**Does the Media Impact Women’s Body Image?**

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Women’s and Gender Studies Research Paper

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**Part 1**

*Topic*

This research paper tackles and discusses the idea of women, eating disorders, their body image and how the media impacts those images via advertising.

*Research Question*

Does the media impact women’s body image?

*Goal/Purpose*

The purpose of this paper is to answer the question stated above because within the modern western world, eating disorders have become an epidemic and my intentions are to find out why. The statistics listed below, which can be found at www.eatingdisorderinfo.org, are based only on what has been recorded recently and the numbers are quite alarming and cause for great concern:

* **“Eating Disorders affect up to 24 million Americans and 70 million individuals worldwide.**
* **1 in 5 women struggle with an eating disorder or disordered eating.**
* **5-10% percent of anorexics die within ten years of onset, 18-20% die within twenty years of onset, and only 50% report ever being cured.**
* **20% of people suffering from anorexia will prematurely die from complications related to their eating disorder: including suicide and heart problems.**
* **A young woman with anorexia is 12 times more likely to die than other women her age without anorexia.**
* **The average woman is 5'4" and weighs 140 pounds while the average model is 5'11" and weighs 117 pounds.**
* **Most fashion models are thinner than 98% of American women.**
* **According to a recent study, over 1/2 the females between the ages of 18-25 would prefer to be run over by a truck then be fat, and 2/3 surveyed would rather be mean or stupid.**
* **51% of 9 and 10 year-old girls feel better about themselves if they are on a diet.**
* **The most common behavior that will lead to an eating disorder is dieting.” (**The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness)

It is alarming how many women are unhappy with themselves and feel devalued by society due to the fact that they do not fit the stereotypical “normal” body type. But this brings one to ask the question: where does the idea of this “normal” body image come from and who are women comparing their bodies to?

Throughout history, the ideal/“normal” body is ever-changing. The idea that the ideal body image is constantly changing leads one to also question how there can be a “normal” body image. So why are women killing themselves to look like something that doesn’t even exist: “normal”?

If we could find the root of this problem and address it, maybe these numbers would not be as astronomical and we could create a brighter future for women. That is the purpose of this study, to help women realize that they are comparing themselves to something that does not exist and should not be killing themselves (sometimes literally) to have a “normal” body image.

*Context*

The question presented above was answered via the study in a historical and social context. The historical context was utilized when researching “normal” bodies of the past and the social context was utilized when conducting the survey and asking women questions.

*Method*

Historical Research

The first thing I did was research various media images throughout history and compare the body images found to that particular era or society and analyzed past perceptions of “normal” bodies. Determining that different cultures and historical eras have different perceptions of the acceptable bodies for women concludes that a “normal” body is contingent on the society and era.

Survey

I conducted a study via surveymonkey.com regarding how women feel about their bodies. The first things I made sure to do was state my purpose of the study: “This survey is for RESEARCH PURPOSES which will be used for a UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT for educational purposes over the effects the media has on women's BODY IMAGE; it is designed for WOMEN ONLY (sorry men). Thank you for your interest in my project as this IS NOT SPAM!! This survey should take LESS THAN 5 MINUTES, is designed for WOMEN ONLY and is completely ANONYMOUS. Please be as honest as possible and answer all questions. Thanks again for your time.”

I then proceeded to create a survey with the 8 most citical questions I wanted answered. Those questions and the subsequent answer options are as follows:

