



## Love Your Body

When losing or gaining weight, many people have their body on their mind. You may want to look better in a swimming suit, feel comfortable wearing certain items in public, or maybe you feel you can't go to a store/event until you look a certain way (examples: gym, wedding, reunion, vacation). Every day we are bombarded with pictures of fit celebrities promoting workouts or diets that helped them achieve their fitness goals. Sadly, all these images are being touched up to make the celebrities meet a certain level of beauty. Seeing all these images, listening to the ads and knowing even some of the most beautiful people in the world are being changed, puts pressure on everyone to reach unrealistic goals.

How's your body image? Quiz from:

<http://www.westernhealth.nl.ca/uploads/Addictions%20Prevention%20and%20Mental%20Health%20Promotion/Body%20Image%20Tool%20Kit%202012.pdf>



Yes      No

- Do you find yourself obsessing about your body?
- Do you ever put off activities or relationships until you are a certain size?
- Would losing or gaining weight make you feel like you were a better person?
- Do you see certain foods as "good" or "bad"?
- Do you feel guilty after you eat?
- Do you feel uncomfortable in your body?
- Have you used unhealthy ways to gain or lose weight?
- Do you feel like you can only be happy if you are a certain size?
- Do you find yourself thinking negatively about your body?
- Do you think changing part of your body would make parts of your life better?

If you answered "yes" to less than four of these questions, then you have a healthy body image! If you answered "yes" to more than four of these questions, then you don't totally accept and respect your body. Read on to find out ways to increase your confidence and improve your body image.



<https://crossfitanchoredathletics.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ThinkFatLoss.png>

**Challenge:** Take a few minutes to think about why you're on this weight-loss journey. Is it to be:

**Thin:** Thinness is temporary. 95% of dieters regain their weight.

**Healthier:** Diet cycling can increase health risks, and many diets that have high restrictions lead to loss of muscle mass.

**Happier:** Restricting yourself too much could cause you to be moodier. If the diet doesn't work, you may also feel like a failure.

**More attractive:** Do you only want people to like you for your body? Are you fun to be around while you're dieting?

Losing weight isn't a bad goal to have. Losing 5% of your normal body weight can significantly reduce your risk of chronic diseases, but your intention should be focused on improving your health, with the changes leading to weight loss.



Many people, who focus on looking good and losing weight, aren't satisfied when they reach a goal. Their bodies changed with the weight loss and they dislike how they look now. It is important to be comfortable with your body at all stages of your health journey. Being comfortable with yourself now is the first step to accepting yourself later.

**Challenge:** Stand in front of a mirror (clothed or unclothed) for 10-15 minutes. During this time look at your reflection and write down all the things you like about your body. It could be small things like your eyes or hair. You can also pick characteristics, like funny, thoughtful, or kind, but try to make most of the list physical characteristics.

Afterwards reflect on why you like those parts of yourself. Do you like your legs because they are strong, and they allow you to run/walk 3 miles each day? Do you like your freckles or scars because they make your skin unique and tell a story of all you've done in life?

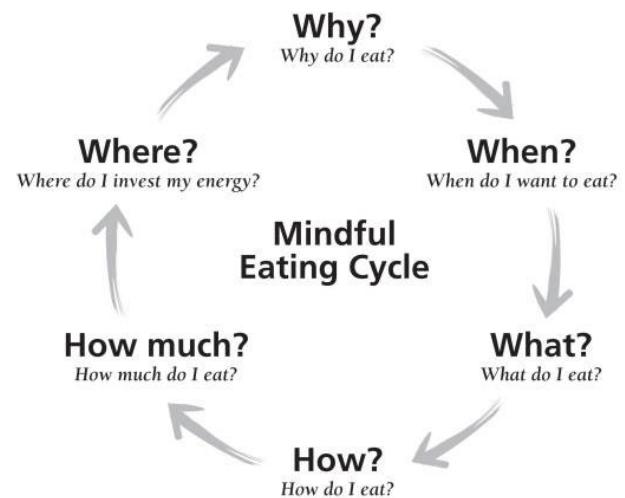
**Challenge:** This is a week or 2-week challenge. Find a way to tell yourself every day you are beautiful, handsome, or enough. This could be changing the password on your phone or computer, putting a note on an item you look at multiple times a day, or saying it every time you catch yourself looking in a mirror.

