

Bodies

Many women talk about wanting to 'get back to pre-pregnancy weight' or 'losing that baby weight'. But this isn't necessarily healthy for our bodies and our minds.

This pack offers some insights from young mums as well as scientific facts that may support you to appreciate your body in a different way since having your baby.



Reframing

Let's change perspective. Your body has achieved something incredible by growing, birthing and nurturing another human life!

1. What are you grateful to your body for?

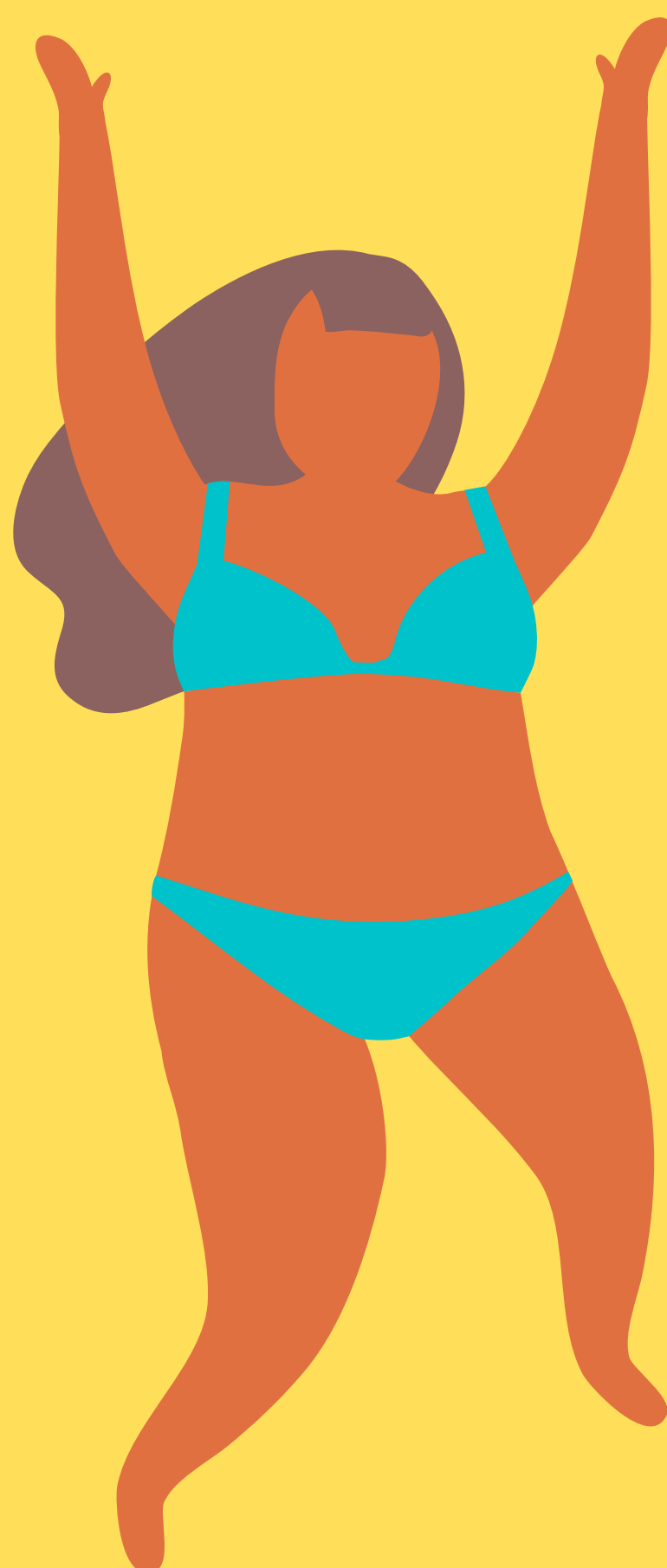
2. What are some of your qualities which are unrelated to looks? E.g. kindness

What I see...

What I know...