1. “What is your age group?” (for demographical purposes)
   * <15, 15-18, 19-23, 24-30, 31-40. 41-50, or >50
2. “What is your sex? Again this is for women only. Men please stop here.” (to ensure only women were the ones taking the survey)
   * Female, Male, or Intersexed
3. “Overall, how do you feel about your boy and/or body image?”
   * 1 (I hate my body), 2 (I rarely like my body), 3 (I am okay with my body), 4 (I usually like my body), or 5 (I love my body)
4. The participant was then flooded with numerous pictures of women in the modern day media. This included pictures from Calvin Klein, Sports Illustrated (swimsuit edition), Victoria’s Secret, various lingerie and swimsuit advertisements, the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders and Maxim. All which were highly accessible via a Google search. The names of the advertisers were also erased from the pictures to protect the owners of the pictures. I also stated “You will now view a collage of media images. This is an IMPORTANT PART OF THE SURVEY as it is designed to see how WOMEN FEEL AFTER VIEWING such images as this. THIS IS NOT any kind of porn or advertising and there IS NO NUDITY. It is strictly for EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES. Please take your time to VIEW ALL THE PHOTOS individually and ANALYZE THEM THOROUGHLY. When finished, please precede with the remainder of the survey questions”
5. “Thinking about how the above images make you feel, how do you feel about your body and/or body image right now?”
   * 1 (I hate my body), 2 (I rarely like my body), 3 (I am okay with my body), 4 (I usually like my body), or 5 (I love my body)
6. “How important is it to you that your body looks a specific way?”
   * 1 (Not important at all), 2 (Somewhat important), 3 (Important), 4 (Very important), or 5 (So important that it consumes much of my thoughts)
7. “Would you consider any of the following measures to control your body? Please remember that this survey is completely ANONYMOUS and you can be HONEST.” (The participant could choose all answers that applied).
   * Dieting, Diet Pills, Extreme Exercise, Exercise, Overeating, Chewing food but not swallowing, Anorexia, Bulimia, Surgery, Other (Please Specify)
8. “Have you ever taken any of the following measures to control your body? Please remember that this survey is completely ANONYMOUS and you can be HONEST.” (The participant could choose all answers that applied).
   * Dieting, Diet Pills, Extreme Exercise, Exercise, Overeating, Chewing food but not swallowing, Anorexia, Bulimia, Surgery, Other (Please Specify)

To get a decent amount of respondents, I posted a note on my facebook (a social networking website) news feed which is a note for all my friends to view and sent an email to all 122 females on my friends list which personally invited them to participate in my study. Since the study was specifically for women, this was a great strategy. The note read as follows: “Hey all WOMEN (sorry men)! I am conducting an ANONYMOUS survey over BODY IMAGE for a course at UT. It is VERY SHORT and takes less than 5 minutes. Please follow the link to take the survey. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L3R2J2K> Also, TELL YOUR FRIENDS and send them this link so they too can help out; I need all I can get! Thanks.” One very important factor which I ensured to reiterate was that the survey was completely anonymous so as to not invade people’s privacy.

I also posted a similar note on four discussion threads which I created on four different social groups that any facebook member can be a part of. This note read ““I am conducting a survey for a senior level course I am taking at the University of Toledo. No this IS NOT SPAM.   
The survey is entirely ANONYMOUS and over BODY IMAGE and is VERY SHORT and takes less than 5 minutes. Please follow the link to take the survey. <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/L3R2J2K> If you want to leave comments for me as well I would deeply appreciate it but it is not necessary. Also, TELL YOUR FRIENDS and send them this link so they too can help out; I need all I can get! Thanks.” The groups in which this note was posted as a thread are as follows:

* 1. “All Facebook Females Unite In One Group! {Join and invite females only!!}”,
  2. “2.4 Million Strong. Group for general discussion. Invite all!”,
  3. “[Six Degrees Of Separation |► The LARGEST Group On Facebook ◄|](http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=14436512661)”, and
  4. “Eating Disorder Awareness”

The reason for selecting these particular groups was to get a diverse group of respondents so the results of the survey were not skewed. With these four groups I was able to recruit women from many areas of the world including Canada, the USA, Australia and Europe and with all different backgrounds. I felt that posting this thread on the group “Eating Disorder Awareness” was especially essential considering the fact that the women of this group would be individuals who have personally experienced issues with body image and finding out why these women feel this way is very important.

Discussion Thread

Aside from conducting a survey and marketing this survey, I felt it important to allow women to speak of their struggles directly. In order to do this, I created two different discussion threads on two facebook groups:

1. “All Facebook Females Unite In One Group! {Join and invite females only!!}”, and
2. “Eating Disorder Awareness”

The threads were entitled “How does viewing media images make you feel” and “University Study – How do you feel after viewing media images” and read “Anything anyone would be willing to share will be helpful here. Please just let me know how looking through a magazine, seeing a music video, watching television, etc... makes you feel about yourself. Does it make you feel worse about your body image, does it not affect you or does it make it better? Also, what are the triggers which make you feel worse about your body? Thanks. P.S. I am a recovered anorexic and bulimic so please don't be afraid to share, I understand all this but I am conducting surveys and research to try and pin point the problems a little better.”