### Mindful Eating = Healthy Eating

Healthy eating is not obsessing about calories, carbs, fats, or any other nutrient. It is picking items that are considered healthier, like fruits and vegetables and whole grains, but not stressing about eating that treat. The environment where you eat and how you are feeling during this time can affect your choices and how you feel after eating. Mindful eating is a great tool to use to learn about your eating patterns and how to make changes to create healthier habits.

- 1 - Starving
- 2 - Very Hungry, "Hangry"
- 3 - Stomach is Growling
- 4 - Slightly Hungry
- 5 - Neither Hungry Nor Full
- 6 - Satisfied
- 7 - Pleasantly Full
- 8 - A Little Too Full
- 9 - Uncomfortably Full
- 10 - Stuffed

Ask yourself the questions in the Mindful Eating Cycle.



<https://www.todavsdietitian.com/newarchives/030413n42..>

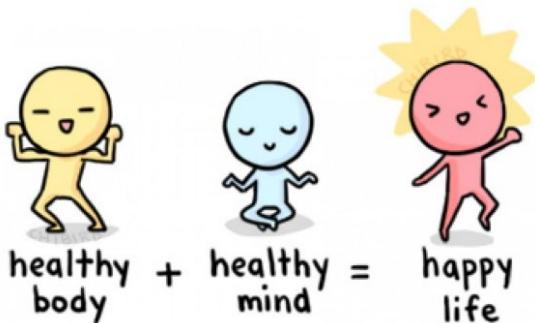
You can also use a **Hunger Scale** to determine when you should eat and how you feel afterwards. Try to stay within the 4-7 range.

@FoodInsight

<https://foodinsight.org/learn-how-to-eat-mindfully-with-the-eat-mojis-infographic/>



Below are a few photos and quotes you can use to remind yourself you are beautiful and restoring health is a journey that may take months to years to complete.



HERE'S TO A YEAR OF  
**BETTER HABITS,**  
**positive thinking,**  
**CLEAN EATING**  
& most of all,  
**LOVING YOURSELF.**

#### Additional Resources:

##### Mindful Eating

<https://www.healthwise.net/osumychart/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=custom.hs0245>

[https://www.move.va.gov/download/NewHandouts/BehavioralHealth/B11\\_MindfulEating.pdf](https://www.move.va.gov/download/NewHandouts/BehavioralHealth/B11_MindfulEating.pdf)

##### Disordered Eating

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/size-diversity-health-every-size>

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

##### Positive Body Image

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

<https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/learn/general-information/developing-positive-body-img>





## Applying the Lesson

**Choose one of the following activities to apply what you learned about your body image and your health. Write a short paragraph 3-5 sentences reflecting on the option you chose and what you learned. Report your Applying the Lesson results by Online form, email, fax or hard copy to your county Extension Office.**

**Option 1:** Choose one of the three challenges discussed in this lesson. Challenge one: Take a few minutes to think about why you're on this weight-loss journey. Challenge 2: Stand in front of a mirror (clothed or unclothed) for 10-15 minutes. During this time look at your reflection and write down all the things you like about your body. Challenge 3: This is a week or 2-week challenge. Find a way to tell yourself every day that you are beautiful, handsome, or enough.

Which challenge did you choose? Did it improve your confidence or help you realize why you have started this journey? Did you think it was a helpful challenge?

**Option 2:** Over the next two weeks, pick 2-4 (at least one weekday and one weekend) days to use the Mindful Eating Cycle and the Hunger scale. Use this exercise to pick up on triggers that promote unhealthy habits. Afterwards, brainstorm ideas to change the triggers to help promote healthy habits.

**Option 3:** Think of two ways you can continue to work on your confidence and improve your body image after completing "A Healthier Weigh."

