



Hahn

Rebecca

By **Obi Obadike**

Staying in great shape is never easy after having one child. Some women are able to bounce back and get their old body back, whilst others struggle, but imagine having to do it three times. Well that's what top US fitness model Rebecca Hahn had to do and she had the same 'weight issues' that every woman has dealt with after having kids.

Hahn struggled with her weight after having third child. When she saw pictures of herself - she couldn't even recognise the person she physically once was. From that moment on she dedicated herself to a 'fitness lifestyle' and began to transform her body into a fitness model physique. So how did she achieve this?

Obi: Rebecca what inspired you to commit to the fitness lifestyle after having your third child?

Rebecca: It was one year after I had my last child. It sounds so cliché, but I saw a picture of myself and I could not believe how I looked. What was more important though was that I felt unattractive and just not in shape! So I did what many women do, I started immediately eating healthy and exercising.

In time the weight began to fall off, but I would feel really hungry at times. So I started to educate myself on how to transform my body the right way. I read every bit of information I could on how to weight-train effectively and how much cardio was necessary and most importantly



how to eat properly. I made up my mind that if I was going to dedicate time in the gym and in the kitchen to getting myself in shape I wanted to go all out.

I grew very passionate about my fitness goals. As my body began to take on a new form I gained volumes of self-confidence. I always had had the itch to compete in a figure competition, so I decided to go for it. So one milestone led to another: my first goal was to lose the fat, then I was able to see where on my body I needed to build on in order to create symmetry for competition.

After I built up any lacking areas I took on my first competition and the rest as they say, is history. I actually won my first competition, I was so super-excited and proud.

O: What training did you do to lose the baby weight after your third child?

R: My training routine was pretty basic, I did five days a week of 30 minutes of a moderate to intense cardio, such as jogging, the stair climber and skipping. I also did five days a week of weight training. Each day I would train 2-3 body parts, for 3 sets of 15 reps each. I would pyramid my weight load for each set, from lightest to heaviest. I wanted to keep my training uncomplicated and manageable because I was also towing my three kids with me to the gym or the park when I would work out. So I also made sure that I could work out from home as well. I bought some basic equipment -dumbbells (ranging in weights from 2.5kg – 15kg, as well as a mat, skipping rope, exercise ball and some exercise DVDs.

Example workout:

Biceps Curls 3 sets of 15 reps.

- * **Set 1:** 5kg x 15 reps
- * **Set 2:** 6kg x 15 reps
- * **Set 3:** 7.5kg x 15 reps
(or max out to muscle failure).

For the two remaining training days of the week I would do 30 minutes to an hour of cardio or a yoga session at the gym or at home from a DVD. Sometimes I would just go on a leisurely hike or jog outside in the sunshine or sometimes I would go to the college and run the up the steps or around the track. It just depended on my mood and energy level.

O: Is your training routine different now?

R: I vary my training routines, so for a few weeks I do pyramids, as I did post pregnancy, but at the moment I'm doing more high intensity full body weights and cardio workouts 4-6 days per week.

O: What was your diet like when you adopted your fitness lifestyle?

R: Again, I focused on not being complicated and I made simple changes and rules that I could easily remember and follow without confusing myself and setting myself up for failure. I made sure that I didn't take my kids food or take an extra bite of theirs like so many of us mums do as we're serving the family or clearing the dishes. I ate about 1400-1600 calories a day and broke that up between three main meals and two - three snacks throughout my day.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner were between 300-400 calories and the snacks were broken up between the remaining numbers of calories. I made a point to eat the bulk of my calories in the early part of the day. It made logical sense to me to eat more in the morning since I would be burning calories all day as I moved about. I also made my calories count by consuming the most nutritious food most of the time.

I choose whole foods over processed foods. If I was hungry and needed a snack then I would grab an apple, rather than crisps loaded with 'processed crap'. I also ate every two to four hours to keep me satisfied as well.

All these changes sound like a lot at first, but they are very simple and become habit very quickly. Dieting can feel really lonely if you let it become a big deal. It's funny because if you really think about it...not changing your diet and becoming healthy is more of a big deal.

O: Did you hire a trainer or a nutritionist?

R: No, I didn't hire a nutritionist or a trainer, I did it all by myself and I was very excited and passionate about it. I really enjoyed that part of educating myself. That passion led me to becoming a certified personal trainer. I did however, utilise a trainer when I was in the home stretch to my first competition for about 4-6 weeks.

O: How many weeks did it take you to transform your body?

R: About 12 weeks and during that time I lost fat and was able to build and tone enough to make a strong,noticeable difference to how I looked and felt.



O: What are some of your favorite training exercises?

R: Squats, dead-lifts, kickbacks and lunges. These exercises not only tone, but if done effectively will burn loads of calories. Another one of my favorites is hanging leg raises. I just love that I am able to perform them! But I do really love how they've carved out my abs.

O: How important are 'cheat meals' when dieting?

R: I think they are wonderful for many reasons. Everyone has to live life and indulge or they might set themselves up for failure without doing so. Not everyone is a fitness model, athlete or competitor, so why should they be so restrictive? The goal is to have control over your eating habits and not be a slave to your diet. People need to know that if they eat healthy all week long then they can have a little fun over the weekend. This helps you break emotional

ties to food too. What that means is no foods are taken away forever and that you get to have whatever you want in controlled portions.

O: What motivated you to compete in fitness competitions?


R: Around the age of 20 I was interested in fitness competitions and could see myself doing them someday. I wasn't motivated then though. Twelve years later and after I lost the post pregnancy pounds after baby number three, I was inspired to challenge my physique further. I guess I would say it was all timing. I learned a lot about myself with each competition. It also allowed me to connect with other women that were passionate about being healthy and self-confident.

O: Is there any final things that you would like to say to mothers who have struggled with the same weight issues you have?

R: I really want to convey that they are neither alone nor powerless. When you are a mother and giving so much to raising a family it can leave you feeling a little empty in the self-love department. I know that some women feel that if they put a lot of time into working out and preparing special calorie friendly meals for themselves, that they are being selfish. But it is neither selfish nor self-indulgent to take the time out to be healthy. It is my belief that it is your responsibility, as a parent and as an adult to take care of yourself. If you don't have your health, you won't be able to take care of your babies and nurture them in the long run. A little self-love can renew your spirit, confidence and develop a positive outlook.

There are so many ways that mothers can make being fit a part of their life. And I also think that it is important to stress that it's about being fit and healthy and absolutely not about being perfect. If we focus too much on perfection we will again, set ourselves up for failure. And you want to go into this lifestyle journey and change with a wholesome attitude of success and positive thinking. There are so many resources to help educate you on how to eat healthy and exercise effectively. The education can come through gyms, the internet and just by recruiting a training partner. It will be an enjoyable process. Like anything else in your life, if you want it bad enough you will make it happen. **UF**

To find out more about Rebecca Hahn go to: rebeccahahnmodel.blogspot.com & rebeccahahn.net (Myspace). Hahn is one of the faces and bodies of Natural Sports Nutrition (www.performancemeals.co.uk)



About the author
 Obi Obadike is a professional fitness model and fitness expert. To find out more go to: www.obibadike.com