*Self-Situated*

As a recovered female anorexic and bulimic, this subject is a very familiar and delicate one. When I was very living with an eating disorder, anytime I looked at a magazine, saw an advertisement, watched television/commercials, etc… my poor decisions were congratulated by the fact that since I did not naturally look like women in the media, I must obviously be doing something right as I was getting closer and closer to what I saw as “perfection”.

Having had an eating disorder in the past for years and struggling my entire life with my body image, I understand that many people are ashamed to admit their struggles. Therefore, I took extreme caution to ensure that the survey was entirely anonymous (as it contains sensitive information) and also made sure to reiterate on the thread discussions that if you wanted to talk about you experiences, that was great, but since it is a sensitive subject, no one was required to give out any information they were not comfortable sharing.

It was easy for me to identify with many of the responses of the women, as I have been in their shoes before. Many people cannot understand an eating disorder as an illness and therefore they think that if the victim just eats, they will get better. Many have no idea that these disorders have triggers which an average person views thousands of times per day without warning. They also do not realize that these disorders are about much more than just food; it is about control, abuse, body dimorphic disorder, etc…

Therefore, when talking with women about a subject many people can be insensitive to, those willing to share may have been more comfortable sharing with me rather with someone who does not understand how eating disorders function.

*Assumptions*

My assumptions prior to conducting the survey were that the media had a huge impact on women’s body image. I also assumed that most women are very unhappy with their bodies as a result of many factors including but not limited to: the media, emotional abuse, physical abuse, low self-esteem, etc… It is also my assumption that society and the media creates for us the ideal body image upon which we compare ourselves to and this image is always one of the most impossible body images to recreate. All these assumptions shaped the questions I ask on the survey, the discussions threads I created and the information I researched.

*Limitations*

While creating the survey, I ran into quite a few limitations which impacted the quality of results I received on the survey. These limitations include but are not limited to:

* SurveyMonkey only allowed for basic accounts to ask 10 questions per survey which presented a few problems:
  + The pictures alone took 3 pages because they could only be a certain size which eliminated 3 questions right off the bat.
  + 7 questions does not allow for in depth information.
  + Does not allow for each picture to be revealed individually in order to provide a much higher impact and allow for the participant to study each picture individually.
* If there was more time, it would have been highly beneficial to have conducted a male and a female.
* Survey monkey does not allow for an answer to disqualify a participant (i.e. One male took the entire survey which was created for women only).
* Some people thought the survey was spam; especially with all the advertisements. Most people who started the survey and did not complete it stopped once they were subjected to the photos.
* Originally (prior to paying $20 for an upgraded account) there was a maximum of 100 surveys that could be revealed to me. This was a problem considering there were 131 respondents and 114 of those respondents completed the entire survey (87%).
* You are unable to alter questions after the first response has been made.
* Some individuals who tried to take the survey could not get the images to show up.
* Many people did not understand the difference between question number 7 and 8. They thought it was the same question when in fact question number 7 asked if they would consider any of the following measures and question number 8 asked if they have ever taken any of the following measures.
  + If I could go back, I would have clarified these questions more.
* If I had the chance, I would also talk with young girls around the age of 10 when issues of body image are known to first arise; therefore tackling the problem before it manifests into a much bigger issue such as an eating disorder.

*Thesis/Answer*

The media definitely impacts how women feel about their bodies. This was confirmed by the responses given via the discussion threads and the fact that after analyzing the responses to the survey, 28.81% of all women who completed the survey provided a lower score for their body image after seeing the media advertisements than they did just a few seconds prior.

*Relation to WGST/Contributions*

This information is very important to Women’s and Gender Studies (WGST) because it tackles women’s issues of body image. WGST focuses on fair treatment for women and the media is very obviously destroying our self-images. Therefore, studies like this need to be conducted in order to convince our society that it is not acceptable and we will no longer stand for this treatment. Especially since their purpose is to make women feel bad about themselves just so we will buy their new product so they can generate a profit. Women are dying so CEO’s can be rich.

*Relation*

This research is very important to my future plans because I am very interested in pursuing a career which will allow me to help women who have gone through the same issues I have been though. My intentions, down the road, are to find a way to combat eating disorders. However, it is important that you understand eating disorders in order to combat them. This paper will accomplish just that.

