LOVE your BODY

It’s natural to find flaws in ourselves, but people with negative body image may take these negative feelings further, hating to look at their own bodies and obsessively pursuing an “ideal body.”

Comparing yourself to others can be harmful. We all may have days when we feel awkward or uncomfortable in our bodies, but the key to developing positive body image is to recognize and respect our natural shape and learn to overpower those negative thoughts and feelings with acceptance that is positive and affirming.

IMPROVING BODY IMAGE

YOUR ARE WORTH SO MUCH MORE THAN WHAT YOU WEIGH AND HOW YOU LOOK.

- Appreciate your body for all it can do
- Beauty is a state of mind - when you feel good about yourself it shows
- Look at yourself as a whole person
- Become a critical viewer of social media
- Do something kind for yourself and your body

Love Body Image

IMPROVING

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES University of Pennsylvania

WHAT YOU SEE IN THE MIRROR

LEARNING to Love

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3624 MARKET STREET, FIRST FLOOR WEST
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Body image is how we perceive ourselves when we look in the mirror. It can impact how we feel about ourselves and how others perceive us in relationships.

Women often feel pressure to measure up to a certain social and cultural ideal of beauty. This can lead to poor body image, which increases the risk for extreme weight/body control behaviors.

Poor body image has been linked to diminished academic/mental performance, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, and sexual dysfunction. Fixating on weight and dieting can cause you to lose interest in school, friends, or work.

**WHAT IS body image?**

Some beliefs and attitudes about body image can be traced to a cultural obsession with celebrity. We are inundated with beautiful and perpetually slim young people in movies, magazines, and on the Internet. These images of models and entertainers are often heavily edited, yet this unrealistic representation persists as an idealized beauty standard. Thus, starting when they are children, young women, especially, internalize messages that they need to look “perfect” to be seen as healthy, competent, and desirable.

Body issues also impact men who are bombarded with media promoting lean eating and high-intensity workouts to achieve muscle mass and success. Research shows that today’s college men are reporting greater levels of body dissatisfaction.

**OTHER FACTORS THAT AFFECT BODY IMAGE**

- A distorted perception of your body shape/size
- Believing you are less attractive than others
- Shame, self-consciousness or anxiety about yourself
- Feeling awkward or uncomfortable in your body
- Comparing your appearance to those around you
- REMARKS FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS ABOUT APPEARANCE
- OUR OWN IDEAS ABOUT HOW WE AND OTHERS LOOK
- SEXUAL, PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- COMPARISONS TO IDEALIZED BODY SHAPE/SIZE
- A MULTIBILLION-DOLLAR DIET INDUSTRY
- REALITY TELEVISION AND SOCIAL MEDIA
- HAVING A TRUE PERCEPTION OF YOUR BODY SHAPE/SIZE
- ACCEPTING AND BEING PROUD OF YOUR BODY
- FEELING COMFORTABLE AND CONFIDENT IN SOCIAL SETTINGS
- APPRECIATING YOUR NATURAL SHAPE
- UNDERSTANDING THAT APPEARANCE DOES NOT DEFINE YOU

Researchers have found that increased preoccupation with appearance and body dissatisfaction put people at a greater risk for engaging in dangerous practices to control weight and size. Some of these include:

- **EXTREME DIETING**
- **COMPULSIVE EXERCISING**
- **ABUSE OF LAXATIVES AND/OR DIET PILLS**
- **SMOKING**
- **SUBSTANCE ABUSE**
- **EATING DISORDERS SUCH AS ANOREXIA OR BULIMIA**

If you or someone you know suffers from negative body image, please seek professional help.

**CALL OR STOP BY CAPS**

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