



## Eating Disorders Action Group

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## Body Acceptance

### What is Body Image?

Body Image is how you think about and see your body. When we feel negatively or out of control about certain aspects of our lives we may become preoccupied with our bodies.

We may spend lots of time trying to change how we look by dieting, or exercising too much, or we may just feel really depressed about how we look. If you are unhappy with your body, how does that affect your life?

Doesn't it make more sense to learn how to accept our bodies? If we put as much energy and time into learning how to accept ourselves as we put into trying to change our bodies we can have a positive body image. Thinking negatively about our bodies, size and weight is something that we have the power to change. You can change the way you think about and feel about your body.

As you become aware of the signals that cause you to feel badly about your body you can begin to work at changing your thoughts. Consistently replacing negative thoughts with positive and loving thoughts will help you feel better about your body.

Remember-every body is a good body!

Here are some tips on learning to accept ourselves:

### Be nice to you!

Do something nice for a part of your body every day for a week. For example, if you choose your feet, give yourself a foot massage, soak your feet in Epsom salts, make a certificate proclaiming your feet to be the best pair in the world. See how creative you can be, and how good it feels to respect and even love that part of you.

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### **Think positively**

Get out the coloured paper, pens, markers, etc. and make signs with a positive message on them, like:

I am beautiful

I have wonderful arms

I have a strong body

### **Decorate your room, car, or house with your signs**

For those of us who have taped the latest fad diet onto the fridge, or put up signs saying "you fat pig-don't you dare open the fridge", seeing your own signs up can be very positive. Try putting up beautiful pictures of yourself for a week, and see how it affects you.

### **Ask yourself...**

What am I putting off in my life because I don't look the way I want to? What feelings do I cover up by eating/not eating/bingeing etc.

### **Treat your body well**

Try getting a massage, take a bath, use nice-smelling lotion, powders and other things. Move your body! Dance, swim, try yoga or anything that feels good.

### **Take a history lesson**

Visit an art museum. Look for female nudes from earlier times. See whose body type you most match. Find an art photo book on that artist or period and browse through with enjoyment and appreciation for your body type.

### **Clean out your closet**

Get rid of any clothes that don't fit you. Try donating them to charity, or take them to a consignment shop. Try to wear clothes that fit you, and that you feel good in.

### **Stop dieting**

Dieting makes you more focused on food and weight. Move from restrictive eating to intuitive eating. Changing your body image will be a process. Don't give up - it will be worth it! Remember, it's not our bodies that need changing, it's our attitudes.

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