

Weight Loss After Having Kids



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Natalie Bacon

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Hi there. Welcome to the *Design Your Dream Life* podcast. My name is Natalie Bacon, and I'm an advanced certified mindfulness life coach as well as a wife and mom. If you're here to do the inner work and grow, I can help. Let's get started.

Hey friend. Welcome to the podcast. Today, I have a really fun episode for you about my weight loss journey after having a baby boy RJ. So I coach a lot on weight loss after having kids and getting your pre-baby body back. It comes up a lot inside Grow You. So I wanted to do a special episode on this. I was thinking about it within the lens of mindfulness and how being aware of our bodies, what we eat, how we treat ourselves, how what we consume, and put on our bodies feels is so important to living mindfully.

I think that having a pregnancy and giving birth is the ultimate experiment in body awareness. Because it's this condensed time period where your body is changing in a somewhat predictable way, but it's still so different when you go through it yourself. As much as you know it's for a beautiful cause and something that you, you know, presumably want, it still has this sort of emotional effect on you that I think is worth exploring and examining.

I was able to go through the process of losing weight after giving birth to RJ, and I did it using a lot of the tools that I teach. So I want to share my experience with you. For those of you who have been around for a while, you know that I lost 25 pounds after college.

It was in my late 20s. I had gained that weight from really just not being mindful about what I was eating. So I would eat a lot of snacks and a lot of sugar. I was somewhat active. Like I always was in dance classes in college and did a little bit of working out, but I really thought that my weight had a set point of 25 pounds higher than what it really was.

So a set point is where you get comfortable at with your weight. We can have set points for lots of different things, but I think most commonly we think about it in terms of our weight. I also teach it in terms of your emotions. So you can have an emotional set point if you feel a particular emotion a lot. So think of the weight that you attribute being most

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comfortable at. That would be your setpoint. I lost 25 pounds after college and kept it off.

So when I gained weight during pregnancy, I did it in a way where I was really open to all of it. I ate anything and everything I wanted. I ate a lot of ice cream. If you follow me on Instagram @natalierbacon, you saw how much I was at TCBY, the local ice cream shop near where we live. I ate much more frequently. I really trusted my food cravings.

I think because the first half of my pregnancy was so challenging. I mean, I was so nauseous. I was on the couch. I was just incredibly sick and hunched over, especially before I got on some medicine for that. So I wasn't eating anything that was healthy at all. I was eating anything that would go down, and really I tuned in to my body for that. So it was really interesting.

What I was craving were things that I would have eaten when I was really young, like a kid. So waffles, cereal, Pop-Tarts. I went through a Pop-Tart phase. Lots of carbs, lots of sugar. I was really just concerned with honoring what my body was craving, even if that meant eating food that I wouldn't consider normally healthy for me. Vegetables sounded terrible. Wasn't having any coffee or caffeine. The coffee, even the thought of that sounded terrible, let alone whether I wanted to drink it or not. So really, I just went all in with eating whatever I wanted.

I didn't do it from a place of being out of control. I think that's important to mention as we talk about this through being mindful. I did it really with the awareness of this is what my body has the urge for right now. I'm going to honor that. It was like my hunger cues were heightened. Of course they were right? I'm growing as human inside my body.

So ultimately, long story short, I gained 40 pounds total. One other thing that I'll mention here is that food was on my mind a lot, like all the time. I would take snacks with me to go places. I would eat before bed and right when I got up. Those are habits that I did not have for years prior to being pregnant.

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So after I lost the 25 pounds, for the last, you know, five/seven years, I eat really clean. I have some sugar, but not a lot. I don't eat often. I'm not taking snacks with me to make sure that I'm eating all the time. I really let my body have periods where I'm not eating and all of that. So pregnancy was the complete opposite.

I didn't have any shame or guilt about it. So I just want to mention that because I think that even before we give birth, we're already thinking about our post-baby body. We're like trying to control the food during pregnancy so that we can "get our body back" after baby. I just want to offer to you that that is not the only way to do it. If you do it that way, it can feel really constricting. It can be really fear based I think. Like you're afraid that you're not going to be able to get your body back is sort of the underlying thought there.

So what I did was pay close attention to how I was feeling. I stayed in a place of openness and curiosity. One of my favorite thoughts to think when I would look in the mirror was oh, that's really interesting. Bodies are so interesting. That felt really good and true for me. This was true, you know, all the way through the entirety of the term of my pregnancy.

