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bye-bye, baby weight

Eat less; exercise more. Those four words make it sound so easy. Here's how one new mom managed to lose pounds and power up in just a few months.

BY DANA WOOD

Back in the day, Danielle Mann was a self-described "gym bunny." Then she and her husband moved to the suburbs, and her workout time was eaten up by her commute. After her daughter, Lucy, came along, she couldn't find the motivation to lose the last 10 or so of the 37 pounds she had gained during pregnancy. Her nightly cheese-and-cracker ritual and prebed chocolate binges—bad habits she and her husband fell into because they were too exhausted at the end of the day to cook—weren't helping the cause. Cookie enlisted trainer Emanuel Gonzalez and

NAME Danielle Mann
AGE 33
KIDS Lucy, age 6
BEFORE
 HEIGHT 5' 8 1/2"
 WEIGHT 144
 DRESS SIZE 14
 WAIST 34"
 CHEST 36"
 HIPS 37"
AFTER
 WEIGHT 114 pounds
 WAIST 30"
 CHEST 34"
 HIPS 33"
 THIGHS 24"

THE PROGRAM

Mann had the will to get back in shape; we gave her the way: counseling sessions with nutritionist Jackie Keller and workouts with trainer Emanuel Gonzalez.

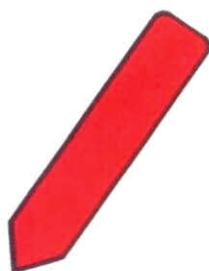
THE DIET

Mann had weekly half-hour phone calls with Keller, founder of the NutriFit food-delivery service and author of *Body After Baby* (Avery), who had her keep a food log online. Together they addressed trouble spots (i.e., Mann's sweet tooth and tendency to graze) and set small goals for the week ahead, like eating a balanced breakfast every day and cooking simple, nutritious dinners.



THE WORKOUTS

Twice a week, before work, Gonzalez took Mann through an hour-long session at New York City's Alta gym. She began with five-minute warm-ups on the treadmill, followed by a 45-minute circuit of multimuscle strength training (crucial for "core"-challenged new moms), interspersed with running in place to keep her heart rate up. The last 10 minutes were devoted to stretching. Gonzalez also gave Mann 20-minute home workouts built around a handful of the strength-training exercises (see page 73).



nutritionist Jackie Keller to help Mann boost her energy and trim down. In four short months, those experts taught her long-term strategies for making smart food choices and incorporating exercise. What worked for her can work for you, too.

BEFORE

During her pregnancy, Mann bought an elliptical trainer and used it daily. After the baby? "It became a clothes hanger," she says. Not only was she exhausted—by 9:30 A.M. she'd usually already been up for four hours—but between the baby's needs, her full-time job as an event planner, and hurrying home to see the baby before bedtime, Mann had no energy for meal planning, let alone exercise. "My husband and I would go to the kitchen, open the fridge, and graze," she recalls. Without a proper dinner, she never felt satisfied: "Between 8:30 P.M. and when I went to sleep, I wanted to eat everything in the house." And she often did.

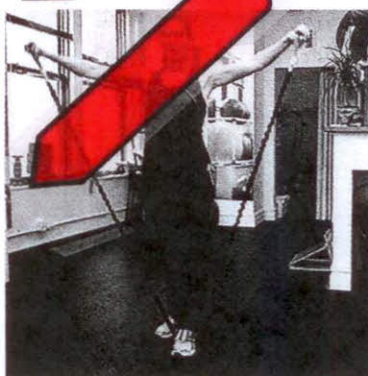
DURING

It did take an appointment with a trainer to get Mann out of bed; she knew Gonzalez would be waiting, so twice a week she got on the 7 A.M. train to make it to the gym by 8. On other days, she would squeeze in cardio homework after work, even if it was just a half hour on the elliptical. "I was so tired when I got home, but both Emanuel and Jackie said if I stuck it out for just 30 minutes, I'd feel better," she says. "And they were right." Mann's multitasking twist on strength training involved using Lucy as a weight: "I'd do sit-ups with her on my lap or lift her over my head." She also bought a jogging stroller, "so watching the baby wouldn't be an excuse."

Scribbling accompanied all this sweating: Keller had Mann keep a journal of everything she put into her mouth, and "after a week, it clicked that I was making poor food choices." Instead of falling into the usual cheese-and-crackerstravaganza, Mann started planning her daily intake ("For a snack, I can have a small cottage cheese or a piece of fruit, but that's it"), reading labels, shopping for specific meals, and cooking easy recipes. "I have one for chicken marinated in soy sauce and olive oil that I eat all the time now," she says.

AFTER

"Before, I never realized what times of the day I was hungriest, or why I was choosing the food I ate," Mann says. "Now I think before I eat. I try to make better choices: fewer cookies, more fruit and vegetables. My carbs have to be whole wheat, not white flour." The changes brought immediate rewards: "When I eat fruit, I have more energy in the afternoon, whereas I used to get tired. Plus, I'm more motivated to get outside and run, and that in turn motivates me to eat better."



NO WEASELING OUT!

Every excuse can be broken down.

What you say:

"I can't find the time."

