

## Simple helpful suggestions for improving your body image

*Positive body image is a process, not a destination.* In a culture that idealizes limited examples of beauty, developing a positive body image requires consistent work. Work to incorporate these suggestions into your daily life.

**Decrease your exposure to media that promotes limited examples of beauty.** This includes magazines, television shows, movies, and music videos. If you find yourself feeling badly about your body or appearance after watching a certain television show, consider no longer viewing the program. If you feel negatively about your appearance after reading a particular magazine, stop subscribing to the magazine. Remember that the average woman in the US is a size 14, not a 2.

**Don't criticize yourself when you look in the mirror.** Consider having a different conversation with yourself when you look at yourself in the mirror. Remind yourself of all of the positive qualities you possess, including physical and personal attributes. Hang notes around your mirror listing your positive traits and gifts.

**Improve your nutrition and eating habits.** Research demonstrates a consistent relationship between body image and how we relate to food. Work to have a more flexible, relaxed approach to eating. Learn more about [intuitive eating](#) and [mindful eating](#) to stop [dieting](#) and/or emotionally eating.

**Remember that every body is different.** If all of us looked the same, the world likely would be pretty boring. Due to genetics, finances, and time the majority of people couldn't possibly look like celebrities. So stop trying! Appreciate the ways that you are different and unique.

**Challenge the relationship between your self-worth and appearance.** If appearance is an influence on a person's self esteem, it should only be a small piece. Find other ways to feel good about yourself other than working on your appearance. Examples include developing enjoyable hobbies, volunteering for a cause important to you, or increasing your knowledge in an area that interests you. Put some effort into working on these areas.

**Wear clothes that you make you feel good about yourself and your body.** Fashion trends keep changing in order for the industry to make money. If you don't feel good about your appearance in the latest trends, find clothes that help you feel comfortable and pleased with your body. Donate the other clothes to charity.

**Develop an exercise routine that focuses on health and wellness.** Regular, moderate exercise is not only positive for your health, but also for your self-esteem. Exercise is also wonderful as a stress management technique and mood lifter. Try finding a couple of hours per week to exercise, which can be anything from walking to a group exercise class at [Campus Recreation Sports](#).

**Stop fat talk.** Criticizing yourself and others creates a toxic environment that makes it difficult for people to like their bodies. Stop asking your friends, "Do I look fat?" and criticizing celebrities. Let's make Towson University a more positive environment!

For more information, check out [National Eating Disorders Association](#) ([nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://nationaleatingdisorders.org))