Ten Ways to Feel Better About Your Body
Think Positive – It Works!

By: Mia Simonsen

Do you think that you're fat or have thunder thighs? Or is it your nose or ears that bother you? You're not alone. We all have something that we wish we could change about our body. For some people this becomes an obsession and can lead to depression, anxiety, eating disorders and other serious health problems, requiring medical help. But if you're the average teen who just wishes they looked better, consider these 10 ways you can feel better about yourself and your body image:

1. Respect Yourself

Accept who you are and the body that you were born with. Body shape is 85 percent inherited; that leaves 15 percent to work with. Treat yourself with respect and kindness. Take care of your body – it's the only one that you'll ever have, so treat it well.

2. Spend Less Time in Front of the Mirror and on the Scale

Do you spend a lot of time in front of the mirror obsessing about what's wrong with your face or body? Try spending more time doing something constructive like exercising or going for a walk outdoors. You'll feel better about yourself and have more energy.

3. Stop Comparing Yourself to Others

Try not to compare yourself to other people – especially models and celebrities. Anyone can look good if their pictures are airbrushed and they have stylists and professional hair and makeup artists at their disposal. There's no need to have to live up to the media's standards. All that matters is how you feel about yourself.

4. Spend Less Time Reading Fashion Magazines and Watching TV

Studies show that teens can get a distorted view of their body image by seeing skinny models in fashion magazines, bulked up guys in fitness or sports pulp, and celebrities on TV. So spend less time in front of the TV and reading trendy magazines and pick up a good book!

Weighty Issues:
According to recent studies, many teenage girls think they are heavier than they actually are.

5. Wear Clothes that Show Off Your "Assets"
Instead of trying to fit into a pair of jeans that you used to fit in, wear clothes that are comfortable, fit you, and accentuate your figure. Make the best of your "assets," no matter what they are. It could be a green T-shirt to set off your eyes.

6. Follow Up Negative Thoughts With Positive Ones

It's human nature to have negative, nagging thoughts. And culturally, it's a given to think critically about your weight or body relative to all the idealized media images out there. So take a stand to counteract this phenomenon! Think about five or more qualities that you like about yourself such as interests, talents, or personality traits. Things like: "I am a kind person." "My friends can always count on me." "I have strong opinions - I know what I like and don't like." "I am good at building things." "I see humor in the world." Write these down on a piece of paper and put them where you can see them every morning. Repeat these positive affirmations whenever you catch yourself having negative thoughts. Life is too short to dwell on the negatives, so accentuate the positives!

7. Surround Yourself with Supportive People

Surround yourself with people who love you for who you are and not how you look. True friends are the ones who like you no matter what.

8. Exercise

Don't let the idea of "exercise" get to you. There are so many different ways to be physically active: walking, running, dancing, yoga, swimming, skating, skiing, tennis, boxing, mountain climbing, hiking, etc. Find what you like to do and mix it up. If you get bored walking on a treadmill, try something different and find a workout buddy to keep you motivated. If you find an activity that you enjoy doing, it can become part of your daily routine – and boost your mood!

9. Breathe and Meditate

Meditation and yoga are a great way to relax your mind and release any tension you may have in your body. Whenever you feel stressed or need to take a break, try some simple deep breathing exercises, stretching, meditation or yoga. You'll be amazed by how much better you'll feel.

10. Journal

Have you ever tried journaling? It's really therapeutic. At the end of each day, write down all of your thoughts. Record all of your accomplishments and things that you are grateful for and happy about. At the end of each month, read your journal and you'll be surprised by how many good things you have in your life. The more you realize how much you have going for yourself, the less you'll focus on what you don't like about yourself.

This article has been reviewed by BodiMojo health expert Tara Cousineau, PhD.