Body Image

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Negative Body Image



- Generally, society places a large emphasis on the appearance of women's bodies
    - Most commonly, women are encouraged to look thinner or smaller
    - As athletes, women are depicted as overly toned and muscular
- Often, women struggle with negative body image or the distorted perception of their physical appearance, resulting in feelings of shame, anxiety, and low self-esteem

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Important Factors

- Social media and television often directly or indirectly show idealized bodies and discuss weight in a negative light
- Tight-fitting uniforms or work out clothes often make women feel especially vulnerable or insecure
- For athletes, many believe they must maintain the “fit” physique, with low body fat percentages and high muscle density





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Exercising for appearance

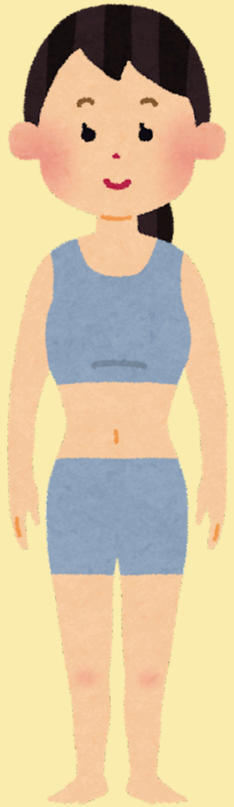
- According to research, exercising for appearance instead of health or fitness is often associated with negative body image
- While exercising is a tool which can help people stay healthy, it is important to remember that looking healthy doesn't always mean looking skinny



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Body composition

- A healthy body fat percentage for women is often cited to be around 21% to 31% (without considering age and activity level)
- Women require a higher baseline of essential fat (~10-13%)
- Without this essential fat, women risk losing their menstrual cycle, decreased bone density, poor immunity, and chronic fatigue
- While everyone stores body fat differently, women typically need 16-20% body fat for visible abs, which is below the healthy range



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Weight

- Weighing more doesn’t necessarily mean that someone has more fat
- People may have weight in fat or they may have weight in muscle
- People who are taller will also weigh more than people who are shorter
- One cannot accurately compare body fat without an analysis of fat mass versus lean muscle mass



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“Don't worry about your body, just do your sport.”

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Food Comparison

- Strenuous exercise burns calories
- The human body needs those calories back to function normally
- Everyone has different metabolic rates, therefore you may need to eat significantly more than other individuals to simply survive





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Food Comparison

- More muscle requires more food
- If you already are more muscular, you often indirectly burn more calories during physical activity
- If you want to gain muscle, experts recommend eating in a slight calorie surplus since your body needs extra energy

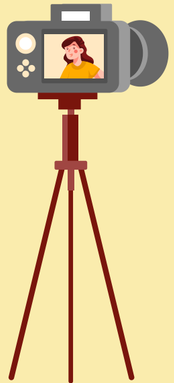


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Social Media

- People on social media don’t always accurately represent reality
- It is likely that fitness influencers don’t actually look the way they present themselves all 24 hours of the day
- Lighting and posing makes a very big difference
- New, under researched or expensive drugs and technologies manipulate depictions of weight loss through the media







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Self-love

- If you're struggling with body image, seek help from a trusted adult or licensed professional
- Ask yourself if you would speak to a loved one or your younger self the same way
- Correct negative self-talk with positive self-talk.



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For sources and citations, please see here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1FkPsT6ZxSg7BThoxeKLjadrmCZ4_qCbjrVkpth89SLU/edit?tab=t.0

or visit projectflowfit.com

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