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Earlier this year I was stressed out; I didn't make time for myself. I just didn't feel like myself. I'm 31, my husband, Samuel, and I have three daughters: seven-year-old Scarlett; Aliyah, who's five; and 10-month-old Hayley. With a full-time job, it was hard. I was always rushing around, dropping them off at my sister Ledis's house to take care of them, then running to work, picking them up, taking them home for baths, and getting ready for the next day. I'd grab anything to eat that was fast and that I could drive through, like McDonald's. Instead of losing the baby weight, I was gaining weight and I was like, "This has to stop."

My coworker, Maria, told me about the Thrive Challenge and I said, "Let me give it a try."

I started meal prepping. I love chips but now instead of Doritos, I have chopped baby carrots and celery with a little ranch dressing. I'm from El Salvador, I love to cook, and my favorite recipe is a traditional stew called pollo guisado with chicken, tomato, pepper, and onions, and you can add potatoes, or whatever you like. It's so good. When I'm making dinner, Samuel spends time with the kids.

I get up at six in the morning and take half an hour to relax and stretch.

I listen to motivational speakers like Les Brown and Steve Harvey. They help me start my day with a positive attitude. I say affirmations out loud like, "I am being nice to myself and nice to others," and "I love myself and I love others."

I walk for 30 minutes during my lunch break.

Then, after work, I go to the park with Ledis and the kids and we all play soccer. Or the kids will be on their bikes and I'll run behind them with the baby in the stroller. My sister and I are very close, and moving a lot is great for her too because she has type one diabetes.

I joined a women's soccer team.

We play against other teams every Sunday. I love it, it's so much fun. I'm playing forward, so I'm the one scoring the goals. At first, I was scared. I said, "I'm so out of shape, I can't even run for five minutes." And now I can actually play the whole game without taking a break.



I'm doing fun activities with the kids like art.

We'll draw pictures and then talk about them. Aliyah said, "Mommy, look what I drew!" It was an amazing picture of the family playing soccer.

Samuel and I have a strong connection.

We start each morning with a kiss, and say, "Have a good day." We text each other throughout the day, joking and flirting. With kids it's hard to find quality time together, but we know it's important so we take one day a week and do something without the kids. Sometimes we just go for a smoothie. I go to Samuel's soccer games to support him and he comes to mine. We're planning a weekend getaway in Florida and my sister's offered to take care of the kids.

I love my job as a medical assistant and I always try to help out.

When you come to the doctor's office, it's because you're not feeling well. So it's important for us to be nice, and be there for our patients. One woman came in and was so upset because she'd received a huge bill she wasn't expecting. I helped her figure it out by talking to the billing office and everything worked out. She said, "Wow, thank you." It feels really good to help others.

I've lost 15 pounds, I'm back to my pre-baby weight and I feel amazing.

My tips: you've got to be disciplined and committed. My main goal now is to stay healthy for my kids and see them grow. And I want to buy our first house. Also, I would love to continue my education and become an RN — and now I know it's never too late.



THRIVE