Even if my future “professional” plans do not come to include working to battle eating disorders, it is an epidemic within our society and the only way to put an end to it is to educate people about it. My hope is that this research paper and my study will provide just a little more information to our society to help them better understand the reason behind why it is such a huge problem.

**Part 2**

*Findings/Data*

Historical Information

Many ideas are not accepted worldwide and do not remain static across time due to the fact that ideas and realities are constantly changing because they are contingent on the current era of time, political stance, economic state, etc… in which the ideas are formed. As a result, what one believes to be the norm in one period of time within one culture can be completely opposite what another believes to be the norm in a different culture, different time period and even the same time period. Therefore, there cannot be a “normal” because it is conditional.

I would like to further apply this idea to the concept of the “normal” body image across cultures and time and what body type is seen as being beautiful. The following are just a few images I have found which confirm my assumptions that the ideal body image is one that is most impossible to achieve.





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*Above Left:* The Three Graces by Peter Paul Rubens (circa 1620) – Baroque Era

*Above Right:* A curvaceousMarilyn Monroe (circa 1950’s) who was an average sized woman

*Left:* A modern day runway model sometimes referred to as a live “hanger” (circa 2000’s)

When looking at these pictures, it is easy to see that the ideal body image has undoubtedly changed throughout history to coincide with ever-changing cultures and cultural practices. The woman from the classical era was seen as beautiful because her body image proved to society which was devastated by war (Thirty Year War of Europe), famine, and disease that she was not among those starving but rather among the privileged. The body types we see in the above image reflects the body type of this era which was most impossible to achieve. Therefore, her idea of beauty was that of a full figured woman who could afford to eat and held a higher social status.

We can also analyze the anorexic woman’s idea of beauty from her cultural view as well. In western societies those who are considered privileged are those able to take time out of their very busy day to exercise and stay physically fit during a time of recession. Nowadays, it is not uncommon for a woman to be working 50+ hours a week just to make ends meet. The ability to exercise to stay fit is left to those who are privileged and leaves the very frail body image being almost impossible to achieve by most.

Some extreme measures of changing ones appearance in the name of beauty which many westerners may see as tortuous, inhumane, barbaric, disgusting and/or cruel include the wearing of corsets, foot binding and the elongation of the neck.



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*Above Left*: A Kayan woman wearing neck rings

*Above Right*: A Chinese woman shows off the effect of her foot binding

*Left*: Polaire proudly showing off her much sought after 14 inch waist (35.5 cm)

During the 18th century, corsets were worn to give the illusion that a woman had an hourglass figure. Essentially, the corset took the body and redistributed organs around the waistline to give the illusion that a woman had a very small waist with larger hips and bust line. Unfortunately, women who wore these corsets were subjected to many medical problems including fainting, organ damage and lack of abdominal and skeletal support (your corset essentially became your support). Women of this era risked all these medical problems just so they could achieve the much sought after hourglass figure in which their society and culture placed emphasis on during this era.

Chinese foot binding (outlawed in 1949) proves how women are subjected to pain and suffering all in the name of the ideal beauty image. The reason for this act was to sacrifice an able bodied female woman. This was seen as a high social status to sacrifice a family member to the point of them being unable to walk rather than having them work in the fields. This again proves that in a time when many were poor and unable to sacrifice help, changing a woman’s body in a way that was impossible to most, held high status because very few could achieve this body image. The practice of foot binding was also a way for society to control women by making it impossible for them to be independent as foot binding prevents them from being able to even walk.

Kayan Neck Elongation is a process which pushes the collarbone and ribs down giving the illusion of an elongated neck. The custom of wearing neck rings is a way of changing a woman’s body in an impossible and unnatural way to achieve an ideal beauty image.

After much research, it has been concluded that women have been altering their bodies all throughout history and across cultures to make their bodies look a specific way which is most impossible due to the fact that it is unnatural or unattainable.