Stretch
marks

Grew my
baby

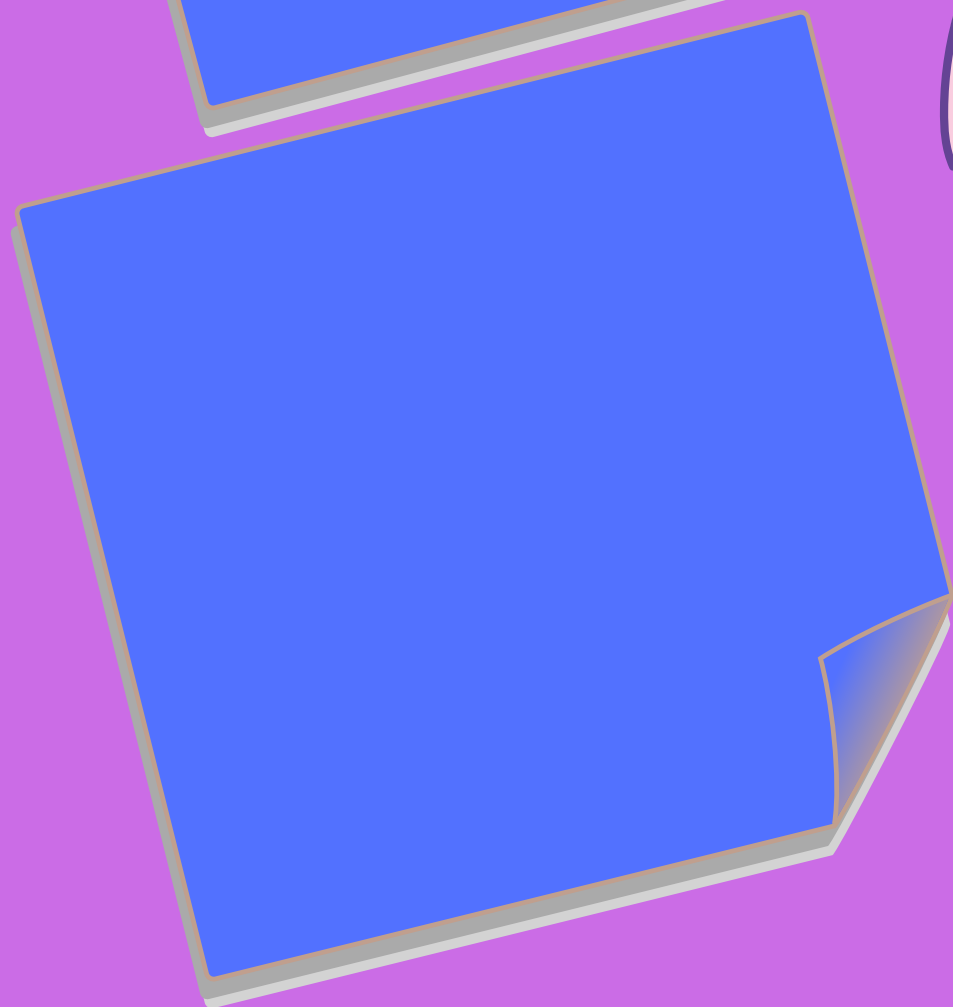
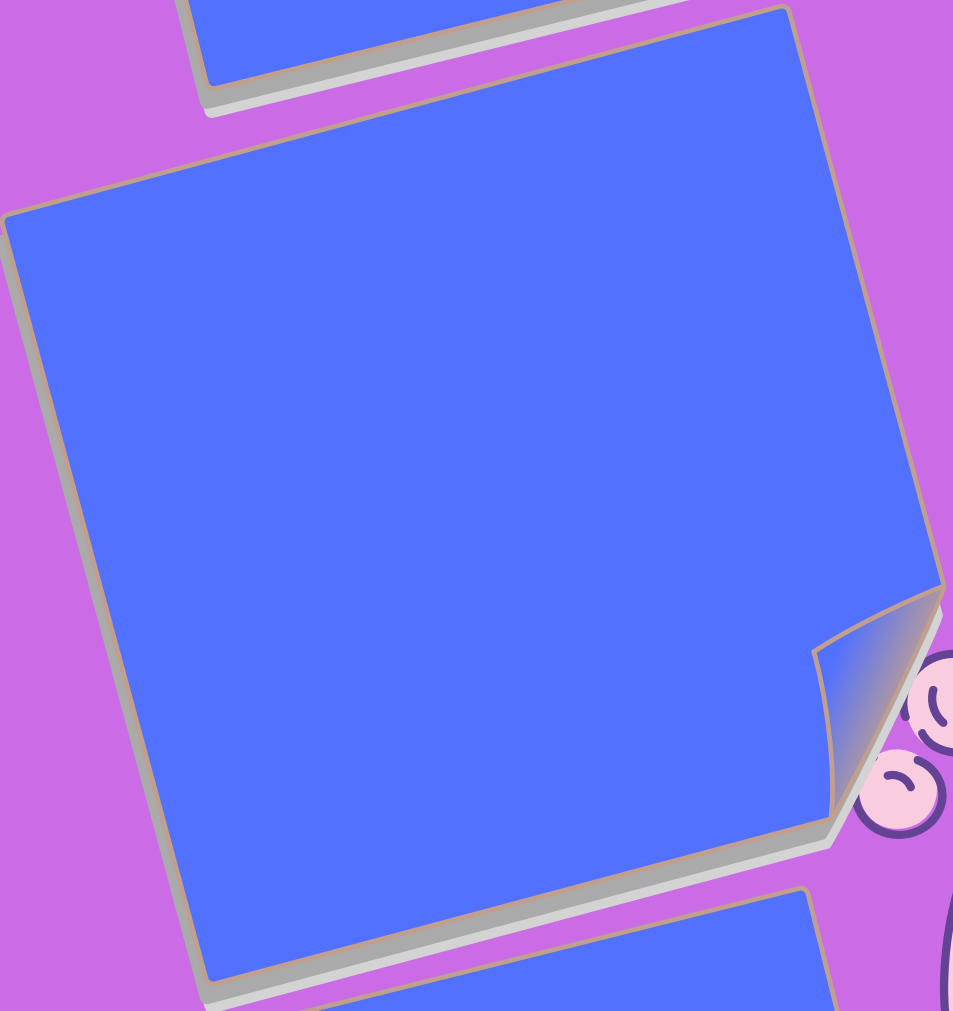


