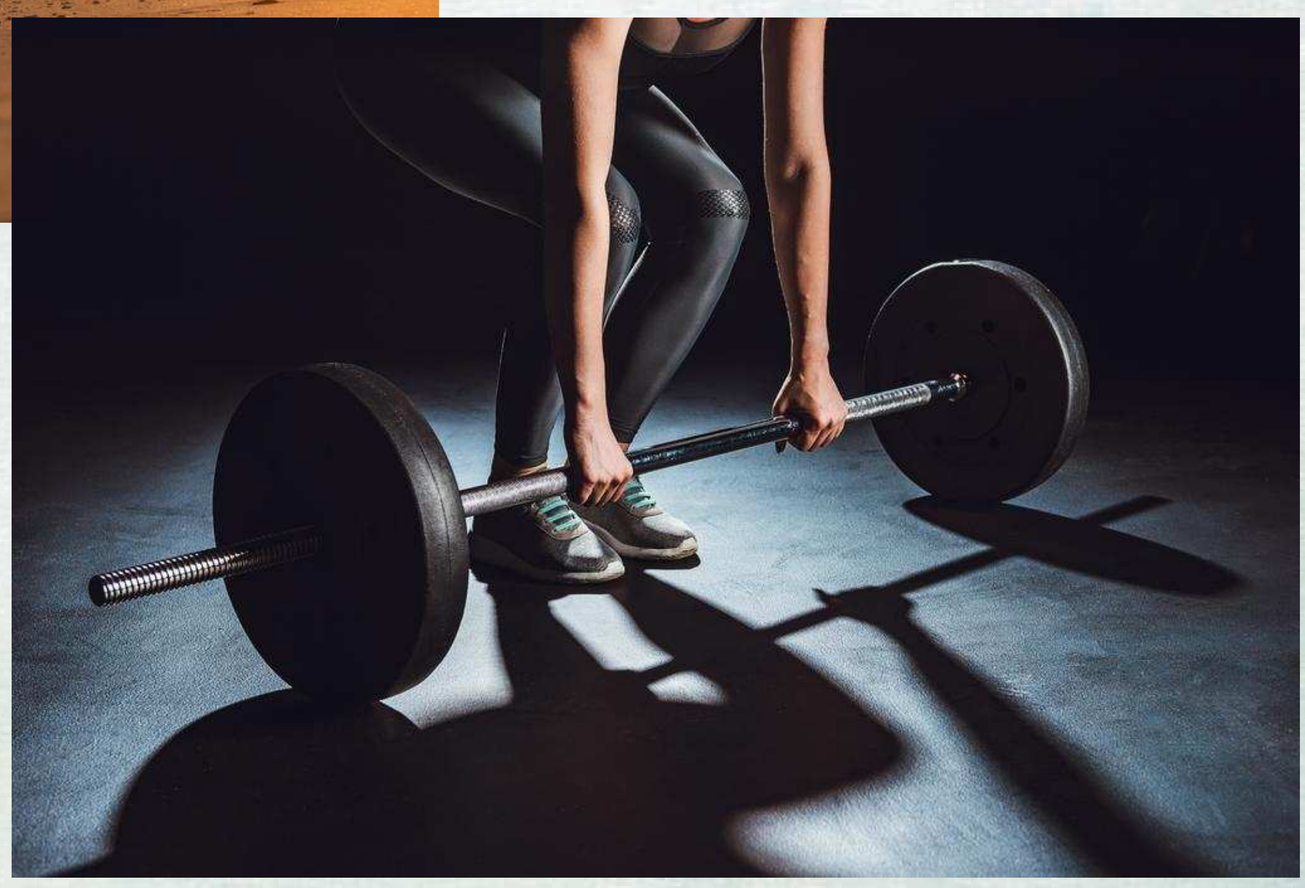
- Why do I like this exercise?

- Why don't I like this exercise?

- How, specifically, does this exercise make me feel during and after I'm finished?

- Does this type of exercise align with the health goals I've set for myself?

Figuring out the answers to these questions can help you start to form a balanced workout routine that will both improve your physical well-being but also boost your mood and increase energy.



HACK 6: NUTRITION IS JUST AS IMPORTANT NOW AS WHEN YOU WERE PREGNANT

You have absolutely every right to be excited about having some of your favorite foods and drinks after a long nine months of being extremely patient. So go ahead and have that glass of wine, enjoy your sushi and feel a bit more relaxed now that you don't have to read every cheese label when grocery shopping. Celebrate the amazing life you have brought into this world! Just remember, don't forget all the good habits you developed during pregnancy. One of the major good habits being what you put into your body the last nine months.

