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get pretty

KICK BUTT

ALISON
LUMBATIS

Get Pretty, Kick Butt!

The Moms' Guide to Looking Your Best and Getting More Done.

By Alison Lumbatis

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FOREWORD

First off, let me say that I don't claim to know it all. But I do know what works for me. That's what this book is about.

I am not a time management expert, professional organizer, stylist, makeup artist, nutritionist or personal trainer.

What I am is a mom of three, a wife, a writer and a life coach.

I've worked with lots of moms. Moms just like me and moms much different from me. Moms who have kids at home, moms who are empty nesters, moms who work outside of the home, stay at home moms and work from home moms. Moms with infants, moms with teenagers. Every kind of mom.

One truth is universal: We all want to be our best for our families.

Since the birth of my first child, my life has been devoted to doing what's best for my kids. I venture to guess that it always will be, even when they have all flown the nest.

But this book is about being our own best selves.

Not because we're selfish, but because it's the key to being better for our families.

This is how I get pretty and kick butt. It works for me. I hope it works for you too.

Stay pretty,

Alison

INTRODUCTION

“Being a mom shouldn’t mean losing yourself.”

From the day I graduated college through the next seventeen years, I worked in a corporate office environment - dressed to the nines every day in heels, pencil skirts and pretty blouses. Oh how I loved getting fixed up every day.

But what I didn’t love was my job.

With three kids at home, I desperately wanted to be with them. Each year I watched as my department shrank more and more, a casualty of evolving technology and the economy. Every time a lay off happened, I prayed to be on that list so I could take my severance package and finally be free of the confines of corporate America.

After fourteen years of waiting, it finally happened! I was able to be the at-home mom I always dreamed of being. During that same time, I decided to step away from my part-time career as an actress and print model to fully dedicate myself to my family.

Without a job or auditions to go to, my closet full of high heels started to become pretty useless. I slowly transitioned my wardrobe, starting with footwear. Flats took the place of my prized collection of heels. Skinny jeans took over for skirts. Cardigans replaced blazers. T-shirts pushed out button-downs. Ponytails did away with my need for daily hair styling. Tinted moisturizer took the place of foundation. Then...

Yoga pants replaced jeans.

Sneakers replaced flats.

Moisturizer replaced makeup.

Uh oh.

Six months later, I was a full blown yoga pants addict, never getting ready or fixing up. I picked my kids up from school wearing the same workout clothes that I had on when dropping them off that morning. Worst of all, I would go the whole day without showering. Eww.

The house started to get messier.

I slacked off on my work outs.

The healthy food in our fridge and pantry slowly got replaced with convenient junk food.

The pounds started creeping up.

All of my motivation and drive was gone. It was all I could do to drag myself through another day. A dark cloud of depression set in over me.

I was in a full-blown mom funk.

I desperately needed to find a way to get out of my rut and into my groove.

Something had to change. One morning I decided to try something different. I woke up an hour earlier and planned out my day. My plans included getting my workout done, taking a shower, putting on makeup, fixing my hair and getting dressed in a real outfit - all before picking my kids up from school that afternoon. Drastic times called for drastic measures.

So I did just that.

When I picked my daughter up from school that day she said "Wow, mommy! What happened to you? You look...pretty!"

That moment was my wake up.

I realized that pretty actually matters. I wanted to do it, not just for me, but to set a good example for my daughters. The fog that I was living in had lifted, at least for that day. I felt productive, energized and PRETTY.

I vowed from that day forward that I would make an effort to shower and get fixed up every day, no matter what I had going on. I sat down and made up a schedule for the next day. I would have a routine and stick to it. Getting pretty would be a big part of it.

I had found my way out of my mom funk.

CHAPTER ONE: The Kick Butt Routine

“Making and sticking to a daily schedule establishes the framework for getting more done.”

That first week that I stuck to my new routine was life changing. I got SO much accomplished. When my husband came home to find me preparing a healthy meal WHILE looking pretty, he was pleasantly surprised. The house had been cleaned up and the kids were done with their homework. Yes, my new Kick Butt Routine was already changing my life - and my family's too.

