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Forget celebrity trainers. When svelte star Jessica Alba wanted to get her famous figure back after her two pregnancies, she turned to a certain binding technique.

“I wore a double corset day and night for three months,” the actress said in a recent interview. “It was sweaty, but worth it.” While images of lacing up with rib-squeezing lingerie comes to mind, experts say Alba most likely wore a waist-slimming wrap, like the Almighty Cincher by AMIA, which promises to trim “poochy bellies.” If worn for as many as 10 hours a day, it can

reportedly reduce up to four inches in the midsection, thanks to stimulating heat that literally sweats off the pounds. The concept isn’t new, especially in Latin American where women bind themselves in “fajas,” which are similar to corsets, but the trend is catching on in Hollywood. Even former Playboy playmate Holly Madison allegedly used similar waist cinchers to help her achieve a smaller midsection six weeks after giving birth.

“Wearing a corset works by drawing in the stretched-out muscles (from childbirth), which provide support and stability around the core,” explains New York City-based nutritionist Franci Cohen. **“It does so while also minimizing strain on the ligaments and joints in the lower back, pelvis and glutes. By reducing stress in these areas, your body becomes more efficient at re-aligning itself back to your pre-pregnancy state.”** Cohen also adds that by wearing body-hugging corsets and girdles, the stomach is pressed into a temporarily smaller size, meaning women eat less and feel full faster. Pre and postnatal fitness expert Leah Keller is also familiar with wearing supportive apparel to naturally help create a smaller waistline.

“For centuries, cultures around the world have recognized the value of binding the post-pregnancy abdomen to facilitate the healing process,” explains Keller. “Somewhere along the line, we’ve forgotten the wisdom of our great-grandmothers who regularly wore girdles and corsets during the months following childbirth.”

In the case of Cora Harrington, founder and chief editor of *The Lingerie Addict*, wearing shapewear prevents consuming too many calories — which is really the secret behind weight loss.

“Any kind of super constricting undergarment is going to compress your internal organs,” she says. “That not only makes eating larger meals uncomfortable, it also makes eating fatty meals or drinking carbonated beverages uncomfortable. It’s that change in diet, particularly if you wear one of these undergarments over a long period as Jessica Alba did, that makes the weight loss happen.”

But is it smart for women to suit up to put pesky pregnancy pounds in their place?

“The problem is that when you constrict your waist, your organs have to go elsewhere,” says Harvard-trained integrative physician and gynecologist Sarah Gottfried, MD. “(Corsets) push your lungs and liver up, and your intestines down. The result is a smaller waist, but organs are out of their natural placement in your body.”

Wayne Andersen, MD says wearing a tight corset for weight loss does more harm than good.

“Tight-fitting attire like corsets can decrease blood flow to the kidneys and compress the abdomen to decrease blood flow to the intestines,” he warns. “They also don’t teach you to eat healthier. You just avoid eating foods that can distend your body.”

For long-term weight loss, Anderson says monitoring your weight with a proper diet and daily exercise is crucial in losing the pounds and keeping them off.

“Rather than using a corset, create a monitoring system with a pair of jeans that fit at your goal weight and use them to check in,” he says. “If you’re finding them a little tight, remind yourself of the healthy habits to help you stay at your goal weight.”

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