With that kind of starting point, so I gave birth and had a c-section, and pretty much immediately lost about 10 pounds, which is what they say is normal. This is kind of what I think happened. I didn't, you know, come home from the hospital and weigh myself, but I can pretty much confidently say that I lost those 10 pounds within that first week. Whether it was like right at the hospital or a few days after anything like that.

So I was down 10 pounds and subsequently I lost 22 more pounds. So to date, I've lost 32 pounds of the 40 pounds. At the time I am recording this, it's three months post giving birth. So it took me nine months to gain 40 pounds, and so far I've lost 32 pounds in three months, which I love. I love that timing of it. I don't think it's too fast. I don't think it's too slow.

But again, those are my thoughts about it. I'm choosing to think that because I'm being very, very mindful of my body, of my eating habits, of

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how I think and feel in my own body. That's what I want to talk about and kind of show you how I'm doing that in case you have had kids and you want to "get your post baby body back".

Before I sort of get into the tools that can help you with this, I just want to talk with you a little bit about my experience in terms of the actions that I am taking. So I really listen to my hunger cues. I still eat when I want to eat, but it's not from this desire for food to get the dopamine hit. It's really paying attention to my body and eating for fuel. So that desire to eat all the time that I felt when I was pregnant, I do not have post pregnancy.

So I'm listening to my hunger cues. I'm eating much less frequently. So I'm not taking snacks with me to when I leave the house. I still eat some sugar, but I've reduced it dramatically. I went through a s'mores phase. I forgot to mention that. God bless Steve for going to the grocery store. I would microwave marshmallows and make s'mores. I love s'mores. Who doesn't love a good s'more? I had s'mores in my kitchen during pregnancy, and I didn't feel bad about it. I didn't think it was a problem. I really honored what my body wanted.

Now I know that there are books out there about the best food to eat to grow a human during pregnancy. For me, that didn't resonate with me, and I'm just being honest. I think that it's because of the nausea. So if I wasn't nauseous, like right now, I'm not nauseous. I'm not pregnant. I would love to read a book about how to eat better, eat cleaner. I would love to read a book about the best foods to eat while you're pregnant. If I ever have a pregnancy again, and I am not nauseous, I think that would be amazing. But that just wasn't my experience.

So I'm not telling you when you're pregnant to go eat a bunch of s'mores. But I'm telling you to listen to your body and do that without shaming yourself, without guilt, without thinking that you're wrong for going to TCBY. It's like listen, I'm doing it my best here, and right now my best is getting whatever down that will stay down. For me, that was a lot of carbs and sugar.

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I think the reason that I wasn't sort of guilted and shaming myself while I was pregnant was because I trusted myself. I trusted that I could create any body that I wanted to in the future. So that was a huge part of it. I wasn't in fear and worried about "getting my old body back". I trusted myself to lose the weight. I had lost weight in the past, and I used that as evidence.

Even if I hadn't lost weight, I was still going to my future thinking this is going to be interesting and fun and maybe challenging. We'll see how it goes in terms of wanting to lose weight post pregnancy.

So what else did I do? I walked. I go on a lot of walks. I walked a lot during pregnancy, and I walk a lot now. No other exercise. I'm a big believer in the saying that you get trim in the kitchen and fit in the gym. So, you know, I would love to go on a journey, and this will probably be sometime in the future, where I focus on getting stronger and strength training. That journey will 100% be in the gym. My journey to lose weight is through food. So exercise just wasn't a huge part of weight gain or weight loss for me.

So as of today, I'm down about 32 pounds. It's funny because my mind is going to oh, this is my new setpoint. But it's interesting because what's really happened is that I lost this weight paying attention to my body, paying attention to my hunger cues, and it didn't take a ton of effort. There are things that have been harder for me to do. So it's easy for me to say that this is the new setpoint. This is where my body's most comfortable.

But I think what's really happening here is that if I want to lose the last, you know, eight pounds, it's going to be harder. That's okay, but I want to acknowledge that for myself seeing that this doesn't have to be my new setpoint. It can be if I want to, or I could lose the eight pounds. It's totally up to me.

I will mention here that right now RJ is on formula, but I did breastfeed for the first month or so. So for those of you who kind of are wondering or kind of thinking that it's easier to lose weight or not easier based on whether

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you're breastfeeding or not. That is something that may or may not be true, but I want you to come up with the story that serves you the best.

