

DidYouKnow?



10 Steps to Positive Body Image

According to the American Psychological Association, 30 – 40% of women are somewhat unhappy with their appearance while another 45% experience anxiety or depression due to dissatisfaction with their appearance. In other words, majority of women are buying into the myth of perfect bodies. Check out these steps to make peace with your beautiful body:

1. **Celebrate life:** Appreciate all that your body can do. Every day your body carries you closer to your dreams. Celebrate all the amazing things your body does for you – running, dancing, breathing, laughing, dreaming, etc. Take care of yourself, regardless of society's standards.
2. **Focus on who you are:** Focus on who you are and not just what your body looks like. Keep a top-10 list of things you like about yourself – things that aren't related to how much you weigh or what you look like. Read your list often. Add to it as you become aware of more things to like about you. Due to genetics and body types, all of us can't be thin but we can all be healthy. Instead of comparing yourself to a model on the cover of a magazine, look in the mirror and find your own standard of beauty.
3. **Remind yourself that "true beauty" is not simply skin deep:** When you feel good about yourself and who you are, you carry yourself with a sense of confidence, self-acceptance, and openness that makes you beautiful regardless of whether you physically look like a supermodel. Beauty is a state of mind, not a state of your body. Do something everyday that brings you joy. Remember, the majority of us are not models.
4. **Food is not the enemy:** Eat healthy but don't obsess. Allowing yourself to enjoy treats helps prevent bingeing and keeps you in control. Learn the basics of exercise and nutrition and set realistic goals. Your focus should always be on health. Walk, run, bike, or do aerobics. Exercise makes you feel good about your body. Indulge your body in fun, feel-good activities often.
5. **Surround yourself with positive people:** It is easier to feel good about yourself and your body when you are around others who are supportive and who recognize the importance of liking yourself just as you naturally are.
6. **Practice Affirmation:** Shut down those voices in your head that tell you your body is not "right" or that you are a "bad" person. You can overpower those negative thoughts with positive ones. The next time you start to tear yourself down, build yourself back up with a few affirmations that work for you.
7. **Dress up your self-esteem:** Dress up your self-esteem by taking care of your appearance. Wear clothes that are flattering to your figure no matter what size you wear. Stop waiting until you lose a "little more weight" before feeling good about yourself. Aim to work with your body, not against it. Treat yourself to a facial, a manicure, or a pedicure. Indulge in a long, hot bubble bath. Wear a wonderful fragrance.
8. **Become a critical viewer:** Become a critical viewer of social and media messages, instead of getting carried away by their words. Pay attention to images, slogans, or attitudes that make you feel bad about yourself or your body. Protest these messages. Write a letter to the advertiser or talk back to the image or message. Be honest with yourself and practice self-acceptance.
9. **Do something nice for yourself:** Something that lets your body know you appreciate it. Take a bubble bath, make time for a nap, find a peaceful place outside to relax.
10. **Lend a helping hand:** Use the time and energy you might spend worrying about food, calories, and your weight to do something to help others. Sometimes reaching out to other people can help you feel better about yourself and can make a positive change in our world. Be grateful for all you have and all that you are able to experience.

