



Body image and body shaming



A definition

Body image refers to how one perceives their own body and how they feel about it. Body shaming involves demeaning or belittling views about certain body types or physical traits.



Why is this important?

In the age of widespread imagery, social standards, pressures, and expectations can cause various mental and physical health issues: eating disorders, body dysmorphia, self-harm tendencies, etc. According to a [2019 UK study by the Mental Health Foundation](#), 19% of adults felt disgusted by their bodies, 31% of teenagers felt ashamed, and 13% of adults experienced suicidal thoughts due to their body image, with 22% of adults and 40% of teenagers confirming that images on social media caused them to worry about their body.



Tips and tricks

- ➔ Although it requires a lot of effort and conditioning, don't give in to shame and hate. Stay true to yourself. If you must change, do it for your own happiness and comfort.
- ➔ Praise yourself. Focus on what you like or enjoy about your body, give yourself compliments from time to time, or take note of the compliments other people give you.
- ➔ Consider the scientific evidence that all body types and sizes can be healthy and the historical and cultural evidence that all body types and sizes can be beautiful.
- ➔ Make teenagers understand that the "perfect" pictures they see of influencers or celebrities are often staged and require a lot of work and preparation (makeup, lighting, camera angle, posing, composition) and that it is natural not to look as perfect.



Useful resources and tools



YoungMinds (UK charity for youth mental health), ["A guide for young people: Body image"](#), explains what to do if you or a friend is struggling with body image, also listing a few additional resources (The Mix, Youth Access, Talk ED and Beat).



King University, ["The Link Between Social Media and Body Image"](#), explains how social media can affect body image and how to prevent such issues.





SAFETY RESOURCES



[United We Care](#) (mental health and wellness platform) explains body shaming and its psychology and impact and also mentions intersex individuals and self-shaming.



MacPherson on [Very Well Fit](#) and Resnick on [Very Well Mind](#) explain the types of body shaming, their impact, and techniques on how to be more inclusive and body-positive.

