



TOP 10 WAYS TO DEVELOP A HEALTHY BODY IMAGE

Having a positive feeling about your body can be very challenging. The media presents us with people blessed with perfect bodies further enhanced with Photoshop. It can be easy to compare yourself to an unattainable physique and then feel bad about the cards you've been dealt.

However, a healthy and attractive body can come in many shapes and sizes. You can have a healthy body image regardless of your current situation!

Learn to love the body you have with these strategies:

1. **Ignore the magazines.** The people on the covers of magazines are literally one in a million. Most of us don't play professional sports, have a billion dollars, or develop the Theory of General Relativity. It's doubtful you've ever even met someone capable of being a model. **Have reasonable expectations.**
2. **Focus on a weight that feels good.** You might think you look better at a lower body weight, but if you feel terrible, who cares? Choose the healthiest body weight that also feels good to you.
3. **Focus on what you can do.** Being able to walk and play the violin is a lot more impressive and meaningful than the ability to do 20 pull ups. No one has a body that's perfect for every activity.
4. **Identify your best three physical features.** Take a look in the mirror and find a few things you like. Write them down. Put this list where you'll see it often. **Remind yourself of these features each day.**
5. **Be active.** Physical activity feels good on multiple levels. Research shows that those who exercise have a more positive body image than those who don't. Get moving and

notice how much better you feel about yourself.

6. **Avoid comparing yourself to others.** Comparing yourself to others usually results in unfair feelings about yourself. Everyone's body is simply different. **No one body shape is any "better" than another.**
7. **Avoid checking your body.** It's common to put all your attention on what you feel is your worst body part. Cut down the number of times you check a specific body part in the mirror each day. You have more important things to do.
8. **Meditation.** If you find yourself obsessing about your body, meditation can help to clear your mind and allow you to refocus. **A few minutes of meditation can make a big difference.**
9. **Try affirmations.** Instead of saying negative things to yourself, say something positive instead. Keep positive thoughts in your head and you'll feel better about your body and yourself.
10. **Be respectful of your body.** If you treat your body respectfully, you'll think more highly of yourself. This means eating healthy foods, getting enough rest, and exercising regularly. Treat your body like it matters. You can't live without it.

A negative body image can affect people of all ages. While this occurs more commonly in females, males can also suffer from this significant challenge. **Remember: everyone deserves to enjoy a healthy body image, including you!**

Be appreciative of the body you have. You have every reason to love your body. After all, where would you be without it?