Why do we watch what we eat and drink when pregnant? Because we want to create the best environment for our tiny fragile growing baby. And why don't we want to keep that same environment (our bodies) just as amazing after pregnancy? I'm sure everyone has their own unique answer to that question.

- Try to keep caring for your body the way that you did when you were pregnant.

- Listen to what your body is craving and do not try and force yourself to eat some of the not so healthy stuff your pre-pregnancy self ate if your post-pregnancy body doesn't seem to like it anymore.

- It's important to remind yourself that you may not need what another mom needs nutritionally after having a baby and vice versa.

- Do not let others try and tell you the best ways to eat because it's what has worked best for them.

- Figure out what works well for you and your family.

Continue to be kind to yourself and to your body. Fueling your body properly will help elevate you to be the best mom you can be.

HACK 7: BE INTENTIONAL WITH YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Having a baby can make you feel less social, and maybe even anti-social at times. Those first few months with your little one are so precious but can leave you feeling like you are in a constant state of shifting and adapting, which leaves little room for friend-dates and social gatherings.

My advice is to be intentional with your meaningful relationships. Take this major shift in your life as an opportunity to really think through the quality of your current connections with people. Sometimes being healthy in our relationships is one of the most difficult aspects of holistic well-being.

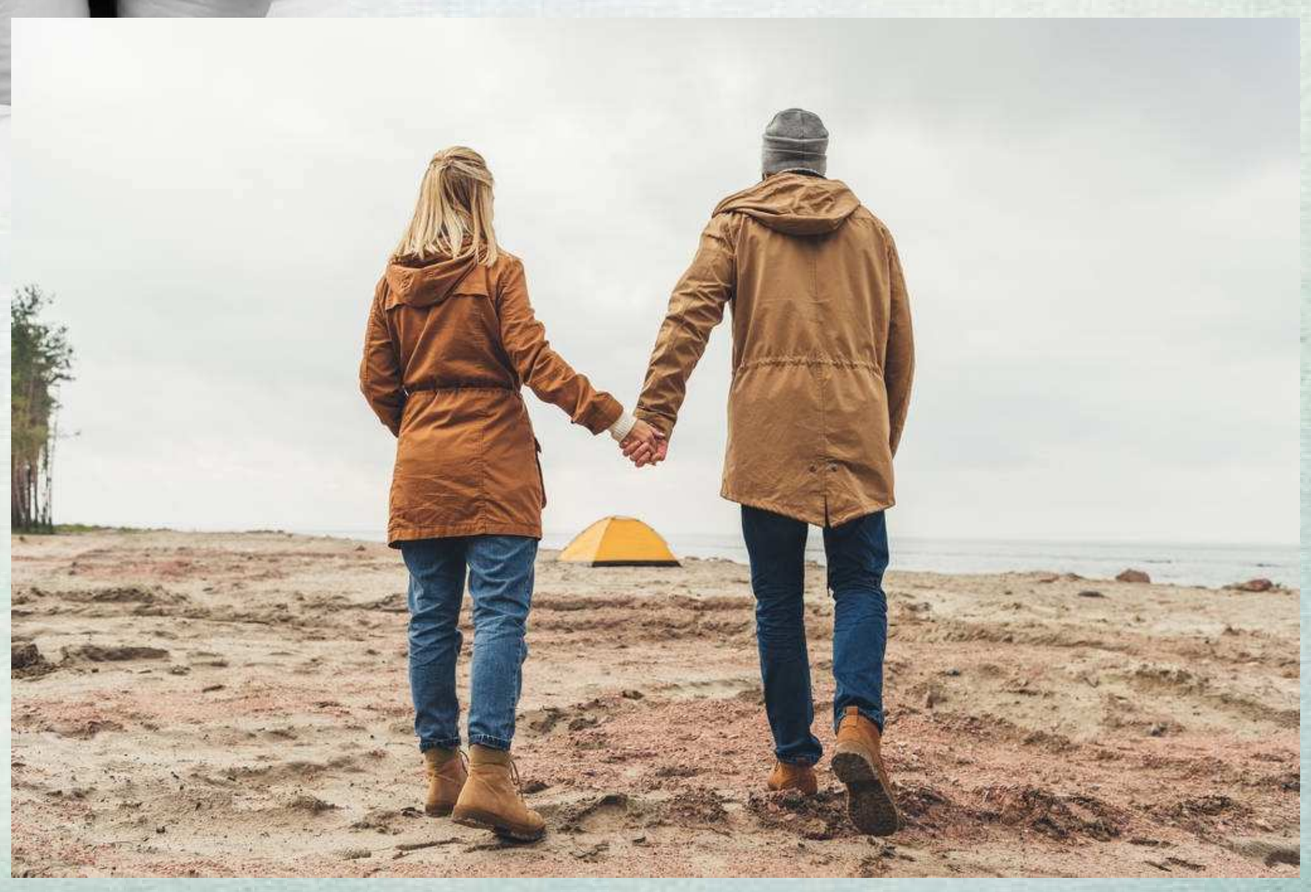
- Prioritize relationship growth with your spouse over other relationships. Especially in the first few months of having a newborn.