So if you are still breastfeeding, I want you to tell the story that the breastfeeding is going to be part of your weight loss journey, and it's going to help you. If you're not breastfeeding, either you did and you stopped or you're listening to this and you had kids so long ago that you're no longer breastfeeding for that reason. Tell the story that supports you there. That now not breastfeeding is irrelevant to your weight loss journey. You 100% can lose weight where you're at.

So I think that telling the story that you want to be true is a huge part of this. So I tell the story that weight loss can be fun, weight loss can be easy. Sometimes it might be hard, but it's totally something doable for me. I pay attention to how my body feels. I pay attention to what my body needs. A lot of times, at least right now with having such a little one at home, it's water. I need more water. Before I always had water on me all the time, and now I'm holding RJ so much that I'm forgetting to drink water.

So for me as someone who naturally kind of gets into this survival mode where taking care of everyone else, I have to bring it back to what does my body need right now? Remind myself how important that is. And very often it's water. So water, movement, rest.

So for you paying attention to what your body needs and really needs. Not what you want like, you know, the dopamine hit, but the true hunger cue, the true thirst cues that your body will tell you. Paying attention to those is a huge part of weight loss.

I learned so much about my body through this process. If nothing else, I know that I can trust myself even more than I thought. I knew I could trust myself, but there was a little twinge of hope in there where I was thinking yeah, I can trust myself to lose the weight in the future. Like, but I hope I'm right about that. It's been so fun to materialize that and see it come to fruition.

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I share that because I want you to know that it's possible for you. One of the tools that I want to teach you about right now is called the body continuum. If you're in Grow You, can go into the bonus vaults and listen to this. There is a lesson on body continuum in your inner work tools. So this might just blow your mind.

There is no going back. There's no going back to your pre-baby body. There's no going back to the body that you had at age 18. There's no going back to the body that you had yesterday. It's impossible. I say that because it is the truth, and it's the best news ever. It means that your future is completely blank in terms of the body that you can create.

Body continuum means that every single moment, every single day, every single week, every single month, your body is changing. So you're always moving forward. Your body is always moving forward. That's really, really great news. What it means is that you can make little changes today, and you'll be moving towards a different future with your body. That's what I would recommend starting with. It's making one little change today.

So you're always making choices that affect your body. Whether you go downstairs and get a glass of water, whether you go on a walk over lunch, whether you decide to eat that late snack before bed or not. So think about all the little choices you make in a day that have an impact and effect on your body, and start there. Redirect your brain to the future. Your brain always on default wants to go to that past version of your body that you desire.

Most commonly when I'm coaching moms, it's I want my pre-baby body back. Even for me, someone who I, you know, came up with and taught body continuum before I ever had kids. Even for me, I had to consciously remind myself that there is no going back, right? Even when I talk about gaining 40 pounds and losing 32, and I talk about the eight more pounds, it's using my pre-baby body weight as the reference point, which is past focus.

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That's why I tell myself okay, I've lost 32 pounds. So the number on the scale is a fact. Now what do I want to do? What do I want to create in my future? What do I want to do with my body? How do I want it to stay the same? How do I want it to be different? How do I want it to change? How do I want it to feel? How do I want to provide nutrition for it? How do I want to fuel my body? Those questions keep me future focused.

Body continuum is a way for you to think about how you're always moving forward. You can't go back to some point in time to access the body that you once had, but your future is blank. You can create any body that you truly desire.

So if you want to be in the best shape of your life, if you want to be a certain number on the scale, if you want to gain weight, lose weight, look a certain way, or you know have a certain shape, or muscle tone. Whatever it is, you can do that. The only thing that I would encourage you to do here is to like your reason for it.

It's okay if part of that reason is to look good. But also hopefully there are some other reasons in there too. To feel good, to be able to move around, to have energy, to have longevity in your future and decrease the likelihood of illnesses. Or if your family history shows that you're prone to certain diseases, you can take control of your nutrition and your eating habits to decrease the likelihood of having those illnesses for yourself.

So when we have kids, I think there's such a culture around your body being amazing for being able to get pregnant and have kids. But then there's this I want my pre-baby body back idea. Then on top of that, there's guilt. Because we think oh, I shouldn't want my pre-baby body back. That it's bad that I think that. That that means I'm not appreciative and grateful for my kids. That means that I don't appreciate what my body was capable of. We add on all of this judgment on top of the idea that we want our pre-baby body back.

