



Ten ways to respect your body

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Have you ever looked in the mirror and disparaged of all the parts of you that you wish you could change?

I think it's safe to say we've all been there. But in the same way that wearing a shoe that's too small won't magically shrink your foot, shaming your body is not going to make it look any different or make you feel better about who you are. Here are ten ways you can start being kind to your body and give it the respect it deserves:

1. **Compliment yourself.** Appreciate and remind yourself of the parts of your body that you like the best.
2. **Talk back to negative thoughts.** Pay attention to how often you find yourself bashing your body (or the bodies of others) and don't let those thoughts go un-checked. Work to actively replace those comments with kind statements.
3. **Stop weighing yourself.** No number will ever truly be good enough so this practice is unlikely to help you feel happier about your body.
4. **Wear clothing that is comfortable,** flattering, and fits you without being too tight or hides your body in too baggy of clothing – regardless of the size.
5. **Stop comparing yourself to others.** No one body is the "right" kind of body. Therefore, how can your body be "wrong?"
6. **Avoid dieting in order to "slim down" before a big event.** Your capability of having a great time and making lasting memories is not contingent on losing weight.

7. **Give your body the opportunity to experience soothing touch.** Take a bubble bath, get a massage and hug people you feel comfortable hugging. Every body craves and deserves soothing touch.
8. **Honor your hunger.** When you recognize your physical hunger signals, make the time to eat. Ignoring that communication from your body will cause yourself to be over-hungry and then it's difficult to determine what you really want to eat and when you have had enough.
9. **Honor your fullness.** Slow down your pace at meals to allow your body to really enjoy the experience of eating. Pause in the middle of your meal to check in with your level of fullness and ask yourself how the food tastes. Then, when you observe the signs that you are comfortably full, give your body the gift of stopping before you are uncomfortably full.
10. **Be realistic about your genetic makeup and realize that all bodies are different.**
When you are practicing self-care, honoring your hunger and fullness signals and moving in ways that feel good your body will likely balance out at its natural weight. Note that I did not say "ideal weight." Ideal weight is a fictional concept because all bodies are different and not one is ideal.

Adapted from Intuitive Eating (Resch & Tribole, 2012).