xxx, aged 21, mum of xxx, aged 1:

"Put what you don't like about your body since pregnancy on one side and then what you gave your child because of these things on the other. For example, I have stretch mark's all down my stomach but because of this my baby was able to grow and be a healthy weight."

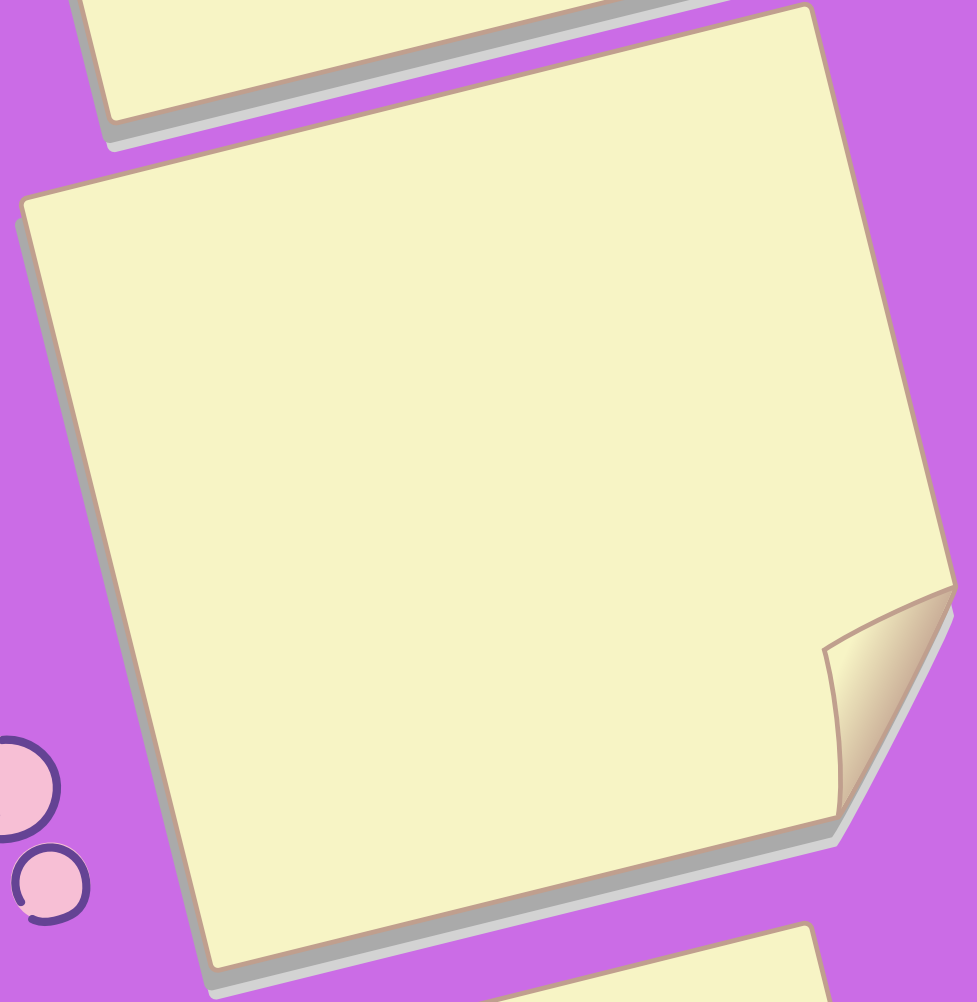
My body...

Saggy skin



My baby...

