

# Managing Body Image



## What is body image?

By definition in Merriam-Webster, body image is a **subjective picture** of one's own physical appearance established by both **self-observation and noting the reaction of others**.

## Remember, body image is subjective.

Here are some methods to challenge/cope with the messages you perceive and internalize:

### Four components of body image:

**Perceptual:** How you **see** your body

- **Comparisons to others (or yourself):** Attempting to measure yourself against others you know, old images of yourself, or images in the media as an attempt to see yourself from another perspective

**Affective:** How you **feel** about your body

- **Satisfaction:** Asking yourself if you feel satisfied with the image you see

**Cognitive:** How you **think** about your body

- **Negative self-talk:** Engaging in an internal dialogue that enhances perceived flaws

**Behavioral:** **Behaviors** you engage in as a result

- **Body checking:** Frequently looking at yourself/ your body in the mirror

### Explore your feelings:

Have you ever heard the expression “I feel fat”? Fat is not a feeling. Challenge yourself to examine your thoughts. Identify your emotions, label them for what they are – angry, sad, anxious, etc.

### Gratitude:

Write down five things you are grateful for daily. Notice all of the ways in which you are thankful for the functions your body performs and all it is beyond the physical appearance.

### The media:

Recognize the role that the media plays in forming a narrative about ourselves and contributes to acts of social comparison. Challenge these messages by forming a critical lens to view both subtle and direct messages. Ask yourself questions like: What is the message being sent? Who created this message? Feel free to unfollow or mute accounts if you feel they send negative or unrealistic messages.

Here are some Instagram accounts to follow to fill your timeline with positivity:

@myselflovesupply @littleearthlings @myeasytherapy @mayedoodles

### Build awareness for behaviors:

Notice when you engage in behaviors – such as body checking – and ask yourself what this behavior does for you. Often, body checking is done without noticing as a way to feel a sense of control over appearance. Challenge yourself to notice these behaviors and redirect your attention elsewhere. Some ideas for redirecting might be to: Call a friend, read a book, engage in breathing exercises

### Challenge negative self-talk:

Pay attention to the way you speak to yourself. Would you speak to someone you love and respect in the same way? Notice the negative comments you make toward yourself, then create an alternative dialogue that expresses love and kindness. Repeat these kind messages out loud or write them down if you'd like!

## Self Love Affirmations: Repeat After Me...

I am worthy of love.

I have come this far, and I can keep going.

I choose joy and love for myself.

I am centered, peaceful and grounded.

I am capable, competent and strong.

I love my body and all that it does for me.

I am not my mistakes or failures.

I am ENOUGH, just as I am.

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