

5 KEY HABITS THAT PROMOTE A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE



EAT AND EXERCISE FOR HEALTH

Taking care of your body to promote health, not how you look, promotes a positive body image. When you feel strong and healthy, you will also feel better about yourself. People who believe they are healthy and appreciate what their bodies can do are more likely to have a positive body image.

Avoid fad diets, extreme exercise, and dangerous ways to lose weight like laxatives. These methods can harm your health instead of making you feel and look better. Continuously going from one extreme diet or exercise routine to another focuses your energy on how you look, not on how you feel. The healthier choice is to eat and exercise to improve and maintain your health, no matter your body weight, shape, or size.

DON'T COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS

Society bombards people with images and comparisons that promote a negative body image if you don't meet those standards. Advertising is designed to make you believe that you need select products to look good. Who you are is not defined by how you look. There is more than one way to look and feel beautiful. Comparing yourself to other peoples' standards can lower your self-esteem and promote a negative body image.



WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

How you discuss your body and your appearance can promote or discourage a positive body image. Constant complaining about your appearance can lead to low self-esteem. Even inadvertent statements make a difference.

Consider how these different phrases make you feel:

- My hair is too long/curly/straight/gray versus I like how this hairstyle looks on me.
- I lost five pounds versus I enjoy using my lunch break to walk outside

In each of these examples, the first statement focuses on an object – clothes, hair, and weight. The second statements focus on the person and their feelings and wellbeing. Promoting a positive body image includes recognizing a person's wellbeing, not only how they look.

DO SOMETHING NICE FOR YOUR BODY

Choose clothes, foods, and activities that you enjoy, not what society or advertising tells you is best. Your personal style should reflect what makes you feel good. Don't punish yourself by wearing clothes that don't fit or styles you don't like to try and look good.

Savor the foods you eat, and you will find that less is often more. Enjoying a treat is healthier than binge-eating because you've denied yourself. Participate in physical activities that combine enjoyment with exercise, like social group sports or walking your dog.



SPEND YOUR TIME WITH POSITIVE PEOPLE

To promote a positive body image, spend your time with positive people. Positive people uplift and support each other. Spending time with people who have a negative body image can affect how you feel about yourself and your appearance. Consider joining a volunteer group. Volunteers are often made up of many different body types, yet they work together and help and respect each other.