

A full-page photograph of Jessica Alba. She is wearing a white, off-the-shoulder, long-sleeved dress with a black belt. Her hair is long and wavy, and she is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a dark green wall with some foliage on the left side.

New Year's Resolutions from an Honestly Amazing Mom

She often plays a superhero on-screen, but Jessica Alba's most incredible feats of strength happen every day: balancing her family life, an acting career and a billion-dollar business.

By Shawna Malcom

It's 10:30 a.m. on a Wednesday when Jessica Alba, an iPad in one hand and an espresso with almond milk in the other, strides into the reception area of The Honest Company to welcome me. The sight of the 33-year-old actress—casually chic in a J.Crew cardigan, silk camisole, maxi skirt and Jenni Kayne flats—in the lobby of the business she founded is startling. Not only because she's stunning, even by movie-star standards, but because I'm used to being greeted by an assistant to the boss—not the boss herself.



But Alba, who proceeds to give me a tour of her company's sun-streamed headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif., seems to delight in the unexpected. Take her poppy-pink tanker desk that sits democratically in the midst of other employees'—and which, a bargain-loving Alba proudly reports, she found on Craigslist. Or her career path from famously fit Hollywood A-lister to eco-conscious domestic goddess, thanks to the lifestyle brand she co-founded nearly three years ago. The Honest Company, which specializes in nontoxic household, baby and beauty products, is now valued at nearly \$1 billion. Yes, *billion*. "It's beyond my wildest dreams," Alba says. "We struck a convenience, standards and values chord." And she's just getting started. "I'd like to build this so that we're a multi-billion-dollar company," she says.

If anyone can do it, it's Alba, who impressively balances myriad roles—movie star, mogul, mother (to daughters Honor, 6, and Haven, 3), wife (to producer Cash Warren), style icon, healthy-living advocate and even Honest Company greeter—with grace. Though not, she's quick to point out, with ease. "I don't have it all figured out," she insists, reporting that her jam-packed schedule has both prevented her from working out in two months and left her feeling "a lot of mom guilt." Settling into an office sofa, she notes, "You just have to try and do the best you can in every moment."

As Alba looks ahead to a new year that promises to be even busier than the last, she points out there's no better time to commit to making a good life great: "January 1 offers you a reset button." Here, Alba shares the credos that help her pull it all off—and opens up about the late nights, unread emails and gym absenteeism that come with a bold, brimming life.



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family. Among her kid- (and husband-) approved specialties: turkey meatballs with shredded veggies inside and gluten-free mac and cheese made with olive oil, Parmesan, mozzarella and a little Gouda.

But Alba doesn't beat herself up for the occasional indulgence—and neither should you, she says: “Life's too short to deprive yourself.” Glass jars of sweets can be found in each Honest meeting room, because “I can't get through a meeting without candy,” she says. “And I love popcorn. My husband got me a popcorn machine for Christmas, but it took up too much space in our kitchen so I brought it to the office. In the beginning, I was the only one using it, but now popcorn's caught on. It's like the Honest Company snack.”

2 ADOPT A FRESH FITNESS PHILOSOPHY

Alba's known for having a killer bod, one she's showcased in a number of physically demanding roles, from superhero Sue Storm in the *Fantastic Four* films to sultry stripper-turned-revenge-seeking-warrior in last summer's *Sin City: A Dame to Kill For*. But looking flawless on-screen requires endless hours in the gym—a commitment she resented early in her career. “I didn't appreciate working out when I was in my 20s,” she says. “It was purely for work, and I hated it so much. It was just brutal.”

A shift in perspective came after Alba became a mother. “Now I enjoy it, because it's ‘me’ time and a stress-reliever,” she says. These days, she likes to get her sweat on in hot

1 EAT WELL—BUT REMEMBER TO TREAT YOURSELF

Raised in a Southern California suburb dominated by chain restaurants, where “everything is canned and fried and sort of ends up tasting the same,” Alba, who was often sick as a child, decided to seek out healthier options early. “I became a vegetarian when I was 12, then stopped when I was 16,” she says. “But that four-year period was interesting, because it opened up

a whole new world of fresh produce and alternative protein sources.”