Clarity for a New Career

A few weeks after putting my own kick butt routine in place my newfound motivation prompted me to hire a life coach to help clarify some goals. In the interest of full disclosure, I reached out to hire a life coach because I thought becoming a coach may be something I'd be interested in. I already had a background in Psychology and loved helping my family and friends clarify and accomplish goals. Without even mentioning this to her, she asked if I had ever considered becoming a coach because she recognized what it takes to be a good coach in me. I knew that we hit upon something significant. Shortly thereafter, I started working on my coaching certification. If not for my KBR, I wouldn't have found the time or motivation to accomplish this goal and move into my next phase of my career. Nor would I have been able to build a successful business from home.

One thing I learned during my coach training was the importance of accountability, something that I completely lacked during my days of working from home. The reason I wasn't taking care of myself was because no one was seeing me. I had zero accountability. Somehow I had to be able to provide it for myself.

I had an idea. If I started taking pictures of my outfits on a daily basis and uploading them to a blog, I would at least be holding myself accountable in some way. I figured if I was broadcasting my outfits to the world, then I would feel obligated to keep up with it. This was worth taking a chance on, even if no one else liked it or saw it.

Get Your Pretty On was started with a few pitiful outfit selfies that I took with my phone. As the weeks went by, I started having my husband take better photos. Then I began shopping on a small weekly budget and putting together better outfits. I surprised myself with my newfound ability to put together some really cute, wearable looks.

But something even more unexpected happened. Other moms loved it too. It was not only providing me with accountability but it was providing them with inspiration. My Payday Pretty feature quickly became popular. Every Friday, I challenged other moms, myself included, to take

a small amount of money out of the weekly budget to do something pretty for themselves. They started to send me photos of their Payday Pretty hauls and I posted photos of some of mine too.

In just four months, Get Your Pretty On had over 100,000 page views. Moms reach out to me on an almost daily basis, thanking me for helping them feel pretty again. That's definitely been the most rewarding part of all of this. I'm grateful every day for my decision to embark on these new, fulfilling ventures. And to think, it all started with my own Kick Butt Routine!

"Keeping Hours"

The key to organizing my life was realizing that I had to treat my week days like work days. One of the things I missed about being in the corporate confines was the need to "keep hours". I didn't even give it any thought back then. Work started at 8:00 a.m. and was over at 5:00 p.m. In between I had regularly scheduled calls, daily responsibilities and a lunch break. When work was done, I drove home, fixed dinner and did homework with the kids. Life, in some ways, was simpler when I worked in an office! I had to translate that same structured routine over into my home environment.

Now my weekdays are governed by the Kick Butt Routine. On weekends, I allow my schedule to naturally flow as I would have when I worked in an office. The other five days of the week though are carefully planned out to help me "keep hours".

Let's break down the pieces of the Kick Butt Routine.

The Components of the Kick Butt Routine

1. The Power Hour

I can't say enough about the Power Hour. This is what really made the difference in establishing my kick butt routine and getting more done. The first hour of the day sets the tone for how the remaining hours will go. I get up (at least) a full hour ahead of the rest of my family for my daily "Power Hour". It's my own personal staff meeting, a daily planning session just for me where I set my priorities for the day and get them down in my schedule. I use this hour to strategize how I can be most effective for that day. This includes creating my daily kick butt routine - an hourly schedule which, in addition to work, includes time for my workouts, personal errands and "pretty time" for getting dressed and ready for the day. This is also when I read my daily devotions, write in my journal and have some quiet time to reflect on what I have going on in my life. I like to wake up really early so I can watch the sun rise. It's the most peaceful part of my day.

"But Alison...I HATE getting up early!" OK, OK, I hear you. I was not a morning person either until about two years ago. If you absolutely cannot get up early, then plan your Power Hour for the night before. Make it the last hour of your day, or schedule it when it's most convenient for you. It could be the hour immediately after your kids go to bed. It doesn't matter as long as you're scheduling it.

2. The 15 Minute Clean Up

As soon as the kids are out the door on weekdays, I do a quick 15 minute clean up of the house. This consists of small do-able chores like making beds, straightening up the family room, putting the breakfast dishes in the dishwasher, wiping off the counters or any number of other little things that happen to be on my nerves that morning. I cannot be productive and start my day when my house feels like a disorganized mess. This is one quick step that I can take that helps me stay on top of my housework without ever feeling overwhelmed.

