

## QuickTakes



### Learning to Love What You See in the Mirror

We all want to look our best, but a healthy body is not always linked to appearance. Healthy lifestyle choices are extremely important to improving body image. Here are some tips to make better choices:

- A nutritious diet promotes healthy skin, hair and strong bones;
- Regular exercise has been known to boost self-esteem, self-image and energy levels; and
- Plenty of rest is key to stress management!

## Test Your Body Image

**Want to learn more about your body image? Take our quiz. The answers will help you start to control stress by seeing yourself in a clearer, more realistic light.**

Answer yes or no to the following questions:

1. Do you avoid exercise or outdoor activities because of your appearance?
2. Do you avoid social situations because of your appearance?
3. Do you always look in the mirror and make judgments about your appearance?
4. Do you exercise mainly to change what you dislike about your body?
5. Do you think people are going to make fun of you because of your appearance?
6. Do you think people will not be intimate with you because of your appearance?
7. Do you think people find you unattractive?
8. Do you think the only way you're going to like your appearance is to change it?
9. Do you feel embarrassed at social functions because of your appearance?
10. Do you feel badly that you have not been able to change your appearance?
11. Do you feel uncomfortable when others compliment your appearance?
12. Do you feel self-conscious about your appearance when exercising?

### If you answered yes to more than three questions, you have a healthy body image!

For further growth, look at the questions to which you answered yes and see if you can work on those areas. Challenge your self-perceptions. Are they rooted in reality, or are they really based on fear or other people's expectations?

Body image can be improved independent of changing your actual appearance. Remember, body image is about the way you perceive your looks.

### If you answered yes to four to eight questions, your body image is moderately negative.

Most of us dislike some aspects of our body; if dissatisfaction with physical appearance grows, it may affect your day-to-day life and overall peace of mind.

Look at the questions that felt familiar and begin to challenge why you feel this way. If you are avoiding certain situations, gradually work them back into your routine and ask yourself if you have magnified fears to unrealistic levels.

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### If you answered yes to nine or more questions, your body image appears to be in an unhealthy range.

Now is a good time to explore the behaviors, thoughts and emotions that feed negative body image:

- Are you avoiding – or jumping into – situations that make you feel bad about your appearance?
- Do you assume the worst-case scenario as the norm and then respond emotionally to those thoughts?

If you work at it, you can improve your body image without altering your physical appearance. Seeking the advice of a therapist may help.

# What Is Body Image?

Body image is how you see yourself when you look in the mirror or picture yourself in your mind. Regardless of how closely your actual figure resembles your perception, your self-esteem, relationships and behaviors are affected by your body image.

To have a healthy body image here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- Is it really possible to achieve the “ideal body”?
- Is the “ideal body” really your key to health, success and happiness?; and
- What can you do to improve your body image?

What is a positive body image? With a positive body image you have a real perception of your size, shape and feel comfortable with your body. You're proud of your unique body and refuse to waste an unreasonable amount of time on worrying about food and your weight.

What is a negative body image? It can be a distorted perception of your shape, when you perceive parts of your body unlike they really are. You may be convinced that only other people are attractive and that your body size or shape is a sign of personal failure. If you feel this way, you are not alone. Let's learn how to change this view and build a healthy body image.

## Body Image and the Media

Women and men in today's society are under pressure to measure up to a social and cultural ideal of beauty and an ideal body image. Women are often bombarded with “Barbie-doll”-type images and men are often faced with “G.I. Joe” type images. The cosmetic, fashion and diet industries are increasingly expanding upon the insecurities of men and women. Young people are a prime target for the media focus.

According to the American Academy for Pediatrics, by the time adolescents graduate from high school, they will have spent 15,000 hours with the media, while only having spent 12,000 hours in school. By age 13, approximately 53% of American girls are “unhappy with their bodies.” This number will increase to 78% once girls reach 17 years of age, according to the National Institute on Media and the Family.

We may have our days of feeling awkward, uncomfortable in our bodies, but the key to developing positive body image is to recognize and respect our natural shape and learn how to overpower those negative thoughts and turn them into positive ones. You may choose to pay less attention to the media, or find ways to reexamine your life and self-esteem to overcome negative thoughts. Whatever you do, avoid unrealistic goals and focus on exploring ways to enhance your life!

## Raspberry-Orange Smoothie Pops

Makes: 10 pops Takes: 10 minutes to prepare, 3 hours to freeze

### Ingredients:

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 3/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate
- 2 1/2 cups fresh or frozen unsweetened raspberries
- 2 cups nonfat vanilla yogurt

### NUTRITION INFO PER POP:

- 94 Calories
- 0.2g Fat
- 0g Saturated fat
- 0g Trans fat
- 3g Protein
- 20g Carbohydrate
- 2.3g Fiber
- 30mg Sodium

### Preparation:

1. Sprinkle gelatin over orange juice concentrate in a small saucepan. Let stand for 1 minute or until gelatin softens. Cook over very low heat, stirring, until the gelatin dissolves, about 2 minutes.
2. Combine raspberries, yogurt and the gelatin mixture in a blender or food processor and puree until smooth. Spoon the mixture evenly into ten 3-oz paper cups. Cover the tops of the cups with aluminum foil and insert a wooden-treat stick through the foil into the center of each cup. Freeze until firm, at least 3 hours.
3. To serve, remove the foil and peel cups from smoothie pop.



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