

# BODY IMAGE & BODY POSITIVITY

LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH



## What is Body Image? <sup>1</sup>

Body image is how you see your body in the mirror and in your mind, and what you think about your appearance.

## Positive versus Negative Body Image <sup>1</sup>

A positive body image is a clear, true perception of your shape. It's seeing and embracing the various parts of your body as they really are. A negative body image is having disapproving thoughts about your body and frequently comparing your own shape and size to others, which can affect the way you see, feel and care for yourself. All ages, genders, sexual orientations, racial and ethnic groups can experience positive or negative body image.

1. <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/body-image-eating-disorders>

## Did you know...

Worries about weight or body image often begin at a young age and can persist if not addressed.

40 to 60% of elementary school girls (ages 6-12) worry about their body and weight, and over 50% of teen girls and 30% of teen boys engage in unhealthy weight management behaviors. <sup>1</sup>

People with negative body image have a greater likelihood of developing eating disorders and/or other mental health conditions.

## Steps to build a positive body image <sup>2</sup>

- Remind yourself that “beauty” is a state of mind, not a state of your body.
- Surround yourself with positive people, and engage in activities that build healthy self-esteem.
- Appreciate all that your body can do!
- Become a critical viewer of social media by paying attention to images or attitudes that are not body positive.
- Keep a top 10 list of things you like about yourself, and focus on your strengths.

2. <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn/general-information/ten-steps>

## Consider Seeking Support if You: <sup>3</sup>

- Spend a lot of time having negative thoughts about your body, and put yourself down for the way you look.
- Often feel sad, anxious, upset, or worried about the way you look.
- Compare yourself to others and believe there's something wrong with the way you look.
- Feel preoccupied with food, weight loss, physical appearance and/or fitness.
- Spend a lot of time exercising, take laxatives, fast, or diet to manage weight.
- Engage in unhealthy cycles of skipping meals and then overeating.

3. <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/warning-signs-and-symptoms>



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