- Invest in the relationships that fill your tank because let's be honest, right now, with a tiny newborn, you do not have time or energy to waste.

- Do not be afraid to be transparent with your loved ones. Talk about your struggles and confide in them. Discuss your positive experiences and share your new found wisdom of motherhood. It can be quite therapeutic just to talk out your thoughts after spending multiple days in a row without much adult interaction.

- Set boundaries with family and friends but also accept that not everything will always go as planned. Stay true to what you think is best for you and your family, but be open to discussing other options and learning new information.

This may sound like common sense but it is easier said than done. Maintaining and growing your dearest relationships is important and will help you feel more like yourself in times of immense change.



HACK 8: HORMONE FLUCTUATIONS

Knowledge of the complexities going on in our bodies during pregnancy and postpartum is not only empowering but also allows us to have a deeper appreciation of our motherhood instincts. Understanding the pregnancy and postpartum hormones and how they affect our bodies can help us comprehend why we feel certain emotions. Understanding the impact hormones have on our emotions can allow us to put an objective lens on and calmly think through situations that might otherwise cause us to react in a negative way.

For starters, let's see what we are dealing with here:

- What are the main pregnancy hormones?

FSH (follicle stimulating hormone), LH (luteinizing hormone), hCG (human chorionic gonadotropin), Estrogen, Progesterone, Relaxin, Placental growth factor, HPL (human placental lactogen), Oxytocin & Prolactin

Did you know that relaxin helps to relax your muscles, bones, ligaments and joints in the pelvis later in pregnancy in preparation for labor? If you start to feel off balance during pregnancy this could be the culprit!

- What about postpartum hormones?

Even after labor and delivery, your body is coursing with hormones. For example, while progesterone and estrogen decrease as soon as your baby arrives, oxytocin increases. Prolactin is an important post-birth hormone as well, as it encourages the production of breast milk.

The rollercoaster of postpartum hormones can be difficult for some new moms. You may experience irritability, heightened emotions and the baby blues. These feelings are common, affecting up to 80 percent of new mothers. If you do start to feel extremely down and out of sorts, be sure to talk with your doctor.

HACK 9: EMBRACE YOUR NEW AND IMPROVED IDENTITY

It can be tempting to daydream about the carefree times you had before the responsibility of another life outside your own, but this is not a healthy habit to start when you are a new mom. Instead of thinking about all the "freedoms" you've lost or how you aren't your "old" self anymore, try thinking about all the blessings you have now. Take inventory of all the beautiful and precious moments you wouldn't have experienced in your previous chapter. Be thankful for the unwavering purpose and incredible responsibility of raising a family. It can be wonderfully liberating to be driven by something deeper and much bigger than yourself.

- Lean into the new and improved you. Find peace in letting go parts of the old you that don't have a place in your life now.

- Make some amazing goals for yourself and your family as you start this new chapter.
Recreate a brand new identity that leverages all of your past wisdom and experience, while also fully embracing the new role of mom.

- Focus on gratitude. Make a weekly list of things you are grateful for.

Be excited, this is going to be the best adventure yet!

HACK 10: TIME MANAGEMENT IS YOUR FRIEND

Time is one of the most valuable assets available to us and we should treat it as such. Being "too busy" is one of the biggest reasons people, especially parents, do not prioritize their health. That is why time management is a crucial pillar in the foundation of healthy habit change.

- Get a baseline of how you currently spend your time. List out the activities and accomplishments from the last few days. Make sure you are being honest with yourself! If you ran around the house for an hour doing odds and ends but didn't accomplish anything worth noting--flag that time frame! This is an opportunity for improvement.

- Flag times during your days that were not used well. It's possible that these tasks are just not as important or you don't have a clear plan on how to tackle them. Figure out what the obstacle is and whether or not it should be prioritized or deprioritized.