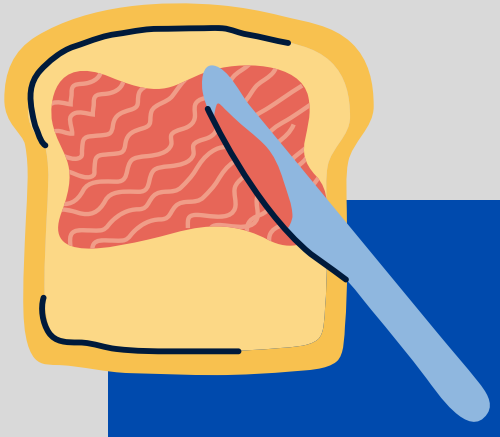
Took their first steps



xxx, aged 21, mum of xxx, aged 1:

I hated my body when I was pregnant and now that xxx is one, looking back I feel a lot happier in my body. You could do post notes down one side listing what you don't like, then one amazing milestone your baby has achieved so that you can remind yourself that even though it's not so nice that all these changes have happened, it's because of this all these beautiful changes could happen with your babies.

Some facts



Metabolism



Metabolism is the function of turning food into energy. Your metabolism is like a wood burning fire. Food is the wood and the fire is your metabolism. You need to put wood on the fire to keep it burning. If you delay or avoid eating food, then your metabolism will slow down or stop. If your metabolism is slow then food will be stored as fat rather than used up as energy. That's why it's important to eat breakfast; - to kickstart your metabolism for the day!



Dieting

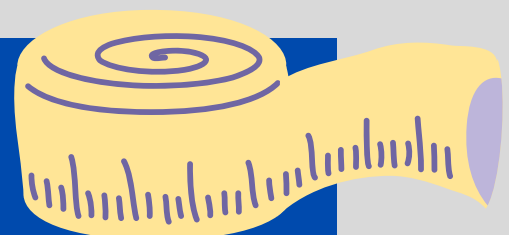


Most weight reduction programmes show some success in short-term weight loss, but 95% of people who go on a diet put the weight back on again. Dieting also significantly affects your mood resulting in irritability, depression and anxiety.

The miracle diet will never arrive, the best answer will always be to eat balanced meals, eat in response to hunger cues, maintain a healthy lifestyle and learn to accept your body for what it is.



Set-point



This is the concept that our bodies have an ideal weight at which they function best. It's been shown that despite variations in daily caloric intake, body weight remains remarkably stable over time. It is therefore unhelpful to either give oneself an arbitrary weight on the scale or a clothes size in the shops to 'aim for', because our body will do it's best to stay at the weight at which it functions best.

Self-compassion

Recent research shows that practicing self-compassion can improve our body image compared to self-esteem, which relies on finding things that you're good at or comparing yourself to others to boost your confidence, e.g. "I don't mind not having a flat tummy because I've got nice legs", or "She may have a flat tummy but I've got good skin".

Self-compassion involves practicing kindness and understanding to yourself and your body no matter how it compares or what standards it meets.

You can access short self-compassion meditations and exercises here:

www.self-compassion.org



Practicing Self-Compassion

Be kind to yourself as you would be to a friend

Imagine a friend shared with you the negative thoughts and feelings they had about their body. How would you respond? Probably with kindness and understanding. Now imagine that friend is giving you the same kindness. Breathe in their kindness and care. You can use phrases like:

- It's ok you feel this way.
- I understand.
- It's hard and I care.
- I love you."



You are not alone

It's very common for women to feel bad about their bodies in pregnancy and after childbirth. Whilst it's sad that many of us feel like this, it can however be a comforting thought to know you're not alone in the difficult feelings you're having. Suffering, pain, discomfort and distress are part of life and every human on this earth experiences challenge at some point. Close your eyes and imagine all the mums on your street, in your postcode, in your city, our country and the world who may have had the same thoughts you're having and they too are in need of a little kindness.

Use your breath to breathe in kindness for yourself and breathe out kindness for the other mums.

Social Media

? Is it helpful?

Is social media affecting how you feel about your body? Remember it is a highlight reel and not everyone's day-to-day reality.



Unfollow or delete

Seeing celebrities or even friends boasting about 'bouncing back' after having babies will not be useful. Unfollow accounts that make you feel bad about yourself, or take a break from social media all together.



Create real connections

Instead, connect with a few good friends in person or on the phone to share interests and experiences. This may feel much more nourishing than scrolling.

Resources

www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/body-image

www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/young-people/well-being/resources/body-image

www.self-compassion.org

www.kindfulbody.com/blog/self-compassion-build-positive-body-image