*Discussion Thread Reactions*

Many women responded in similar ways to the thread discussions posted and claimed the same things about how the media affects their body image. The following are just some of the responses to the thread (stated above) asking how the media impacts women’s body image:

* In TV shows and magazines the girls are so thin with no shape but they are so famous. Everyone is saying that they are beautiful with basically no REAL women being famous, no girls with acne on their cheeks or with a butt and thighs that jiggle when they step. They are all so skinny and perfect. I had anorexia and I know it is wrong, but it is hard to ignore the media.
* For me it was the media partially. The media only contributed to my anorexia, not caused it. The media confirmed what my head was telling me, that I was too fat and would never be accepted. It is unfortunate that the media and “stars” do not represent a wide range of female bodies and shapes. I no longer buy magazines as they only fuel my “addiction” of being thin.
* When I first saw media images, I remember the pain, the insecurity. Next I remember the years of bulimia that followed. Painful, painful times.
* I hate seeing pictures of girls with bikinis or people in skinny jeans. The media makes me feel worse. I hate not being naturally skinny, so I try hard to get that stuff out of my mind. My triggers: seeing skinny ladies/girls, seeing success stories of celebrities losing weight.
* One of the biggest things I notice, that I think all girls notice, is really how a lot of the models in magazines or images in the media are of girls with flat stomachs or toned stomachs. Whenever I see this, I immediately have to question just the little bit of healthy flab on my stomach.

Two men also responded to the threads I created but in two very different ways. The first male responded to my request for women to take the survey and proceeded to tell me that my survey did not matter, asked why I was not just “cooking and cleaning” and continued to tell me to “shut the f\*\*k up and just go tidy my face.”

This response was appalling to me as my sole purpose of this study was to better the lives of women who are self-destructive and this person saw that as a threat. Some of these women can blame behaviors such as this for the reason behind why they feel the way they do about themselves; male negativity and/or abuse.

The second male to respond to the threads was completely opposite the first man. He proclaimed, “All we really need is for someone to love us and to be able to give love back to them, and being thin doesn’t make you anymore loveable. Everyone knows how corrupt this society is, so instead of falling into the mentality that is expected of you, break free of it and learn to love yourselves, because it’s hard for someone to love another person who doesn’t understand how to love themselves first. Think about it: you let a system based on profit and exploitation affect your self esteem. I just think it’s a shame that someone (not just for women) can allow society to destroy who they are.” It was refreshing to hear someone who understands the fact that we as human beings are worth more than our wrinkles, weight, BMI, eye color, hair color, etc…

While I know this person had great intentions when posting on this thread, it also confirmed my assumptions about how many people think that an eating disorder is easy to fix by just eating some food. He confirmed my assumption that many cannot understand how an eating disorder functions by also stating that “You can’t blame anyone but yourself for feeling low about who you are. I agree with the fact that an abuser can give you reasons to feel bad, but it comes down to if that abuser is right. So if I call someone fat, and they are fat, what’s the problem? It’s not my fault that she thinks it’s bad to be fat and this it makes her less of a person.”

He was correct in that fact that it is not his fault that person feels it is bad to be fat, but whose fault is it? People are not born knowing what the “ideal” beauty image is. We are conditioned from day one by the media and our society to understand what bodies are acceptable and what bodies are unacceptable. Therefore, it is not her fault that her body image and self esteem is low on account of what our society conditions us to believe.

Body Image Survey

As for the survey, I did not expect to get such a large number of respondents and completely underestimated the power of social networking. Expecting only around 30 participants, the total number of participants ended up being 131. This allowed for a very credible amount of participants to give a very good variety of responses.

The survey is attached as Appendix A. Some of the findings from the 131 respondents of the survey include:

* Overall:
  + 28.81% of the women who completed the survey provided a lower score for their body image after seeing the media images than they did prior to seeing the media images.
  + 44% of the women said that they either hated their body or rarely liked their body prior to seeing the media images and the numbers dramatically rose to 56.8% after seeing the media images.
  + Only a mere 6.8% of women said that they loved their body after seeing the media images.
  + 66.1% of women ranged from “important” to “so important it consumes much of my thoughts” when asked how important it is that their body looks a certain way.
  + 63.9% of women reported that they have used dieting to regulate their body.
  + 24.1% of women reported that they have used extreme exercise as a form of controlling their body in the past.
  + 26.9% of women reported using extreme dieting to regulate their body.
  + 20.4% of women admit to having been anorexic at some time in their life (past, present and or future).
  + 21.3% of women admit to having been bulimic at some time in their life (past, present and or future).
  + 21.9% of women say they would consider surgery to correct their bodies while only .9% has ever actually used this method.
* Girls under the age of 15:
  + 25% of the respondents under the age of 15 reported having been bulimic.
  + 50% reported that they loved their body which dropped to 25% after viewing the media images.
* Women between the ages of 15-18:
  + 45% of the respondents reported that they have been anorexic.
  + 45% reported that they have bulimic.
  + 53% of these women answered that the way their body looks is very important or so important that it consumes much of their thoughts.
* Women between the ages of 19-23:
  + 75% of women ranged from “I hate my body” to “I am okay with my body” while only 6.8% said they loved their body.
  + 26.3% of the respondents reported that they have been anorexic.
  + 23.7% reported that they have bulimic.
  + The one respondent who said they have used surgery fell into this age group.
* Women between the ages of 24-30:
  + 27.3% of the respondents reported that they have been anorexic.
  + 27.3% reported that they have bulimic.
* Women between the ages of 31-40:
  + A surprising 70% claimed that it is only somewhat important that their body look a certain way.
  + Only 10% admitted to being anorexic and 0% admitted to being bulimic at some point in their life.
* Women between the ages of 41-50:
  + Only 8.3% admitted to being bulimic and 0% admitted to being anorexic at some point in their life.
* Women over the age of 50:
  + 0% of these women reported loving their body or usually liking their body. Leaving 100% of these women reporting only being okay with their body, rarely liking their body or hating their body.
  + However, 63.6% reported that it is not important or only somewhat important that their body look a certain way.
  + Only 9.1% admitted to being bulimic and 0% admitted to being anorexic at some point in their life.
* Comparison of age groups:
  + When analyzing question number 3 the age groups with the highest percentage of women who reported “I hate my body” were women under the age of 15 and over the age of 50.
  + Percentage of women who claimed they hated or rarely liked their body:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Age Group** | **Prior to Media Advertisements** | **After Media Advertisements** | **Percent Change** |
| **<15** | 25.00% | 50.00% | 25.00% |
| **15-18** | 53.00% | 66.60% | 13.60% |
| **19-23** | 34.10% | 43.70% | 9.60% |
| **24-30** | 52.00% | 62.50% | 10.50% |
| **31-40** | 40.00% | 50.00% | 10.00% |
| **41-50** | 41.70% | 50.00% | 8.30% |
| **>50** | 60.00% | 58.40% | -1.60% |

Conclusion

The media advertisements had a significant impact on the participants’ body image since the statistics show that many women’s body image’s plummeted after viewing the media advertisements of the very unattainable body type for an average woman. The age group in which the media made the most prevalent impact was for girls under the age of 15. For all other age groups, excluding women over 50, the effects of the media seemed to be fairly stagnant around a 10% change.

My predictions prior to researching the subject were correct. Women are held to body standards which are the most impossible to achieve within the society they live. Therefore, women strive to change their body in a variety of ways. Many women of our modern western world obtain eating disorders with the goal of change their body to fit the “normal” body type in which their culture has provided for them.

Many women also claim that the media may not be the reason why they started regulating their bodies in an extreme way, but it certainly aids in their addiction to be perfect, which is virtually unattainable for most because a society’s “normal” body type is nearly impossible to recreate unless you are among the privileged.

Now that we are aware that the media does in fact, without a doubt, impact the way women feel about their body image, we need to figure out a way to turn around this epidemic.

**APPENDIX A**

**Question 1:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **This survey is for RESEARCH PURPOSES which will be used for a UNIVERSITY RESEARCH PROJECT for educational purposes over the effects the media has on women's BODY IMAGE; it is designed for WOMEN ONLY (sorry men). Thank you for your interest in my project as this IS NOT SPAM!! This survey should take LESS THAN 5 MINUTES, is designed for WOMEN ONLY and is completely ANONYMOUS. Please be as honest as possible and answer all questions. Thanks again for your time. What is your age group?** | | |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| < 15 | 3.7% | 4 |
| 15-18 | 11.1% | 12 |
| 19-23 | 37.0% | 40 |
| 24-30 | 15.7% | 17 |
| 31-40 | 8.3% | 9 |
| 41-50 | 10.2% | 11 |
| > 50 | 13.9% | 15 |
| ***answered question*** | | **108** |
| ***skipped question*** | | **0** |

**Question 2:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **What is your sex? Again this is for WOMEN ONLY. Men please stop here.** | | |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Female | 98.1% | 106 |
| Male | 1.9% | 2 |
| Intersexed | 0.0% | 0 |
| ***answered question*** | | **108** |
| ***skipped question*** | | **0** |