3. At Home Workout – Yoga pants allowed!

Yoga pants aren't completely banished. They just expire every day immediately after working out! Four days a week I squeeze in an at-home workout. Most of my workouts are just 20 minutes – short, but effective. My motto is MAKE IT COUNT! There will be more to come on this subject in Chapter 7.

4. Pretty Time

My pretty time takes just 30 minutes a day. It consists of a 10 minute shower, followed by hair and makeup plus time to get dressed. This is my quick start routine. I shampoo my hair and blow it dry at night which saves time. You may prefer to get your pretty time scheduled at the very beginning of the day and that's fine too. The key is to set a schedule and stick to it. You'll be amazed at how much more in control of your day you suddenly become and how much more you can get done.

5. QT – Quality Time

One of the best perks of being an at-home mom is being with your family. Am I right? That is what it's all about after all. Yes, self care and an organized home are important but does any of it matter if we don't have quality time with our spouse and kids? That's why I intentionally carve out QT for my kids and my husband on a daily basis. Since my kids are at school during the day, I devote the first hour that they're home to really listening to every word they say. I ask them open ended questions about their day like "What made you laugh today?" or "What was the best part of your day?" Then I listen. I mean really listen. It's the best part of our day.

My husband and I have a similar routine when he walks in the door. We have a 15-minute debriefing about each others' day. Again the key here is listening. We also have an hour after the kids are all in bed for just the two of us. We lay on opposite ends of the couch and give each other foot rubs. Sometimes we don't say a word. Other times, we have conversations about parenting, family finances or any number of issues. It's nice to know that we have this uninterrupted time together every day.

A note to moms of infants, toddlers and pre-schoolers: By now, you may be thinking "OK, this is all great Alison, but my schedule is at the beck and call of a tiny human!" I totally get that and this book is not just for moms of school-aged children. After the birth of our third child (a colicky baby who turned into a strong-willed toddler) I was one HOT MESS. The need for some structure in my day was greater than it's ever been. My self-care was at an all-time low and I

literally spent entire days in my PJ's. The very last thing I wanted to do was get up an hour earlier after being up with a crying baby all night!

The good news is this. It gets easier. IT GETS EASIER! It really does. This is a time in your life that will pass so quickly, though it might not seem like it when you're in the moment. During this time, you can still make a schedule. Get up early on the days when you can. If you aren't able to, then plan your Power Hour the night before. Do your workouts and pretty time during naptimes. Take advantage of a Mother's Day Out program or have a family member or sitter come over to help you a few hours a week. Make it work to your best ability. It won't be perfect every day, but it will give you more much-needed structure to your days.

Alison's Kick Butt Routine

Here's an example of my KBR taken from a regular Wednesday in my life.

6:00 a.m.: The Power Hour (Devotions, Planning, Scheduling for the day)

7:00-7:30 a.m.: Before school routine (Make breakfast, Wake the kids, Get everyone off to school)

7:30 a.m. – 7:45 a.m.: 15 minute Clean-up (make beds, clean up kitchen)

8:00 a.m.: Work (write, emails, etc.)

10:30-11:00 a.m.: At home workout (3 days a week)

11:00-11:30 a.m.: Pretty time! (shower, get dressed, put on make-up)

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: Lunch (run errands, do light housework, eat)

12:00-2:30 p.m.: Work

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.: (QT) Daughters arrive home from school (make them a snack, talk about their day, get homework started)

3:00 - 4:00 p.m.: Wrap up work tasks, if any

4:30 – 5:00 p.m.: Gymnastics carpool

5:30 - 6:00 p.m.: Prepare dinner

6:00 p.m.: (QT) Hubby and son arrive home. Talk to them about their days while cooking.

6:30 – 7:00 p.m.: Dinner/Clean Up

7:30 – 8:30 p.m.: Family Fun Night! (Board games, hide and seek, etc.)

8:30 – 9:00 p.m.: Bedtime Preparations with kids

9:30 – 10:30 p.m.: (QT) Relaxing time with hubby

10:30 p.m.: Bed time, nighty night!

