

Women —It's Time to Take Care of You!

By Michele the Trainer

THE HEART AND HEARTH OF the modern family is the health of the mother, so why do mothers always put themselves last?

Welcome to being a mom in the city. You put gas in the car, you get home, you unload the groceries you bought at lunchtime, you make dinner, you clean up after dinner, and you rally the troops to get ready for bed. You repeat yourself a thousand times to get all this done, and this is only Friday evening.

Saturday comes and its soccer or softball and both kids have games in two different areas. You're not hydrating because you don't want to use the little league bathroom. Now you're

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sitting while driving and driving, and then cheering them on with more sitting and sitting. Now you have birthday parties to attend and "Goodness—Did I forget a gift?"—so there's more driving and you're exhausted. So you have a piece of that crummy pizza or franchise grocery-quality cake.

Now the negative self-talk/guilt-confidence slayer starts bringing you down, "Why did I eat that?" Now it's Saturday evening and Sunday you have to get everyone to Hebrew school or bible school or Sunday school, or—

"You better make sure everyone has clean clothes for Monday!"—"Goodness, is there still gas in the car?"

Now it's Monday. They have to go to school and you have to go to work.

› What about you?

Breathe and ask yourself:

- Did you work out? Did you exercise?
- Did you make yourself a healthy lunch?
- Did you hydrate while you were driving everyone around?
- Did you get any exercise while watching your kids exercise?

Women must schedule time to take care of themselves. Start with 10 minutes a day and be serious—protect and defend that time. As Joseph Campbell said, "It takes courage to do what you want. Other people have a lot of plans for you."

I encourage women to care for themselves with the same fierceness they use to protect their children—with that same mother bear warm nurturing, yet no-nonsense, protective quality.

If you are taking care of everyone, that makes you the keystone. You simply have to take care of you. Protect yourself in the same way you care for others.

› Why do we guilt about self-care?

Self-care is not narcissism—it's as mandatory as changing the oil in the car. Our bodies require maintenance and if we are not moving ahead we are falling behind.

Here are some tips to help mothers create priority and balance:

- **Make and defend some "me time":** Try 10 minutes to start and then increase this over time to include some yoga or a nap. Then move up to a walk and a workout, or both, and some reflective time to review the next day's agenda.

- **Set expectations and announce your agenda:** You can gain friend and family support if you let everyone who depends on you know you might have to say no to them sometimes to say yes to you. This is Okay!
- **Prioritize your life:** Review your monthly schedule and eliminate what doesn't serve you or contribute to the well being of you and yours. Some activities may not be relevant anymore. You have to stop, regain control and review so you can make the best decisions.

› Hire Help

Do I need a nanny? I have a nanny for the kids, a gardener for the lawn, and a sitter for the dog. People who are most aware understand there are many reasons to hire a trainer, such as efficient use of time.

Here are some other reasons to hire a trainer:

- 1 Initial Motivation**—Just to get off the couch.
- 2 Proper form, alignment and spotting**—This is the most critical yet most overlooked reason.
- 3 Friendship and moving meditation**—Work out the issues of life while working out.
- 4 Accountability**—Block that time for yourself with fierceness—block it like a mama bear protecting her cubs. A buddy may not show up but a quality trainer will.
- 5 Commitment**—When we make the appointment we become committed to the task.

Regarding proper form and alignment, reason 2—This is so important to your spinal health, yet it's constantly overlooked. We only get one spine and one cervical spine, and those joints and bones protect the highway of our nervous system. The correction and protection of that system is critical.

Anyone can see that a lot of movements, both in and out of the gym, are performed and repeated in misalignment. Often these movements can exacerbate or prolong any

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bad posture or pain that might be present. Note that anyone in pain should not be lifting any weights.

It's also important to hire a trainer who can understand, is comfortable with and has experience working with your medical team.

It's almost impossible to align with another working adult's schedule, so reason 4 is very logical. Are you waiting for your other working parent friends in Los Angeles to work out with? Maybe they are busy care-giving too?

It's important to identify when your mission is impossible and move forward with a plan that works! Hire someone who can be there for you when you need a set of eyes on your alignment or a cheerleader to keep you motivated. Block and dedicate the time for movement so you can work out the issues of your day while you're working out and taking care of you simultaneously. You can efficiently take care of all these things and you, too!

Remember, when mama's happy, everyone is happy! This is all about you so you can take care of everyone else! **yhc**



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She has worked alongside physical therapy, teaching fitness at the hospital for more than five years. Michele lost 165 pounds and kept it off since 1998. She is our local health advocate. You can find her books at www.amazon.com/Michele-the-Trainer

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