



4 Reasons To Fall In Love With Your Prenatal & Postnatal Body



P A R E N T H O R O E D G N A N C Y

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It's not easy for me to admit this, but when I became pregnant last year my biggest fear was how carrying a child would change my body. As a teenager I struggled with my weight emotionally and physically for years, and after discovering yoga in my early 20's I learned how to accept my body and to love the parts of me I once hated.

It's fair to say I was in a good "bodyspace" before I found out I was pregnant, but the moment I saw that positive test, past anxieties about body image started to resurface.

On a deep level I was terrified of being judged about my body after giving birth. I was horrified by the

thought of gaining weight that I wouldn't be able to lose. Of getting stretch marks, of having excess skin and of my breast sagging.

I fully embraced that after having a baby my life would change and I would change, but I couldn't bring myself to welcome a change in my body.

I would love to say that after I had my baby these thoughts went away. They didn't. I felt pressure to get back to my pre-baby weight. It wasn't until one day when I was looking at my body in the mirror that I noticed my daughter looking at me. In that moment I realized how my anxieties around body image could not only affect me, but also my daughter.

When this new insight dawned on me I started to think more about how as women we never assume that we will be the same person after we give birth, so why should we assume that our bodies will be the same?

97% percent of women will have a negative thought about their body today.

Pretty shocking, huh? When I read this statistic I was surprised but also relieved. We spend so much time thinking we are the only ones with all these negative thoughts rolling around in our heads when it comes to our bodies, only to realize it's an extremely common practice for most of us.

Knowing how common this issue is for pregnant women and new moms, I wanted to share 4 ways to start loving your prenatal and postnatal body. I hope they make you feel empowered, beautiful, confident and most importantly, loved.

1. **Turn Anxiety Into Awe.** It's easy to get caught up in the hard parts of pregnancy, but if you focus on all of the extraordinary things that your body is doing you'll find that your anxieties fade into awe. Picture for a moment how incredible it is that during pregnancy your body grows a new organ, the placenta. This organ passes oxygen and nutrients from your bloodstream to your baby, protects your baby from infection and eliminates your baby's waste. Or consider how amazing it is that the force inside your uterus when pushing during a contraction is 397 pounds of pressure per square foot. Your body is showing up for you in ways you could have never imagined, send it gratitude.
2. **Make Kindness Your Religion.** Loving your body can come from a simple shift in perspective. Would you want your son or daughter to have negative thoughts about their body? Of course you wouldn't, and you can take steps to keeping that from happening by leading by example. Making the decision to change your mindset will not only do wonders for you, it will be insanely beneficial for your baby.
3. **Give yourself time to heal.** During pregnancy your body slowly prepares to give birth. Nature knew what it was doing here, it didn't go from 0 to 100 in a day, it gave your body time to gently open to protect it from injury when possible. It's important to remember this after you give birth. Don't expect your body to "close" up in a week, a month or even three months. Be kind to your body after birth, what you just did is the equivalent of having major surgery, give it time to heal.
4. **Find comfort in your community.** Don't be scared to open up about your thoughts, keeping them inside only leads to isolation. Share how you are feeling with women who are or have been pregnant. I can assure you that you are not alone in your thoughts and I know from experience that one of the best feelings in the world is when someone says they have felt the same way you do. You are not alone, I promise.

Send your body love, thank it for everything it does for you and give it praise for it's beautiful uniqueness and strength.

Are you pregnant or a new mom?

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