# BodyImage



**'Body image' is the picture you have in your mind of your size, shape and general appearance – and how you feel about it. Where does this image come from? Lifestyle adviser Anne Banks examines the issues.**

1 Do you love what you see in the mirror? No? Then you are not alone. Almost everybody worries about what other people think, and we all get stressed out about the size of our feet or the shape of our nose. And spots? Don't even start!

2 Most people have hang-ups about their body at some time. 1) ..... They often kid themselves they're too fat or too skinny, when they're a perfectly healthy weight. Boys tend to worry about spots and whether they are muscular enough. But why do we worry so much about how we look?

3 It's the images we see in the media that are mostly to blame. 2) .....Whether it's a hunky actor in designer jeans and trendy jacket or a stunning model in an elegant dress, they're sending the same message: 'If you look like me, your life will be perfect.'

4 But appearances can be deceptive. Compare today's magazine covers with those of fifty years ago. 3) ..... Not any more! Nowadays, blemishes are removed from photographs with the help of a technique called 'airbrushing'. A photographer or designer can straighten teeth, zap spots, alter make-up or skin colour, and even change a hairstyle. That perfect face is just a trick of the camera after all!



5 The 'perfect' body shapes aren't natural, either. Go down to any gym and you'll find young men 'pumping iron' in an effort to live up to some masculine ideal that says that 'real' men should be strong and muscular. Body builders, desperate to increase the size of their muscles, often eat food with far more calories and protein than is natural, which is a danger to their health. 4) .....

6 It's the same for the girls. We all know of celebrities who go on starvation diets so that they can wear 'size zero' clothes. They end up ruining their health. The irony is, naturally curvy girls who diet until they're stick-thin actually end up looking awful. Ask boys! 5) ..... Unfortunately, some girls are so obsessed with their weight they just don't realise!

7 6) ..... These include pop singers like Mis-Teeq, Jamelia, and Rachel Stevens. 'There's always pressure on young girls because of the images they see in magazines,' say Mis-Teeq. 'For us personally, we eat what we like and we don't diet. As long as you do everything in moderation and look after yourself, you'll be OK.' Jamelia believes it's up to the stars to try and change things. 'I'm a singer and it's my talent that's important,' she says. 'I want to look good on stage, of course, but I'm not sure people realise the amount of time and effort that goes into that. If people saw me on a day when I wasn't working, they'd be shocked!' Rachel Stevens doesn't want to be stick-thin, either. 'There's always been this pressure to be skinny, but you've got artists now like J-Lo and Beyoncé who are really curvy and look absolutely stunning,' she says.

8 So come on boys and girls, take control of your life! We humans come in all shapes and sizes and there's no 'correct' way to look. It's what you say and do that really matters. 7) ..... They're not what they seem! Anyway, why waste your time trying to live up to somebody else's ideal? Being fit and healthy is far more important. Just believe in yourself! After all, if you like yourself as you are, everyone else will probably end up liking you, too!

LIVEWORKSHEETS

**4 Read the article and choose the sentence (A–H) that best fits each gap (1–7). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.**

**A** Back then, models were allowed to have blemishes like spots or wrinkles.
**B** And if they lift weights, they risk permanent injury unless they are very careful.
**C** Open a magazine or turn on the TV and you'll see glamorous people living the 'perfect' life.
**D** Fortunately, some media stars are beginning to resist the pressure to look skinny.
**E** Forget the 'perfect' people you see pictured in the media.
**F** They often spend huge amounts of time and money trying to look good.
**G** Most of them prefer girls with a bit of shape.
**H** Girls are the worst!

**5 Find words in the article that match these meanings.**

1 small red marks on the skin (para 1)
2 unnecessary worries (para 2)
3 fool themselves into believing (para 2)
4 be responsible for doing something wrong (para 3)
5 quickly destroy (para 4)
6 eat very little in order to get thinner (para 6)
7 unable to stop thinking about something (para 6)

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