

Sara Cecilie Schjoedt-Eriksen

by Maria Flames - Monday, January 28, 2019

<https://zurichseeconnections.com/saracecileschjoedt-eriksen/>

Zurichsee Connections January-February Influential Woman **Mom in Balance Switzerland** **Sara Cecile Schjoedt-Eriksen**

Sara Cecilie Schjoedt-Eriksen, owner of Mom in Balance Switzerland, was born and raised in Denmark. In 2012, she moved to Switzerland with her husband and children for new adventures, leaving a career in finance behind. After settling in, on the left side of the Zürichsee, Sara discovered new energy and motivation through a renewed activation of her love for everything to do with fitness and healthy lifestyle management. What began as a personal lifestyle choice, soon evolved into a professional calling, leading to a Personal Trainer certification, a nutrition and weight management education, and a specialist distinction as a prenatal / postnatal fitness trainer. As owner of Mom in Balance Switzerland, Sara has taken her passion and tied it together with her diverse background in finance and fitness — making a difference, so that women can find their balance and be the best that they can be.

- **1. Sara, tell us about yourself in the world of fitness...**

Fitness and health is my personality. It guides how I spend weekends in the mountains and the diverse sports that I practice and have tried. There is virtually no sport that I won't try at least once! I see fitness as a lifestyle choice that defines everything I do and why I do it. It is who I was in 'life' before *Mom in Balance Switzerland*, and it will also be me once I'm retired. As an entrepreneur, I've taken my lifestyle and made it my business. I feel very lucky to be able to say that I'm living my lifestyle through my work!

- **2. What is the story behind 'Mom in Balance Switzerland'**

Mom in Balance Switzerland has been making women sweat and providing empowering workouts for over five years! In a nutshell, *Mom in Balance Switzerland* offers invigorating outdoor workouts for expecting mothers and women in postpartum recovery, as well as challenging total body workouts for active women in all seasons of life called MPower. In Switzerland, prenatal and postnatal fitness has traditionally been offered in indoor venues with a set schedule. We are different in that we offer a flexible membership with ability to sign in and out of a variety of daytime, evening, and weekend classes throughout the region via our MiB App. But, what really sets us apart is the fact that we take fitness outdoors, utilizing the amazing fresh air that only Switzerland can offer, and teaching women from fitness newbies to seasoned athletes how to grow or maintain a level of fitness during pregnancy and beyond with very little gadgets or physical tools. Learning the simplicity of training with one's own body weight and using resistance bands, is one of the hallmarks of how we teach and train. It gives women the tools to make fitness an integral part of a busy lifestyle by learning how to train outside the confines of a gym and

in absence of major investments in equipment. At the same time, training exclusively amongst women builds an amazing community. *Mom in Balance Switzerland* is for many not just a weekly workout, it is where our members charge their batteries, network -- (and even find jobs!), make new friends, plan lunches, coffee breaks, and adventurous playdates.

- **3. What is your recipe for balancing an active fit lifestyle combined with motherhood?**

I think that finding the right balance for your personal situation is important. What works for me isn't going to work for everyone, but prioritizing self-care is something that we all need to do. As mothers, we instinctively put the needs of our family before our own, to the point that we neglect ourselves and suffer the consequences both physically and mentally. Test things out. Figure out what balance works for you, your partner, and the rest of your family. Take that hour just for yourself. It may sound cliché, but I stand behind: happy mom, happy family. All the way! If I'm stressed, then everything at home slides out of control. Then while you're at it, give yourself some grace! I'll be the first to tell you that I prioritize healthy meals for my family because being a good role model and eating the same healthy foods at the table alongside my family is so important to me and my philosophy. Then in the next sentence, I'll admit that I just gave my kids frozen pizza for lunch yesterday! Knowing that I'm giving my family a varied and balanced diet 90% of the time gives me the wiggle room to whip out some easy meals when nothing goes as planned. I do this with zero guilt. Keep it real! Be honest, be real with yourself and others. Don't strive for the perfection portrayed on social media. Be more open about your bad days. I find it refreshing to not constantly be striving for perfection, and that is where my balance comes from.

- **4. Is it safe to exercise while pregnant or during the postpartum period (after giving birth)?**

Yes! Contrary to many myths and misinformation out there, exercise during pregnancy and in the recovery period after giving birth is not only safe -- it is recommended. In Switzerland, public health experts such as Gesundheitsförderung Schweiz (1) highly recommend that healthy women with low-risk pregnancies should participate in moderate activities at least 2.5 hours per week. Obviously, this is a very important conversation to have with your gynecologist or midwife at the beginning of your pregnancy and through postpartum.