Weekly Recurring Activities: In addition to this daily schedule, I also have weekly household management activities that get scheduled in. Once a week, I add in a full house cleaning, a laundry day and schedule in time for paying bills. I also carve out an hour for meal planning and to make a weekly grocery list. Every Wednesday is Family Fun Night in our house. We usually order in and then play games, or watch a favorite show together.

This is an example of my weekly recurring activities:

Monday: Bill Paying

Wednesday: House Cleaning (mopping, bathrooms, heavier cleaning duties), Family Fun Night

Friday: Meal Planning/Grocery Shopping

Saturday: Laundry

Sunday: Sunday Successful Start Routine (See Next Section)

Time Management Bonus: The Sunday Successful Start Routine

As all three of our children became school-aged, our house turned into total chaos on weekday mornings. Recognizing the need for some kind of calm in the storm (I'm a firm believer in how you start the day determines how the rest of the day will go), my husband and I decided to tag team the issue and come up with a solution. Our plan is the Sunday Successful Start.

The Sunday Successful Start tackles the three biggest weekday morning chaos inducers: preparing breakfast, packing lunches and getting dressed.

Breakfast - Our family enjoys a big breakfast on Sunday mornings. We usually have French toast or pancakes. Whatever I'm making gets doubled and put in the freezer. I package individual servings of two pieces of French toast or pancakes in freezer bags. On school mornings, they get popped in the microwave for 30 seconds and voila! A warm breakfast is served. To round it out nutritionally, we add in sliced strawberries or bananas along with a glass of milk. Some mornings, we also pair it up with heat and serve turkey sausage. Weekday breakfast prep clocks in at around 5 minutes.

Lunches – On Sunday evening, my husband and I create an assembly line in the kitchen. We pull out all non-perishable food items and package them in individual re-sealable bags. Our girls both love PB&J so we make a week's worth and store them in the freezer. Each morning, we pull out a frozen sandwich. They thaw out just in time for lunch and taste as fresh as the day we made them. We then add in the non-perishables, a string cheese and a whole piece of fruit. All that's left is filling their reusable water

bottles and popping in an ice pack and lunch is ready. Our morning lunch process takes about 3-5 minutes.

Getting Dressed - Our two older kids wear uniforms but our youngest daughter doesn't yet. Often times she and I clash over outfit selections. She rarely wants to wear what I pick and what she picks isn't always weather or school appropriate! So we arrived at a compromise, we would work together to select her outfits for the week on Sunday evenings. To make it even easier, I bought her a days of the week outfit organizer. Now we work together before bed on Sundays to pick out her outfits and stack them in the organizer. No more wasted time in the mornings fretting over what to wear! Dressing time is now down to 5 minutes flat.

When our kids wake up, our morning routine is a well-oiled machine. They shower the night before so they can grab their outfits for the day and get dressed when they get out of bed. While they are getting dressed, I'm doing breakfast prep. Then they come downstairs to eat, brush their teeth, grab their lunches and head out the door.

It's Your Turn: Your Kick Butt routine starts now. No excuses. You don't need to have it all planned out perfectly. Just start where you are now.

Write out a list of *everything* you need and want to get done in your week. Then prioritize what needs to get done each day. Every weekday, use your Power Hour to complete a new hourly schedule using a chart like the one below or any calendar of your choice. Place pretty time near the top of your day, if possible.

| Time | Activity |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 6:00 – 7:00 a.m. | Power Hour |
| 7:00 – 7:30 a.m. | Before School Routine |
| 8:00 – 8:30 a.m. | Work Out |
| 8:30 – 9:00 a.m. | Pretty Time (Shower, Get Ready) |
| 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. | Laundry Sorting |
| 9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Organize Pantry |
| 10:30 – 11:00 a.m. | Make Grocery List |

CHAPTER TWO: The Closet Cleanse

“You can’t reach for anything new if your hands are still full of yesterday’s junk.” Louise Smith

This week, we’re going to clean out your closet. I can hear you already, “oh no, we’re not!” Well, nothing from this point forward is going to work unless we do. If you want to get pretty, sometimes you have to start somewhere ugly.