Why it doesn't hold water:

You have to make the time. If that means hiring a trainer—whose time you're more apt to respect than your own—so be it. The cost of the sessions will be worth it, because you'll have a workout, tailored to your needs and weaknesses, that you can actually do on your own. For instance, Mann can do cardio until the cows come home, but she'll only motivate to sculpt and stretch when Gonzalez is around. "I much prefer to go out for a run than to do lunges in front of the TV," she says.

What you say:

"But I'm nursing!"

Why it doesn't hold water:

To keep up your milk supply, you need only 500 extra calories a day—and those should mostly be lean proteins (such as six ounces of skinless chicken breast), for your sake and your infant's. So it's especially important to make your food choices count while you're nursing. As Mann learned, a food log keeps you honest: "After the baby, I was eating entire boxes of Tastykakes. Now I think before I mindlessly shovel anything like that into my mouth."

What you say:

"I'd rather spend the time catching up on sleep."

Why it doesn't hold water:

True, sleep is a crucial aspect of staying healthy and sane, but so is exercise. While working out, you trigger hormones that relieve stress and stimulate blood flow, increasing the amount of oxygen your brain receives. With this burst of alertness, you're likely to feel more capable and invigorated. Mann found that when she got herself to do a circuit before sitting on the couch after work, she had more energy for the rest of the night.

DO IT YOURSELF

Just about every new mother itching to get back in shape can benefit from the core-strengthening exercises and diet program our experts outlined for Mann.

STRENGTH TRAINING

Start with one set of 10 reps, and work up to three sets of 10. As you are noted, use a weighted ball (see Fit Kit, right) to increase intensity.

< Kick-Drop Squat

Stand with your legs shoulder-width apart, arms at sides. Bend your right knee and raise it to your left hip. Place your right foot back down and drop to a squat, knees aligned over feet, arms out straight. Hold for three seconds. Do 10 reps, then repeat for the left side.

< Lunge & Chop

Stand with your legs shoulder-width apart, holding a fitness ball above your head. Step your right leg forward into a lunge. "Chop" down over the bent knee, bringing the ball to your right hip. Step out of the lunge. Do 10 reps, then repeat for the left side.

< Kick Crunch

Lying on the floor and holding a fitness ball, stretch your arms above your head, elbows at ears. Raise your shoulders and right leg until they meet in a V formation, with your leg at a 90-degree angle. Drop your leg and return to a resting position. Do 10 reps, then repeat for the left side.

< Reverse Bowling

Secure a fitness band (see Fit Kit, right) to a doorknob. Grasp it with your right hand, elbow bent at a 90-degree angle. Lunge back with your right leg, straightening the arm downward. Step up and out of the lunge. Do 10 reps, then repeat for the left side.

< John Travolta

Secure a fitness band to a door bottom. Drop to a semi-squat, knees bent, and grasp it with your right hand. Stand, stepping out a few feet to the right, and raise your arm above your head. Do 10 reps, then repeat for the left side.

FIT KIT

Gonzalez suggests investing in a few versatile, stowable pieces of equipment—not a bulky wonder gadget. Coupled with Keller's personal-eating plan, these could help you shed the postbaby bulge. For more recommendations, visit Gonzalez's website: physicalfitnet.com/eraser.



1 Lateral Resistor II ankle band, \$25, monkeybar gym.com.

2 Swing Core Trainer five-pound medicine ball, from \$45, performbetter.com.

3 Foam door anchor, \$15, stroops.com.

4 NutriFit Personal Eating Plan (includes food journal), \$25, nutrifitonline.com.

5 Polar FS2 heart-rate monitor, \$70, heartmonitor.com.

6 Slastix four-foot toners (in light, medium, or heavy resistance), from \$13 each, stroops.com.



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EXPERT ADVICE

Emanuel Gonzalez's Top Five New-Mom Fitness Tips

- 1 Don't start a serious postpartum routine until six weeks after you've had the baby, and make sure you have your ob-gyn's approval.
- 2 Ditch the "crave" foods you allowed yourself during pregnancy. You are not "eating for two," even if you are nursing.
- 3 Take a day between workouts, especially at first. You won't see results or stay committed if you overdo it so much that you injure yourself.
- 4 Take advantage of baby's nap time to squeeze in a daily workout. Try a Pilates or yoga DVD—we recommend *Shiva Rea: Postnatal Yoga* (\$15, gaiam.com), which emphasizes abdominal strength.
- 5 Aim for a mix of cardio and strength training.

Jackie Keller's Top Five New-Mom Nutrition Tips

- 1 Keep track of what you eat and especially when you eat. It's crucial to eat regularly and healthfully—and way too easy to slip into the habit of eating without thinking.
- 2 Eat a protein- and fiber-rich daily breakfast. Choose eggs, fruit, and whole grains, which will keep your energy steady until lunch, rather than pastries or sugary cereals, which give you a burst of energy but then leave you tired and hungry.
- 3 Have fruit and veggies handy for snacking. It's nearly impossible to eat too much of either.
- 4 Keep a journal, even if it's just e-mailing yourself a daily list of what you eat and drink and how much you exercise. (Share it with someone else, if that makes you more accountable.)
- 5 Set realistic goals each week. Break down big goals into smaller steps—isolate three specific activities you think you can accomplish, for instance.