

“You will not understand the power and beauty of your youth until they’ve faded. But trust me, in 20 years you’ll look back at pictures of yourself and recall in a way you can’t grasp now, how much possibility lay before you and how fabulous you really looked.”

Mary Schmich and Baz Luhrmann, Everybody’s Free to Wear Sunscreen (1997)

Three simple steps to being fit and healthy

You will be the right size and shape for you, if you do three simple things....

1. **Eat healthy food** - super salad fests!
2. **Have the occasional indulgence** - chocolate cake.....Yummmmm!
3. **Exercise three times a week for more than half an hour** - kick-boxing, rock-climbing, surfing, scuba-diving, walking the dog.....

Our body shape is already decided before we are born. This is fact. It’s all about genetics. There is only one person in the world shaped like a famous film star and that is the film star herself! And there is only one person in the world with legs like you.....

<http://www.cyh.com/cyh/youthtopics/>



...On the covers of magazines

...In the lead role of your favourite movies

...In your favourite TV show

...Walking down the runway for a fashion designer’s latest collection

...are men and women who fit the ‘ideal’ image.

Media influences

We are bombarded with these images in the media so often that many people feel pressured to conform to this ‘ideal’ look, and put a lot of stress on their bodies and themselves in trying to reach this ideal.

It can be hard to remember when you see these images that often lots of airbrushing goes into the perfect images on the covers of glossy magazines.

Celebrities can afford make-up artists, hair stylists, clothing consultants, lighting experts and personal trainers.

Sometimes these images can get stuck in your head and make you believe you shouldn’t be happy with yourself until you look that way.





The 'ideal' for women

An 'ideal look' that women can feel pressured to achieve is to have a slim but womanly figure. For some women, the pressure they put on themselves to reach what they see as the 'ideal' image can lead to eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, a desire to change their looks through surgery and buy clothes and accessories they can't really afford.

The 'ideal' for men

An 'ideal look' that men can feel pressured to achieve is to be fit and muscular. Use of performance enhancing drugs like steroids is therefore becoming more common. At the same time, the number of young men with eating disorders such as anorexia is also increasing. There are also the same pressures as women to have the right clothes.

Did you know?

- Women with moustaches are considered beautiful in the Ukraine
- Women with thin legs are seen as unattractive in Fiji.
- Fuller figured women are desirable in 80% of the world.

Some people think that there are bonuses that come with fitting the 'ideal look', such as:

- Being popular
- Being attractive and desirable
- Being successful and intelligent

Hello! So not true!

It's also not true that:

- People who fit the 'ideal look' are more successful
- If a person doesn't fit the 'ideal look', it shows they can't control their body or themselves
- People who fit the 'ideal image' have more chances of getting a boyfriend or girlfriend
- If someone doesn't fit the 'ideal body type' it means that they are unhealthy
- If someone doesn't fit the 'ideal look' they don't like who they are
- If someone **does** fit the 'ideal image', they **are** happy with how they look. People who fit this ideal can sometimes have negative thoughts about themselves.



So, what can you do?

Well, it's all about balance. Try to remember that fitting the 'ideal image' doesn't always equal happiness, but being healthy is important.

Our body image is our idea of how we look, and how we feel about our size, shape, weight and other parts of our body. **Positive** body image involves accepting your body. The body image related worries of young men and women these days can lead to feelings of failure when they can't achieve the body they see as ideal.

Try to remember:

- No amount of exercise or change in eating habits is likely to change the basic, genetically determined shape of your body, so try to respect and accept your body the way it was built.
- Make the most of what you've got.
- Wear clothes that are comfortable.
- Work **with** your body, not against it.

Some tips for healthy eating:

- Find a balance with the foods you eat – all things in moderation.
- Eat breakfast – this can help you concentrate in those early morning classes.
- Allow enough time to eat – this way you can eat more slowly and will know when you are full.
- Eat at regular times.

Your self image is related to your self esteem, so keep in mind that it's OK to not be perfect. No one is. Love your body and take care of it.