OK, so here’s the deal. You have to know what you have so you can figure out what you need. Some of you will be starting completely from scratch; others will discover that you already have a pretty good foundation of wardrobe basics. But you’ll never know unless you get in that closet and start cleaning. Let’s get to it.

STEP 1: Find three medium to large boxes and label them CASH, STASH and TRASH. If you don’t have boxes on hand, trash bags will do.

In each box, you will categorize the following:

CASH – These are items that can be sold or donated. They are in good condition, but you haven’t worn them in a year or more and will probably never wear them again.

TRASH – Anything stained, worn out or damaged beyond repair.

STASH – This is the stuff you want to keep. Put items in here for now and we’ll organize them later.

STEP 2: Pull every item out of your closet one by one, including shoes, handbags and scarves or other accessories. Find a category for each item and place it in its respective box.

But how do I know what to STASH?

That’s entirely up to you, but here’s a good litmus test of questions:

- Have I worn it in the past year?
- Is it a classic piece that will stay in style?
- Is it still in good condition?
- Can I pair it up in more than one way?
- Do I feel good when I wear this?
- Does it fit?

If you answered no to one or more of the questions above, it’s probably not a keeper. However, you can create a fourth box of items for storage if there are things you just can’t bear to part with yet.

A note about drawers. Drawers are for hiding things. I prefer to hang everything that I can make an outfit out of so I can see it. Keep your pajamas, socks and unmentionables in drawers. Everything else gets a hanger.

STEP 3: Once you're done categorizing what you have, it's time to organize what's left in your STASH box.

Most people have a preferred method of organizing their clothing. Mine is placing it in groups of like items (tanks, short-sleeved shirts, long sleeved shirts, cardigans, button-downs, colored denim, dress pants, skirts, etc.) Others prefer to sort by color. It really doesn't matter as long as it makes sense to you and you know where to find everything.

Note: If you need new hangers, or organizers, now's the time to get them. I highly recommend purchasing at least a shoe organizer. Accessories such as belts and scarves can be placed on peg boards. You can also find nifty little closet organizers at most discount stores.

The first time I did this little closet exercise, I got rid of 80% of what I had. We had a garage sale that next weekend and I'll never forget how scary it was to watch most of my clothes and shoes get hauled away. But I also knew it was the only way to rebuild my wardrobe with pieces that I loved. And I took that garage sale money and did just that!

It's Your Turn: Give yourself three days to get your closet organization completed. It should only take you one afternoon. If you don't have the time to do it all at once, carve out 30 minutes a day for the next several days to work on it until it's done. If you still have a lot of stuff left after cleaning it out, consider only keeping seasonal pieces in your closet for now and storing the rest until weather changes dictate needing it.

CHAPTER THREE: Finding Your Style

Congratulations! You have a big empty closet and absolutely NO clue what to put in it. Good, because that's exactly where you're supposed to be.

Now we're going to have some fun with finding your style. This was something that I really struggled with when I started to rebuild my wardrobe. Back in my corporate days, finding my style was a no-brainer. I tended toward ladylike dress clothes with a modern edge – like pencil skirts with strappy heels and feminine blouses. But I wasn't sure how to translate that into my casual attire. I knew comfort was key but so was looking put together. How could I pull off both?

Honestly, it took a lot of experimenting to rediscover my style. At first, I started out a little on the frumpy side. As time went by, I found a few key pieces that worked with anything (which I'll be sharing in the next chapter).

Here are some universal style rules I discovered along the way.

