

A satisfying workout

I've never been athletic. I've never put a lot of interest into my physique. Consequently, I'm a wimp.

When I found out that I was pregnant one of my many strange concerns was whether I could carry a baby around all the time. Sure they start out at six pounds, but soon they're 10, then 20, then 50 pounds—and more! How would I carry a baby or child in my arms when I groaned from merely picking up my hefty cat of 15 pounds!

The third trimester of my pregnancy seemed to confirm my fears that I was too wimpy to carry a baby. My belly felt like I was wearing a very large fanny-pack filled with bricks. My back hurt, my feet hurt, I was constantly winded (nevermind that those were all normal side effects of the 30 pounds of water I was carrying in addition to the baby).

Then she was born. I forgot those silly worries. I was exhausted in every way, but I would hold her in my arms all the time. The weight of her little body was an assurance to me that everything was well in the world.

It turned out that my baby never wanted to be put down either. No bouncy seat, playpen or walker was ever satisfying to her for more than a minute. I happily obliged most of her requests to be picked up and held. We quickly became inseparable and my arms grew stronger to match. In fact, I enjoy holding her so much that as she has learned how to crawl and walk I've had to restrain myself so that she can have time to explore the world independently.

One day I picked up my cat to put him outside. I was shocked because he felt as light as a feather! I felt instantly guilty because I was sure that I had neglected to feed him enough in my new-mom frenzy. I rushed over to the bathroom scale and weighed us. Then I weighed myself. After a little mental subtraction I announced to him that he was 14.7 pounds. He hadn't lost weight. I contemplated this for a moment: the cat felt lighter, but wasn't.

The Laughing Mom: humorous tales of motherhood

Written by Susan Pfaltzgraff

I weighed my 11-month-old next and she was 19.2 pounds. Good grief! Is that what I've been lifting all day long? Not just lifting either! Lifting, balancing, tossing in the air, twirling upside-down. Sure, sometimes those acrobatic positions that make my baby giggle can feel a little awkward, but not difficult. I took a moment to admire my own arms and felt the little solid biceps that had formed in the last year.

Carrying a baby. I had been so worried about it and it turned out to be a great workout. A workout that I can handle and very satisfying, too!