

Body image is the way you perceive your body when you look in the mirror or when you picture yourself in your mind. What you believe about your appearance, how you feel about your body, how you sense and control your body as you move, and how you feel in your body are all aspects of body image.

Negative body image can be one of the first triggers of an eating disorder and one of the final and hardest stages of recovery from an eating disorder.



**ADDITIONAL  
RESOURCES**

**Negative Body Image** includes having a distorted perception of your body and its shape. You may feel uncomfortable in your body and base your self-worth on the way you look. You may feel that only other people are attractive and that your body size or shape is a sign of personal failure.

**Positive Body Image** includes having a true perception of your body and its shape. You celebrate and appreciate your natural body shape and feel comfortable and confident in it. You understand that your body is a gift from God and that physical appearance says little about character and value. You refuse to spend an unreasonable amount of time worrying about food, weight, or calories.

**We are all unique...**

- Every person has a unique body size and shape that's ideal for him or her. This uniqueness is influenced by differences in genetic blueprint; just like eye color and foot size.
- Our bodies have the most energy, feel the most comfortable, and are able to maintain good health when we develop a healthy relationship with food and exercise.

**Ways to develop a more positive body image...**

- Recognize with gratitude what your body does for you. Each day it allows you to walk, talk, see, hear, etc.
- Overcome negative thoughts with positive, affirming, and accepting thoughts.
- Treat your body with respect by including healthy eating patterns, adequate sleep, and moderate exercise into your lifestyle.
- Resist the pressure to judge yourself and others based on weight, shape, or size.
- Post positive messages about yourself and your body on your mirror and read them as you get ready for your day.
- Be physically active in a way you enjoy. Exercise because it makes you feel good, not because you "should." Don't be afraid to do certain activities because of your body shape and size.
- Recognize that your worth does not depend on how your body looks or what you eat.
- Try following Intuitive Eating (see WSR "Healthy Relationship with Food" fact sheet or go to [intuitiveeating.com](http://intuitiveeating.com))
- Dress to feel comfortable and confident without worrying too much about what is "in style."
- Ask Heavenly Father to help you see your body as He sees it - as a divine gift.

"I plead with you...to please be more accepting of yourselves, including your body shape and style, with a little less longing to look like someone else. We are all different."

-Jeffrey R. Holland

**Counseling Services**  
MCK Room 181  
[counseling.byuh.edu](http://counseling.byuh.edu)

**The Center for Mindful Eating**  
[www.thecenterformindfuleating.org](http://www.thecenterformindfuleating.org)

**The Body Image Workbook:  
An Eight-Step Program for  
Learning to Like Your Looks**  
By Thomas Cash

**National Eating Disorders  
Association (NEDA)**  
[www.nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org)