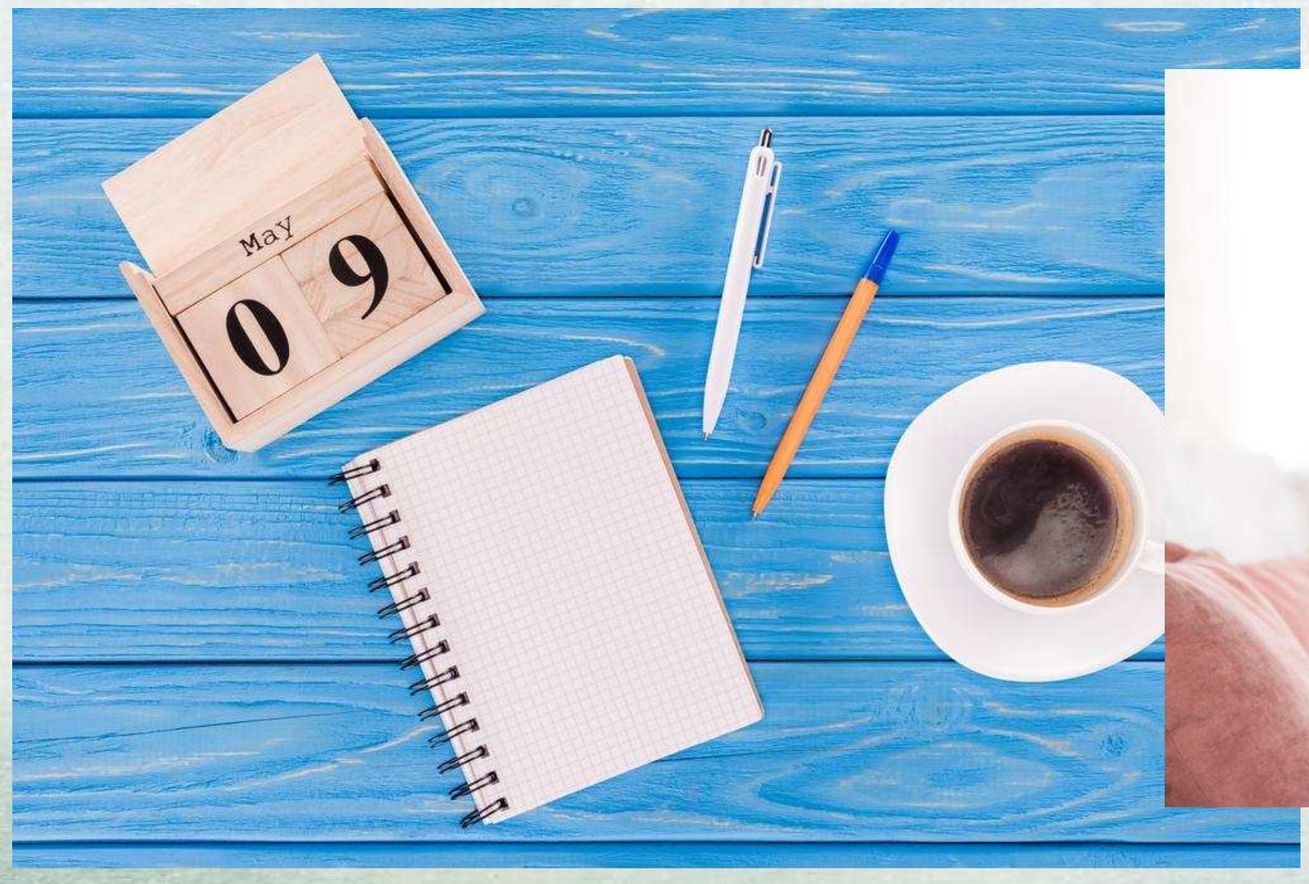
- Star times during your days that were used well. These tasks are probably important and enjoyable. Continue prioritizing these and try to keep this part of your routine the same as you make other shifts in your day.

- Try to avoid multitasking when working on items that require a great deal of thought and energy. Block out time on your calendar in the beginning of the week to plan your week. Make daily goals for yourself. Get a good grasp on what you want accomplished by the end of the week.

- Set an alarm each morning to review your tasks and prioritize accordingly. Preferably, make sure you try and do this when your little ones are still sleeping or occupied :)

- If you find yourself getting distracted, change your scenery and take a break.

Even setting aside 5-10 minutes every morning to plan and prioritize your goals for the day can actually save you hours in a week. Remember, start small. You don't need to make a dramatic change in your daily routine to have a big impact on managing your time.



TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP

If you have found this ebook helpful and would like to learn more about my program please schedule a free discovery call!

www.findyourstridewellness.com/book-online