

# You In Shape

## The sweet life

This reader found her own recipe for success by indulging her two loves—baking and exercise. By Mallory Creveling

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**DESSERT IS SERVED**  
Mimi Kurz makes gluten-free, vegan, and paleo treats in her bakeshop.

Photographs by Tony Zikos

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**NAME:** Mimi Kurz

**AGE:** 28

**PROFESSION:** Cofounder and owner,  
Mimi's Cookie Bar

**HOME:** Mammoth Lakes, CA

**SHAPE READER:** 10 years

Mimi Kurz has had a sweet tooth for as long as she can remember. When her mother tried to institute a two-treats-a-week rule, she persuaded her babysitter to sneak her Tootsie Rolls on the sly. As Mimi grew to school age in Chicago and later Vermont, she discovered that she enjoyed baking even more than eating candy—a hobby her parents encouraged by allowing her to whip up cakes and cookies from scratch. “I had fun playing around with recipes, and the end result was usually pretty tasty,” recalls Mimi.

Luckily for her health (and figure), she also took pleasure in sports and the outdoors. So when it came time to find a career after high school, the athletic angle took precedence, and Mimi landed a job in Southern California, as a merchandiser for active-lifestyle brand Roxy. There, she indulged her passion for workouts like running and Pilates, but she never stopped honing her dessert-making skills at home—to the delight of friends who sampled her sweets at dinners and even a pal's wedding.

## (DAY) DREAM JOB

Mimi's priorities began to shift five years later in 2010, when potential layoffs at her company got her thinking about other careers. What came to mind was her fondness for baking. She started testing the waters (while keeping her day job) by launching [mimiscookiebar.com](http://mimiscookiebar.com) and filling dessert orders on nights and weekends. When her husband, Delaney, landed a marketing job in the Sierra Nevada mountains later that year, Mimi joined him, hoping to finally take the leap and become a full-time baker.

Within a few months, the couple started working together to establish

Mimi's own bakery in the perfect location, Mammoth Lakes, a nearby tourist town. Mimi cashed out her 401(k) and IRA accounts, secured investments from friends and family, and signed the lease on Mimi's Cookie Bar in August 2011. “I wanted to do what I was passionate about and figured it was now or never,” she recalls.

## ON A ROLL

The two dove into prepping the street-side space, giving it a bright vintage feel, and opened the shop four weeks later. Mimi's first offerings were a range of organic cookies—including vegan and gluten-free varieties—frozen yogurt, and beverages like gourmet hot chocolate and smoothies. “It didn't take long for me to realize I never wanted to go back to a desk job,” says Mimi.

Since then she has broadened her business, branching out to cakes, cupcakes, brownies, and pies and satisfying customers' requests for specialty items like paleo treats. Mimi also sells wholesale now, supplying restaurants and catering weddings and other events.

## POSED FOR SUCCESS

So how does Mimi stay slim while spending every day smelling and tasting delicious confections? For starters, she plans out her meals in advance. This includes a protein-packed breakfast at home, and premade lunch (usually a ham sandwich) and dinner (often ravioli and veggies) at her store. She also allows herself one dessert a day to avoid overdoing it (a step up from her mom's two-a-week rule). Her naturally sporty nature doesn't hurt, either. Mimi rarely misses her morning walk with her dogs, and she follows that with at least 30 more minutes of exercise, whether it's jumping rope or lifting weights.

With all of her obligations, Mimi needs the energy, strength, and stress relief that exercise provides. Yet, as jam-packed as her life is, she wouldn't have it any other way. “I get to be my own boss and make my own schedule,” says Mimi. “Even though I work almost every day, it doesn't feel like a job because I'm doing what I love.”

## PERFECT FORM

Doing mat exercises a few times a week keeps Mimi toned from head to toe.

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