Mom Style Rules

1. Mix high and mid-priced items with low. You only need a few classic investment pieces to pair up with mostly inexpensive clothing and accessories. Spend a little each season to update items like trendy tops and necklaces. Pair them up with quality jeans, knits, shoes and handbags that you can wear longer term.
2. Add animal print to any outfit. Leopard print acts as a neutral. One piece is all it takes to add a little something special to your look.
3. Shop the juniors' department for great deals.
4. Always, always shop your closet first. Chances are there's already something in there similar to what you want.
5. Invest in pieces that will stand the test of time. Buy a handbag you can carry for at least a year. Purchase good boots that can be worn season after season. Invest in a great trench coat. Do a cost per wear analysis. You may find that a more expensive item is actually less expensive per wear than a cheaper one.
6. Go with higher quality denim for a better fit. Many higher end department stores provide free altering. Dry clean premium denim every couple of weeks to make it last longer.
7. A good fit can make even a low-priced item look polished and expensive. Don't be afraid to get items tailored, even if they were cheap. For a few dollars, a tailor can transform the most inexpensive item into a custom fitted piece for you.
8. Every woman should have these basics in her closet – dark wash jeans, cardigans in every color, comfortable flats, tees/tanks and plenty of scarves. The combination possibilities are endless and you will always look put together.
9. You can look good on ANY budget. Start off spending just \$20 a week (or month) to add new items to your wardrobe. You'll be amazed at what you can find!
10. Bold accessories are an inexpensive way to up the wow factor of any outfit. Pick up statement necklaces, stacked bangles, cocktail rings and dangly earrings at discount stores.

You don't have to shell out a lot of money to hire a personal stylist to help find your style. Asking yourself the following questions should give you a pretty good idea about what you like.

It's Your Turn: Finding Your Style

1. What are your typical daily activities that you need to dress for?
2. Are there any colors or styles that you don't like?
3. Which celebrities do you most closely identify with style-wise?
4. What is your current favorite outfit and why?
5. If money wasn't an object, how would you dress?
6. What types of outfits do you pin most often?

CHAPTER FOUR: Build Your Wardrobe Basics

Now that you know where you are, it's time to start rebuilding. This is the fun part, trust me!

But what if you still don't have any idea what you want to buy? That's ok. I have a little cheat sheet list that works for most moms. You can adjust it as you see fit to accommodate what you love and want to include.

Below is my cheat sheet list of favorite outfit basics. These are the items I go to over and over to create a multitude of different looks that work for most of my daily mom activities.

1. Dark wash skinny jeans – Comfortable and forgiving, dark wash skinny jeans with plenty of stretch are a great addition to any wardrobe. They can be dressed up or down by simply swapping out shirt and shoes. (Think blazer for cardigan and heels for flats).
2. Cardigans – In a rainbow of colors and prints, cardigans can be thrown over any ordinary top to make any outfit look pulled together.
3. Tees and Tanks – These are your foundation pieces. Choose well made tees and tanks in a variety of styles and colors.
4. Scarves – A fun addition to any outfit year-round. I'm a big believer in a scarf's ability to be an outfit maker.
5. Flats – When comfort is key, a good pair of flats is essential. Buy a quality made pair in a metallic or leopard print to act as a neutral with most outfits.

It's Your Turn: Take an inventory of your pared down closet and make a list of what you need to fill in the gaps. Make it a goal this week to spend at least \$20 to add or replace one or more items on your list.

CHAPTER FIVE: Payday Pretty – Your Weekly Allowance

Build your wardrobe on \$20 a week? Yes, really.

When I started to rebuild my wardrobe it didn't happen overnight. It literally took me months to get all of my basics in place and have a good inventory of things that I loved to wear. Granted, I could have taken a lump of money out of savings but that wouldn't have been nearly as fun. I like to curate pieces to add to my collection rather than just go out and get them all at once.

What worked for me (and I've encouraged many other women to do) is to take a set amount out of the weekly budget and spend it on something that makes you feel pretty. I started with just \$20 a week and was amazed at what I found – jeans, sweaters, accessories, even shoes. Each week I enjoyed seeing how far I could stretch my \$20 and what I could find. This little Friday tradition is what's referred to on my blog as Payday Pretty. I started to challenge myself and other moms to do something pretty for ourselves on a weekly basis. Some did it on as little as \$10 a week, others up to \$100 or more. No matter your budget, Payday Pretty is a doable weekly goal.

I've learned to stretch my dollars by shopping clearances and discount stores. But I've also saved up for investment pieces that stand the test of time, like purses and boots.

It's Your Turn: Your assignment for the week is to squeeze at least \$10 (but preferable \$20) out of your weekly budget to do something pretty for yourself. It's totally up to you what you spend it on but this is a required assignment. No skipping this one!

