



Learning to love the body you're in



In a near-constant stream of social media images from friends, influencers, celebrities, and brands, it's all too easy to compare ourselves to an ideal of perfection and beauty. That can make it challenging to have a healthy body image, whether we're big or small.

If you find yourself with a poor self-image, it's time to change the negative self-talk and be thankful for everything that's right with your body.

Body positive — learning what healthy means for you

Body positive is a movement that promotes acceptance of all bodies, regardless of size, shape, skin tone, gender, and physical abilities. It encourages a positive body image that's based on treating yourself and your body with respect and appreciation. Building body acceptance is vital because having a negative body image can lead to eating disorders, mental health conditions, performance-enhancing substance use, and depression or suicide.

How to build a positive body image

Most people don't love all of their body all of the time, but it is possible to like and appreciate your body more.

- **Practice gratitude.** Be thankful for all your body does for you every day.
- **Scrub your social media feed.** If certain apps or people make you feel bad, remove or unfollow them.
- **Surround yourself with positive people.** They'll support and love you for who you are, not how you look.
- **Give yourself encouragement.** Post inspiring quotes on your mirror or repeat a positive saying each morning.
- **Focus on yourself as a whole person.** Make a list of all you do for family, friends, and your community.
- **Shift your energy when you're feeling bad.** Go for a walk, write in a journal, or meditate.

Tips for parents

Kids pick up a lot of cues from their parents, but advertising and social media also play a role in poor body image. To help your child(ren):*

DO:

- Love and accept them for who they are.
- Keep an eye on their social media feed and talk with them about what they see.
- Be aware of changes in eating or exercise habits.
- Listen for negative comments about themselves.

DON'T:

- Comment or focus on their (or your own) weight.
- Shame your child for eating certain foods.
- Over-control their eating.

Additional resources:

The Body Positive: thebodypositive.org

Mental Health America: mhanational.org

National Eating Disorders Association: nationaleatingdisorders.org



Finding help

Talking with a doctor or therapist can be helpful. To find one in your plan's network, use the Find Care feature on our SydneySM Health mobile app or anthem.com/find-care.

Sources:

Cleveland Clinic: *7 Tips for Building a Better Body Image As an Adult* (accessed May 2023): health.clevelandclinic.org.
National Eating Disorders Association: *10 Steps to Positive Body Image* (accessed May 2023): nationaleatingdisorders.org.
National Eating Disorders Association: *Developing & Modeling Positive Body Image* (accessed May 2023): nationaleatingdisorders.org.
National Institutes of Health: *The impact of the media on eating disorders in children and adolescents* (accessed May 2023): ncbi.nlm.nih.gov.

* Mental Health America: *How to Teach Your Child Body Positivity* (accessed May 2023): mhanational.org.

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