These days, Alba doesn't adhere to any specific regimen (“I think diets are boring”), other than opting to eat a variety of lean proteins and fresh fruits and vegetables. A typical breakfast is half a banana with brown-rice cereal and almond milk, and lunch is usually a salad chock-full of whole grains and nuts or pumpkin seeds “so it's not just leaves; it feels hearty.” For dinner, she whips up meals that are “as fresh and organic as possible” for her



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products. When she became pregnant the first time, the actress switched to an all-natural regimen and saw dramatic improvement. “I tried everything under the sun and finally found natural products that actually worked,” she says. (Check out her favorites on p. 20.)

For others who want to go the natural skin-care route, Alba advises looking closely at a product’s label: “Avoid anything with parabens and phthalates. And no synthetic fragrances. They’re one of the top-known allergens—make sure it’s specifically labeled ‘fragrance-free.’”

While Alba takes pride in putting her best face forward, she’s also careful to impart a beauty philosophy to her daughters that goes beyond skin-deep. Growing up, she says, “whenever I was bullied, my mom would say, ‘You’re a beautiful girl. They’re just jealous.’ It never helped. I want my girls to know that beauty is being kind. Beauty is helping people. Beauty is humility. I want to give them connections to things in the world that have value beyond physical appearance.”

yoga and spinning classes whenever she can. “I prefer Flywheel,” says Alba of the cycling phenom that lets participants compare their progress to others’ in the room, “because I like doing the competitive thing.” She also logs time in her home gym, which occupies half of her garage (the other half is a playroom); there, she alternates sprints with brisk walking on a treadmill and keeps her abs toned with Pilates. “It’s fun to mix it up,” she says. “And I really like to work out with friends. They keep me accountable.”

For those of us who see exercise as an obligation (like Alba once did), the

actress suggests finding motivation beyond the physical. “I like how I *feel* after a workout,” she says. But she doesn’t stress when the gym falls off her schedule. “I’m a little squishy right now,” she reports. “It’s fine. I don’t care.”

3

GET GORGEOUS THE GENTLE WAY

Alba insists she didn’t always have such flawless skin. “For so much of my life, I had crazy rashes. I’d start sneezing and my face would swell up”—the result, she says, of an allergy to petrochemicals found in many traditional skin-care

4

NURTURE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Proudly ambitious, Alba can’t imagine not holding down dual careers. “Acting is a priority,” she says, “but when you’re building a company like this, you can’t just check out. This is life-changing stuff. This is legacy.” Her schedule, though, is not for the faint of heart: She has two films—action comedy *Barely Lethal* and horror flick *The Veil*—set for release this year. And when she’s not on a movie set, she’s in the Honest office five days a week,



jessica's gentle beauty faves



John Masters Organics Lavender Hydrating Mist for Skin & Hair (\$16, johnmasters.com) *Certified-organic flower water erases dryness on face or hair.*



Koh Gen Do Macro Vintage Essence Mask (\$110 for six, barneys.com) *Plant essences leave skin dewy. "I'm big on these," Alba says. "They make you look like a serial killer, but I do them on long flights."*



Dr. Hauschka Rose Day Cream (\$43, drhauschka.com) *The organic lotion packs Damask rose oil and shea butter.*



Resurface by Shani Darden Retinol Reform (\$95, shanidarden.com) *"It's a moisturizing retinol so it doesn't strip your skin," Alba notes. "I use it once a week—more if I'm traveling."*



Honest Healing Balm (\$13, honest.com) *The soothing cream is packed with certified-organic oils—perfect for roughness or razor burn.*

sometimes until 8 p.m. Her unread email count: 81,585. "If I let work take over my life," she says, "it will."

But she refuses to forego what matters most: quality time with those she loves. "I sacrifice sleep for grown-up time," she says, whether it's going out with girlfriends after tucking her daughters into bed or having date nights with the hubby. She and Warren enjoy going to dinner and concerts, "but we go out so much for work, it's also nice to just watch TV and order in," she says.

Alba's made it a personal goal in 2015 to set aside two or three days a week when she'll get home early enough to see her kids after school. "They're growing up so fast, tomorrow they're going to be teenagers!" she says. "You can't turn back time and do it over again. I don't want to miss their lives."

5

CONNECT WITH YOURSELF

How do you slow down with so much going on? A year ago, Alba discovered

"Mindful Meditations," free guided meditations available to download from iTunes U, some as brief as a few minutes—ideal for the über-busy modern woman. "I don't know how to carve out 20 minutes, but I know how to carve out two or three, so I try to do those whenever I can," Alba says. "It's a small thing, but it really helps me shut down and turn off."

After all, restoring a sense of balance is vital. "You can't take care of anybody else if you don't take care of yourself," she points out. And that's the honest truth. ♦