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In 2020, I had a miscarriage; it was very difficult and it took me a long time to come to terms with the loss. It's so easy to blame yourself. Six months later I was pregnant again and my husband, Jacob, and I are the proud parents of a wonderful son, Henny, who's now 2 years old. But I'd gained a lot of weight with both pregnancies. I'm 30 now and I weighed 265 pounds. I would eat my feelings — it felt comforting to know that food was always there when no one else was. I wanted to change and I started the Thrive Challenge.

Taking time to plan out my meals was my first Microstep.

My favorite recipe is my breakfast protein bowl with eggs, spinach, onion, tomato, and potato. I add Greek yogurt and salsa. It's delicious and keeps me full until lunch time. My favorite swap: I use omega-3 flax tortillas instead of regular tortillas — they're amazing. Another thing that really helps is measuring out food in portions.

I exercise alone at 4:30 a.m.

Once it became a habit, I actually started enjoying moving early in the morning. Each day I felt stronger and less sore and started craving the feeling I got from my workouts. I'm lifting weights, which reminds me of my time playing high school soccer. Then I have breakfast, and take my dog out before Henny wakes up. I also park in the furthest spot away from the building in the parking lot. I'm clocking in about 10,000 steps a day now, and I have more energy.

I've lost 10 pounds and I've learned that I'm capable of achieving things I thought were hard.

One morning, I put on a pair of scrubs that used to be snug and they were looser. I didn't feel so self-conscious wearing them. Having more confidence is hard, but I'm doing my best. I know my body has been put through the ringer but by God I am proud of it. I've carried one healthy pregnancy and I carried my daughter for 15 weeks before she passed in utero, and that's a lot to be proud of.

I'm connecting more with my son and my husband.

I put my son in the stroller and walk around my apartment complex. We go to the park, which he loves, we get lunch together, and then come to Walmart and shop. Just being in his presence makes my day so much better. Watching him grow and learn is so cool. My husband and I are spending more time connecting, too; we'll watch a movie or play video games, and we'll go out on a date at least once a month.



I'm also connecting with myself through my nighttime routine.

After getting my son to bed, I'm using Microsteps to decompress, like putting my phone away and turning off the T.V. I'll read for an hour, usually fantasy or romance books. Just giving my mind something easy to think about helps me to calm the noise in my head. I used to read a lot as a child and I'd forgotten how much I actually enjoy a good book.

Stress is a part of life and I handle it by being with my family.

I'm working on being kind to myself. I remind myself that I'm human with feelings and it's okay to not be okay all the time. I tell myself this is not a rough life, it's just a rough day. Thrive has helped me learn to give myself a break from perfectionism. If I have an off day, it's okay, because guess what? There's always tomorrow and tomorrow will be better than yesterday. It's all about the journey and I don't have to be perfect. I'm appreciating my family and I feel happier.



THRIVE