



10

STEPS TO A BETTER YOU

BODY IMAGE IS A HUGE ISSUE FOR MANY WOMEN, WRITES JESSICA BENNETT OF WWW.DIVABODYDESIGN.COM. HERE, SHE PROVIDES TEN STEPS TO HELP BANISH THOSE DEMONS

Only four percent of women globally consider themselves beautiful, while a recent global survey found that two thirds of women strongly agree that: “the media and advertising set an unrealistic standard of beauty that most women can’t ever achieve.” Researchers have even found that “fat talk”—a phenomenon in which a person makes negative claims about their weight to others—is considered normal by many women. The fitness community can provide both great solace and ‘therapy’ for these issues. Weight training is proven to boost self-esteem and body image as well as improving your overall health and social circle.



1 **HEAD TO NATURE FOR INSPIRATION**

Go outside, take a flower, leaf or twig. Is it perfect? Or does it have irregular edges, rough sides and blemishes? Chances are that it is imperfect, yet still amazing. Take this wisdom and use it on yourself – you are imperfect, yet you are also beautiful.

2 **WRITE AN “I LIKE MYSELF BECAUSE...” LIST**

I often use this technique with clients. First, write down ten things you like about yourself without referring to your appearance. Include things that you’re good at, or various ways you’re proud of yourself. Then, make another list of ten things you like about your body and appearance.

3 **CHALLENGE NEGATIVE SELF-TALK**

Every time you hear yourself talking negatively about how you look, spend an equal amount of time giving yourself positive feedback. Your worst critic is yourself, and only you can change that.

4 **BE REALISTIC**

If your ultimate goal is to lose weight and get in shape, don’t expect it to happen overnight. Buy and wear clothes that you are comfortable in, and if you can’t stand looking at the size on the label, cut out the tag – I do it all the time!

5 **ADMIRE SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE, NOT SLENDER PEOPLE**

This is a BIG one for me, I recall the people I admired in my early 20’s being the stick-thin models that I so desperately wanted to look like. Ask yourself who your role models are in life? Admiring successful people and surrounding yourself with these kinds of people can help shift your focus away from external appearances.

6 **LET FOOD BE YOUR FRIEND, NOT YOUR FOE**

Stop feeling guilty about what you've been eating and start eating right! Good nutrition means you're nourishing your body by eating healthy foods. Stop eating processed foods that have a lot of man-made ingredients on the label and stick to natural foods, which are nutrient-dense and provide more energy.

7 **DON'T THROW A PITY PARTY**

Feeling sorry for yourself is rarely productive, but it can be even worse when you get a group of your girlfriends together for a massive "woe is me" body bashing pity party. I know chicks who do this! As much as some women need to talk about their feelings and concerns, continually wallowing in self-pity can negatively affect your progress toward self-acceptance. Throw a workout party instead ;)

8 **HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR BODY**

Women are most familiar with their face, and are therefore most likely to be accepting of this part of their body. In this sense, you should also try to get used to the rest of your body. Look at yourself in the mirror and study the shape of your body and how it looks. Set small fitness goals and track your progress, seeing the changes in a tangible way will empower and inspire you to keep going.

9 **PAMPER YOURSELF**

Your body deserves a break sometimes, and so do you! Treat yourself to relaxing retreats, like taking a bubble bath by candlelight, a massage, manicure, pedicure, or simply a rich piece of dark chocolate. Treat your body with respect, and treat it regularly!

10 **LOVE EXERCISE**

Regular aerobic exercise improves heart and lung health, increasing muscle endurance, circulation and overall body health. Resistance exercises build lean muscle tissue and boosts metabolism. If you don't like to exercise in the gym, explore other options. Staying active is a great way to give back to your body for all it does for you. The ability to exercise is a gift; the sense of achievement and empowerment can positively impact both your mental and physical wellbeing on an immeasurable scale.

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**MEDIA AND
ADVERTISING
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