I tend to live life with a kale shake in one hand, and a glass of wine in the other. A foodie at heart, fitness has allowed me to take my body, and life to places I never thought possible.

**Where do I start?** I could tell you about my “before and after” transformation story, having lost 35 pounds and after” transformation story, but I would like to tell you about the on-going journey that continues to be my reality; a reality that includes family, fitness, food, friends, career, but I would like to tell you about the on-going journey that continues to be my reality; a reality that includes family, fitness, food, friends, career, and adolescence. It wasn’t until I found fitness, post-puberty, that I truly found my passion, the key to my confidence (inside and outside the gym).

After dedicating time and effort into learning everything there is to know about fitness, health and nutrition, I decided to start helping others unlock their true potential and discover what endorphins, confidence and proper nutrition can do for them; not only physically, but on a physiological level as well. When women start feeling more confident lifting weights (a territory that was typically male dominated) it trickles into all other aspects of their life. Not only does feeling better about oneself help create this confidence, but knowing that you have the power to transform your body, also gives you the power to know that you can do anything. It is quite liberating.

“Balance and moderation” are the golden rules to any sustainable lifestyle, but really what is balance? What is moderation? To some, who are used to eating chocolate daily and indulging in wine, their version of moderation is limiting the consumption of their vices to 3-4 times a week. To others, who may be on more of a strict protocol, their balance is one weekly treat and one less workout. I’m not here to tell you what you should do, judge anyone’s preferences or even tell you I’m not here to tell you what you should do, judge anyone’s preferences or even tell you what is moderation? To some, who are actually indulgent lifestyles, but on a physiological level movement, paired with my love of food, made for an unhealthy, unfit childhood and adolescence. It wasn’t until I found fitness, post-puberty, that I truly found my passion, the key to my confidence (inside and outside the gym).

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woman, makes “multitasking a must!” Having workout outdoors while incorporating my family makes family time and exercise a joint activity. Taking my family for a long hike on the weekends ensures that we have quality time together as well as getting in my daily movement. Instead of meeting a friend to catch up over a glass of wine (which still does happen), I often suggest a yoga class followed by a tea to catch up. My seven-year-old daughter joins me in the kitchen when prepping vegetables, washing fruit and baking coconut flour pumpkin muffins becomes our bonding time.

**My weekly routine**

With so much on the go, I make sure my routine takes advantage of my time, without having to sacrifice the time dedicated to my body. Remember, although we are all busy, our bodies are a priority and dedicating one hour a day to their physical well-being is NOT a lot to ask. Think about how many hours we spend sitting at a desk, in the car, on the couch, in bed etc. Our bodies deserve at least an hour daily. I like to use resistance training which has been the real key to “transferring” and “sculpting” my body, as well as incorporating walking and yoga into my routine to maintain my happy and healthy body. Variety is the key.

**Tips and tricks**

Meal Prep – it is easier to stick to something when you are prepared. Pick two days a week where you can “prep” your food. This happens to be Sundays/Wednesdays for me. I cook a few proteins (salmon, chicken breast, turkey muffins), varying my choices every week. Vegetables get cut up and put into easy to grab bags. Fruit gets washed and bagged as well. Things like yams get roasted and packaged into Tupperware for easy access. I boil 12 eggs and put them back in their carton – they’re the perfect snack along with a bag of veggies. I use the Ziploc mini bags and put in my handful of natural unsalted nuts and stash a bag in the car, in each purse and in my gym bag. You can do the same with shaker cups and a pre–measured scoop of protein powder. These are emergency items that don’t go bad! That way you never have to cook differently for them all, I make the same meal, but may add some cheese on my husband’s burger with a bun, while I will cook mine on a Portobello mushroom with braised onions.

Get water in! It may seem to be challenging in the beginning for most people. But it’s important. When I started on my journey, I got a liter bottle and put three elastic bands around it. Every time I finished drinking a bottle, I would take off the elastic and fill it up again. It is a good visual reminder of getting it in!

**Nutrition**

My nutrition and eating habits have finally come to what I call “auto-regulation” after being over-weight, and then being on very strict meal plans. I now listen to my body’s needs and eat according to hunger and a few guidelines.

- Eating smaller meals more often (between four and six meals) to keep hunger at bay and make sure my body is being fueled all day. Eating less amounts at one sitting is also easier on my digestion.
- 90 percent of my foods to whole foods offered by the earth (staying away from boxes, cans, jars, and products with many ingredients and conservatives).
- Carbohydrate intake (fruit, potatoes, rice, bread etc) to my post-workout window.
- Eating a higher fat intake (avocados, nuts, yolks, oils etc) away from my workout window.
- Eating protein (animal or vegetable) with almost every meal.
- Enjoying treats like chocolate and cheese (my favorite) when occasions arise or when my body “asks” for a treat.
- Drinking water only (no pop, man-made energy drinks etc) - or wine on occasion
- Knowing where the majority of my food comes from (grass fed, local, hormone free, organic).
- Taking pride and pleasure in the kitchen in preparing food for my family.
- Eating out ONLY once in a while (this keeps it as a treat and allows me to know what I am eating and how it is prepared).
- Eating slowly and mindfully, appreciating each bite as if it were my last meal as opposed to “scoping” down my food, or eating standing up. Enjoy your food! Chewing slowly will help your digestion as well as keep your hunger signals down.

Remember that we all have to start somewhere, and that your journey will look totally different than mine, but it will be your journey. Do it for you, do it for the right reasons and remember that the journey and “sculpting” the most important part, you will learn so much about yourself.