What I suggest doing instead is just noticing that it's a thought error. Meaning whenever your brain goes to the thought, I want my pre-baby

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body back, instantly just remind yourself of what is true. Say something like, “Oh brain, that's not even possible. There's no such thing as going back in time. My body is always going forward. What do I want to create for my body?”

You might choose that you want to weigh a certain number on the scale that is, in fact, what you weighed pre baby, but make that a new choice. Make that about your future, make that about you feel really good, and you feel confident. It's easy for you to feel your best when you're this weight. So that's the weight that you want to get to.

So in this way it becomes this future focused goal that is not anchor to your past. It doesn't feel so heavy. It doesn't feel like there's pressure. It's simply you're going on a journey to see what's possible for your body. There's no guilt. There's no shame. It's I love my body. This is where we're at with it.

Let's see what's possible in the future. Let's change it a little bit. Let's lose some weight or gain some weight. Let's get stronger. Whatever you want. You can do whatever you want. It's your body. I just want to show you what's possible with mindfulness and paying attention to your body. Instead of doing what I see most often is anchoring to the past. Thinking that there's this pre-baby body that we need to get back to. That's just not true.

So lastly, I want to offer you the thoughts and feelings that really helped me. I think that you can borrow them and see how they feel for you. This is interesting was a huge thought for me. So whenever I would look in the mirror if I was either naked or in a swimsuit or a dress, even when I was pregnant, and my body looked so different. I genuinely went to the space of curiosity.

Like oh, this is interesting. What is happening here? Sometimes I would laugh like oh, boy. That's really interesting. Like I thought my belly button looked really interesting. I just focused on shifting from any emotion that I would have, and I just focused on staying in curiosity. That really came from the thought of this is interesting. I wonder.

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Other emotions that I experienced often after giving birth as it relates to my body are acceptance and love. I really stayed with the idea that I love my body. I accept it, and I want to lose some of this weight. And I want to rethink how I'm eating. And I want to move my body more. Oftentimes, we think that we need to disapprove of our current body in order to lose weight. So it sounds like I don't like my body, and now I want to lose weight.

Instead, what you can do is you can say I like my body. In fact, I love my body. It's all I got. I'm so grateful for it, and I want to change it. When you do it from the place of love and accepting what you already have, it's a much more enjoyable journey. Because of that you will continue. Then you will get the result that you want with your body.

Alternatively, if you beat yourself up, if you're really hard on yourself, if you say oh my gosh, I can't believe I ate that whole bag of chips. Oh my gosh, I had a s'more and I'm not even pregnant anymore. Oh my gosh, I just can't get this right. I'm trying all the things, and then I'm not doing anything. You're just being really hard on yourself, and you're not having fun. You're sort of beating yourself up into change. You will self-sabotage. You will slow down. You will take a break. You will quit.

The reason is not because of the chips or the s'mores or your capability. It's just because of your judgment. You're judging yourself so harshly, and it feels terrible. You would rather just quit or take a break because of that feeling, of that guilt, of that shame. So I say get to a place where you can feel good about your body and then focus on the future. Focus on what you want to create, and how you want to feel in your body after having kids.

So ask yourself how do I want to feel in my body? If any weight were possible, how much do I want to weigh? Is that even important to me? Maybe something else is important to you? How strong do you want to be? What food do you want to eat?

Really answer these questions for yourself without seeking like external advice. Because there are so many different ways to eat and there's so many different diets. I think all of them work if you do them, right. But, you

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know, it's not about getting these quick results. It's about changing your relationship with yourself. It's about loving your body first and then deciding what you want to create for your future. All right, that has been my experience with weight loss after having a baby boy RJ.

One last resource that I want to offer to you is college nutritionist on Instagram, Dr. Rachel Paul. Rachel is one of my dear friends. Love her so much. Hi Rachel, if you're listening. She will be able to help you with specific food choices, weight loss, mindset shifts, all of that. She is also a certified life coach from The Life Coach School. So I stand by all of her tools that she's teaching. This is really just a resource for you if you are looking for more of those how to's to help you navigate what food choices to make.

That's what I have for you today. I hope you have an amazing rest of the week. Listen to your body, answer those hunger cues, and really become aware of what your body needs and what you want for the future of your body. I will talk with you next week. Take care.

If you loved this podcast, I invite you to check out Grow You, my mindfulness community for moms where we do the inner work together. Head on over to nataliebacon.com/coaching to learn more.