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Learn to Love   
**Yourself**

## 5 ways to love your body



When you look in the mirror do you like what you see? You should, but if you don't, you're not alone. Many people suffer from negative body image.

The key to developing positive body image is learning to accept and love your body.

- ✓ Keep a list of 10 positive things about yourself that don't involve your appearance. Refer to it often.
- ✓ Think about everything that you could accomplish with the time and energy you spend focused on your body and your appearance. Start doing some of those more productive, more enjoyable activities. If you are concerned about being overweight, set a healthy target for your weight based on your health care provider's recommendations, and don't expect to get to your target any faster than one pound per week.
- ✓ Create a list of people you admire — people who have contributed to your life, your community, or the world. Ask yourself whether you think appearance was important to their success/accomplishments.



- ✓ Wear comfortable clothes that you like, that express your personal style, and that feel good to your body.
- ✓ Eat when you are hungry. Rest when you are tired. Surround yourself with people who remind you of your inner strength and beauty.

### *Practice Self-Appreciation*

Give yourself a pat on the back. A little self-appreciation can go a long way toward helping you feel more positive and achieve more.

#### **Three tips to try:**

**Review what you've accomplished.** List your best successes at work and in life, such as passing a test, completing a key project, landing a big client, coming up with a great idea, or helping someone else. Remembering what you did well in the past can reconnect you with your self-worth.

**Recognize your strengths.** Make a list of the things you do well. If you have trouble thinking of your strengths, ask a friend or coworker to help you list some.

**Tune up your self-talk.** Recognize the negative messages running through your mind: *I can't do this. I am not capable and will never get it right.* Work hard to think more positively and send encouraging, appreciative thoughts to yourself: *I know I can do this. This is hard, but I'll figure it out. I never quit.*

Sometimes that's all it takes to turn your attitude around and spur you toward your goals.





## Change Your Habits, Change Your Life

Forming healthy lifestyle habits can be daunting. But if you've succeeded before with a major change, you know the effort pays off. To make it easier, experts in the art of change suggest these 5 proven strategies:



## Love your heart

Did you know? It's possible to prevent heart disease. Yes, it's possible. In fact, the CDC has tied 80% of deaths caused by heart disease to 6 preventable conditions: obesity, smoking, inactivity, high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol and diabetes.

**During American Heart Month**, use the following self-assessment to review all the positive choices you can make for your heart. **When you take care of your heart, you take care of your entire body — emotionally and physically.**



Check the boxes that apply to you.

- I keep my waist circumference below 35 inches (for women) or below 40 inches (for men). High numbers reflect excess belly fat, which raises heart disease risk.
- I don't smoke (or, I'm ready to ask my health care provider for help quitting). Cigarette smokers are 2 to 3 times more likely than nonsmokers to die from coronary heart disease.
- I get at least 150 minutes of cardio exercise weekly, plus 2 to 3 strength training workouts. Routine exercise strengthens your heart and helps control blood pressure, blood sugar and weight.
- I make heart-healthy food choices. I limit saturated and trans fats and have low-fat dairy, lean protein and at least 2 cups of fruits and 2½ cups of vegetables daily.
- I schedule routine medical checks to monitor my blood pressure, cholesterol, triglycerides and blood sugar, as my health care provider advises.
- I limit alcohol to 1 drink a day (for women) or 2 drinks a day (for men). Excessive alcohol intake can increase blood pressure and triglycerides. (A drink is 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits — vodka, whiskey, etc. — 12 ounces regular beer or 5 ounces of wine.)

Scoring: If you answered yes to at least 4 questions, well done. If you've got changes to make, focus on 1 at a time, starting now.

- 1 Focus on 1 goal at a time. If you take on multiple goals, such as eating better, exercising daily and reducing your household debt all at once, you may find you're overloading your focus and energy, and give up.
- 2 Develop positive thinking. This is a powerful, self-motivating habit that has the potential to quickly change your outlook and your life, and help you form new habits more easily. For example, if you're trying to fit in regular exercise, dwelling on the difficulty of doing it can leave you feeling discouraged and prone to failure. Solution: Work to replace your negative thoughts with those that make you feel good about your goal and the rewards ahead.
- 3 Make the goal achievable. Example: Don't commit to running 5 miles a day if you haven't been exercising for years. Be practical. Start by taking 10-minute walks instead.
- 4 Identify smaller, easier steps. Example: Rather than crash dieting, try losing 5 pounds in the first month by simply eating smaller portions and adding a 30-minute walk 4 times a week. Have patience.
- 5 Get help. Take advantage of the experts — your health care provider, a personal trainer, a financial counselor, a tobacco quitline or support group.

**The best reward of all:  
You feel better, and the person  
you see in the mirror looks better, too.**