Quick Dressing Bonus Exercise: Once you have your basics in place and your wardrobe is mostly in maintenance mode, it's time to start pairing up some go-to outfits. One day this week, carve out an hour in your Kick Butt Routine to create as many outfit options as possible from what you have in your closet. Take photos of your outfit pairings by laying the groupings out on the floor or wearing them and snapping a selfie in your mirror. Don't forget to include accessories and shoes for each look. Load the photos into a folder on your computer where you can refer back to them when you're stumped for outfit ideas. You can even print them out and put them in a binder to keep in your closet. You will never stand in your closet and wonder what to wear again. This exercise can be repeated for every season. It's a lot of fun playing dress up!

CHAPTER SIX: Five Minute Make-Up

We can't talk about getting our pretty on without addressing make up. No matter what your opinions are about it, it's a must have in my book. If you're completely opposed to wearing makeup, then you can skip this section. But mostly everyone can benefit from a quick routine that helps you face the day more confidently.

I'm going to share my own five minute make-up routine that I learned through a combo of trial and error and from working with a wide variety of professional make-up artists during my acting/modeling years.

Step 1: Moisturize

Find a moisturizer that works well for your skin type and contains a good SPF for daytime.

Step 2: Even

I use a foundation as my base and concealer. After applying primer, dot foundation around your nose, under eyes and on any other area that needs evening out. Use a make-up sponge to blend it in working from the center of your face outward.

Step 3: Set

Dust a lightweight mineral powder over your foundation to set it. You can skip this step if you have really dry skin.

Step 4: Contour

I use a blusher/bronzer duo for this step. Brush the bronzer under cheekbones, on temples and down bridge of nose. Swirl a pinkish or coral blush onto apples of cheeks and blend out toward ears.

Step 5: Eye Shadow

Swipe a sparkly champagne color over lids and apply a small dot to corners of eyes. This is a trick that I learned that makes you look more awake. Use a darker neutral for the crease (taupe to chocolate brown) and highlight brow bone with the champagne shade.

Step 6: Eye Liner

I use dark eye shadow for my eye liner. It creates a softer line and is easier to control. Use a very thin brush or the point of an applicator. Dampen it slightly then dip it in the eye shadow color of your choice. Line both upper and lower lids. Some of my favorite colors to line with include navy blue, turquoise, plum, chocolate brown and gray.

Step 7: Lashes

Curl lashes and then apply two coats of your favorite thickening and lengthening mascara to upper lashes only.

Step 8: Brows

My brow routine is pretty low maintenance, I get them waxed once a month to keep their shape and pluck the strays in between. Each day, I use a spooly brush to tame them. You may opt to use a brow pencil to fill in any sparse areas.

That's it. It might look like a lot of steps but it literally takes me about 5-7 minutes for everything. Choose the steps that work best for you and leave the rest. Experiment with products and colors to find what works for you.

A note about lipstick: I don't regularly wear lipstick around the house. Lip balm, yes. Lip stick, no. But I try to swipe on some color before I head out the door, even if it's just a tinted lip balm. A little flush of color on your lips brightens up your whole face. I save my red and coral lipsticks for date nights or special occasions.

Makeup is an inexpensive way to transform your look. You don't need to spend tons of money on department store makeup. I've had great results from drug store brands and that's what I mostly wear. The only thing I recommend spending a little more on is a good foundation that is the perfect match for your skin. It may be worth a makeup counter consultation to get it right.

It's Your Turn: Take an inventory of your make-up collection. Toss out anything that is old or you don't love. Replace a few items this week with your Payday Pretty allowance. Try to make a point of doing your 5 minute make-up routine every week day for the next week.

CHAPTER SEVEN: Healthy is Pretty

I'll keep this chapter simple. This is not a diet and exercise book and I am far from qualified to be giving out advice in either of these areas. But I can 100% attest to the fact that exceptional self-care **MUST** include some kind of health and fitness routine. I'll share with you what works for me. It might work for you too.

At Home Workouts

K.I.S.S. – Keep it Short and Sweaty. My workouts are quick but effective. I don't believe in wasting time. My motto every time I work out is "MAKE IT COUNT!" My average workout is 20-25 minutes (unless I'm in a yoga class). Oh and I don't have a gym membership, everything I do is at home.