The benefits of exercise range from lowering many risk factors for pregnancy complications such as gestational diabetes, high blood pressure, and excess weight gain. At the same time, it can have a positive effect on a new mother's psychological well-being and sleep quality. Mom in Balance trainings are designed by a team of gynecologists and specialized pelvic floor physical therapists. Our trainers are educated to be able to adapt workouts to the specialized and diverse needs of pregnant and post-partum women. Pregnancy is a very special time to focus on not only taking care of one's self, but also the little growing human being. For many women, it is the first time they'll start to learn to listen to their body and experience its amazing strength and resilience. Most women will receive the green light to begin training again after giving birth from around 6-8 weeks, depending on any complications or complexities such as a c-section or birth injury.

- **5. Are your workouts truly challenging for those of us that need to get back in shape?
Should I be scared to start?**

Mom in Balance trainers are specialized in adapting exercises for all levels. While we offer three

exclusive types of workout programs: pregnancy (prenatal), recovery (postnatal), and MPower (fitness for all women), within these parameters there is room for customization in all directions. Injuries, ability, and any health limitations (with healthcare provider approval), can be taken into consideration. At the other end of the spectrum, a woman with a strong physical fitness background and no limitations in recovery and beyond can be equally challenged. No one should be scared to workout with us. It is truly one of the most welcoming fitness communities that I've ever had the chance to train with. I love seeing the transformation that regular training affords our members.

- **6. What advice would you give to someone who wants to transition to a healthier and fitter lifestyle?**

First off, you need to define your goals as clearly as possible. What aspects of your current lifestyle do you want to improve upon? Commit and plan, including scheduling in your workouts, just like you schedule in any other commitment in life.

Call us, talk to us. Start up slowly. Keep an open dialogue with your trainer. Reevaluate your expectations, stay true to yourself, and check in with yourself along the way. Adjust accordingly and give yourself grace when needed. The most sustainable lifestyle changes are those that happen gradually and with mindfulness. If possible, clear time to for training twice a week, with one of those trainings being on a weeknight to keep you focused. You'll feel the benefits of regular exercise faster, which will give you more energy and motivation on your journey to a fitter lifestyle. *Mom in Balance* has a holistic network, which can help you focus on all aspects of finding your healthier 'you', including dieticians, physical therapists, and a gynecological team.

If you miss a workout, don't let it drag you down. Set small goals with non-food related treats along the way. Small presents to yourself, such as a new nail polish, the latest cookbook, or a small accessory can go a long way in keeping your spirits high!

- **7. Where else can *Mom in Balance* be found around the world?**

Switzerland is the strongest *Mom in Balance* organization outside of the Netherlands. But you can find classes in exotic locations such as Kenya, Singapore, and Japan, as well as throughout Europe and in the USA

- **8. As a female entrepreneur working in Switzerland, where do you get your motivation from?**

I love the feeling of going into the office knowing that what we are doing as a start-up is just the beginning -- we're building up a trending fitness concept -- if that isn't motivating, then I don't know what is! I've worked hard to get to where I'm at professionally. It is also very motivating to see how elements of my professional journey from my background in finance to my diverse certifications as a personal trainer and prenatal/postnatal specialization all tie into building up *Mom in Balance Switzerland*.

- **9. If you were not at *Mom in Balance*, where would you be?**

Realistic or dream job? Realistic, I'd be working in finance in a bank somewhere. It is where I come from.

On top of living my current dream, I could see myself working with kids and families in transitioning to a healthy lifestyle.

- **10. What do you do in your spare time?**

To be honest. Spare time isn't something that I have. But I make a point to prioritize how I use the hours of the day. It is about making the time. As an entrepreneur, mom, wife, and house manager, I need a plan. The pay-off is though, that I start every morning by doing something for myself. Once the kids are off to school, it is important to start the day in a positive way. Taking the time to have a nourishing breakfast. Meditating. Walking the dog. Getting my workout in. Obviously, not everything at once, but each day begins with a focus on me before I break out into the world.

- **11. Where can we find you in Switzerland?**

In the mountains. We do not have mountains in Denmark, so this is probably why I love them so much! I find my peace in the mountains. I love being up there and feeling how small you are in this big world. In the summer, I'm in the lake almost every day.

- **12. What item identifies you?**

My days are full on. Some days I wake up and I put on my favorite sweatshirt to set the tone for the day. My sweatshirt reads, "Power mom".

Appendix

[1] https://gesundheitsfoerderung.ch/assets/public/documents/de/5-grundlagen/publikationen/ernaehrungsbewegung/empfehlungen/kinder-und-jugendliche/bewegung/Infoblatt_GFCH_-_2018-09_Gesundheitswirksame_Bewegung_bei_Frauen_waehrend_und_nach_der_Schwangerschaft.pdf
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