Intervals - I've found that interval training is the most effective for me. Studies show that intervals of high intensity exercise with rest periods for heart recovery burn more calories throughout the day than typical low to moderate intensity workouts. The key is to get your heart rate up for a short burst, then allow a longer recovery time. Here are some of my favorite at-home interval workouts:

Treadmill – Warm up for 3 minutes. Sprint for 30 seconds, recover for one minute. Continue intervals for 20 minutes. Cool down for 3 minutes. If you don't have a treadmill, this can also be done outdoors.

DVD's – Jillian Michael's 30 Day Shred and Ripped in 30 are both great interval workouts. I'm also a fan of the Spartacus workout DVD's.

A note about weight lifting: If you want to seriously change the shape of your body, add in some weights. I do a full body weights work out twice a week. It's short but effective. There are some good weights workouts online, find one that works for you.

Easy Eating

Nutrition – My nutrition is also pretty simple. I follow the 80/20 rule – eat healthy 80% of the time, eat what I want (within reason) 20% of the time. During the week, I drink lots of water. My breakfasts consist of filling protein and high fiber most days (300-400 calories), lunches are a big salad with lean protein (400 calories), snacks are greek yogurt, nuts or string cheese (150 calories). I try to eat a balanced dinner with lean protein, some veggies and a healthy carb like a baked sweet potato (500 calories). I have a nightly snack of 150 calories (popcorn, cereal, dark chocolate). My daily calorie total is around 1600-1800. This helps me maintain my current weight. When I want to lose, I stick with 1500 a day and add in an extra weekly workout. This is just the magic formula that works for me. There are plenty of online calorie calculators and nutrition sites that can help you develop a personalized plan.

We usually go out to dinner Friday night and I have whatever I want. I love Mexican food so it's typically fajitas at our favorite neighborhood restaurant. My Friday night splurge helps me stay disciplined throughout the rest of the week. Mexican food is totally worth it!

It's Your Turn: Come up with three small changes you can make today toward healthier living. It could be drinking more water, committing to a daily walk or cutting out sweets. Whatever it is, try to do it for a full week. Once you've accomplished this goal, add in three more next week.

When you feel comfortable, commit to a weekly workout routine and make it part of your Kick Butt Routine. Choose activities that you find fun, if you hate running then by all means don't do it! Your workout time should be something you look forward to. If you're dreading it, you're not going to stick with it.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Pursue Your Passion

You might be tempted to skip this chapter. Don't. You've been warned!

This one is near and dear to my heart. Most moms, me included, assume that when we have kids, we lose ourselves. And while this is true to a certain extent and it is our obligation (think about it, if we didn't, then the human race wouldn't survive!) I also believe that it is imperative to maintain some kind of life of our own. Something that we have just for us, not for our kids or our husbands or anyone else.

A few years back, I had a counselor ask me what I had just for me. I couldn't answer that question. She then asked me what I planned to do when my kids were out of the house. Again, no answer. I had built 100% of my life around my family and serving them. Yes, this is my top priority in life but is by no means my only purpose. She explained to me how it can be a dangerous trap that many moms fall into. This prompted me to start my own search for meaning outside of my family and home life.

I started experimenting with activities that had piqued my interest in the past like a women's Bible study, yoga, writing and planting a garden. None of these activities took much time away from my family but they paid big dividends in feeding my soul. These are all activities that I can continue to pursue after my kids are grown up.

It's Your Turn: Is there anything that you've always wanted to try? What hobbies or activities would you like to pursue? Take some time this week to research ways that you can pursue your passion.

CHAPTER NINE: Staying Out of the Mom Rut

It's one thing to get out, another to stay out.

If you aren't practicing these steps every day, the possibility exists that you will fall back into the mom rut. My life didn't just magically transform. It takes intentional action EVERY DAY for me to stay out of the rut. I have to recommit every week, day, hour, minute to my schedule and making myself a priority. Life gets busy. We all have a whirlwind of activity. One day we make an excuse, then again the next and before we know it, things start to spiral back out of control.

But it's ok. Don't beat yourself up. Commit in the moment to do better. You can always go back to square one and start again.