**Question 3:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall, how do you feel about your body and/or body image? I hate my body - 1 I rarely like my body - 2 I am okay with my body - 3 I usually like my body - 4 I love my body - 5** | | |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| 1 | 12.4% | 13 |
| 2 | 28.6% | 30 |
| 3 | 37.1% | 39 |
| 4 | 16.2% | 17 |
| 5 | 5.7% | 6 |
| Additional Comments | | 5 |
| ***answered question*** | | **105** |
| ***skipped question*** | | **3** |

*Additional Comments:*

|  |
| --- |
| * Need to work out more, but overall like my appearance.... |
| * I have not boobs and my belly is fat |
| * Something could be better and something not, but I can't go around whine about it. Other things are more important that that! |
| * There are times that I look at pictures in the magazines, or on TV, that make me feel not beautiful. But I know that God loves me and made me in his image. |
| * Body image is slowly getting better...I went to treatment this summer and I'm still in recovery. |

**Question 5:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Thinking about how the above images make you feel, how do you feel about your body and/or body image RIGHT NOW? I hate my body - 1 I am not happy with my body - 2 I am okay with my body - 3 I like my body - 4 I love my body - 5** | | |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| 1 | 20.6% | 20 |
| 2 | 33.0% | 32 |
| 3 | 25.8% | 25 |
| 4 | 13.4% | 13 |
| 5 | 7.2% | 7 |
| Additional Comments | | 6 |
| ***answered question*** | | **97** |
| ***skipped question*** | | **11** |

*Additional Comments:*

|  |
| --- |
| * I have no boobs and my belly is fat |
| * I am overweight. If you are interested to know why I hate my body. |
| * I wished I could look at least a little like them. |
| * Haha… I wish I looked like that! |
| * Those images looked like soft porn degrading to women |
| * I think about looking like that without the surgical enhancements. |

**Question 6:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **How important is it to you that your body look a specific way? 1 - Not important at all 2 - Somewhat important 3 - Important 4 - Very important 5 - So important that it consumes much of my thoughts** | | |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| 1 | 3.1% | 3 |
| 2 | 36.1% | 35 |
| 3 | 33.0% | 32 |
| 4 | 19.6% | 19 |
| 5 | 8.2% | 8 |
| Additional Comments | | 6 |
| ***answered question*** | | **97** |
| ***skipped question*** | | **11** |

*Additional Comments:*

|  |
| --- |
| * Like I said work out more. lol… |
| * I model so in order to be paid I have to be in shape. |
| * I am more concerned about my health instead of my image but being overweight effects my health. |
| * Like I've already said; it's things which are more important to me. |
| * No matter body size, appearance is important for self image. |
| **Question 7:**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **HAVE YOU EVER taken any of the following measures to control your body? Please remember that this survey is completely ANONYMOUS and you can be HONEST.** | | | | **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** | | Dieting | 60.7% | 54 | | Diet pills | 25.8% | 23 | | Extreme dieting | 24.7% | 22 | | Exercise | 74.2% | 66 | | Extreme exercise | 20.2% | 18 | | Overeating | 12.4% | 11 | | Chewing food but not swallowing | 4.5% | 4 | | Anorexia (severe restriction of calories) | 12.4% | 11 | | Bulemia (purging of calories by means of vomiting, laxatives, etc...) | 16.9% | 15 | | Surgery | 1.1% | 1 | | Other | 4.5% | 4 | | Other (please specify) | | 5 | | ***answered question*** | | **89** | | ***skipped question*** | | **19** | |

*Additional Comments:*

|  |
| --- |
| * Cut the fat away |
| * Diet pills |
| * Better eating habits |
| * I train normally and eat healthy food, but still live my life as I want to - not to be a control freak... |
| * I don't really do any of these things. I occasionally exercise, but not often. That's about it. |
| * Have done all of the above checked. Unfortunately. |
| * I exercise 5 times a week for health and to fit into my clothes comfortably, I choose not to go up in sizes - exercise is what works best |
| * Only a tummy tuck when it comes to surgery. |
|  |

**Question 8:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **HAVE YOU EVER taken any of the following measures to control your body? Please remember that this survey is completely ANONYMOUS and you can be HONEST.** | | |
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| Dieting | 60.7% | 54 |
| Diet pills | 25.8% | 23 |
| Extreme dieting | 24.7% | 22 |
| Exercise | 74.2% | 66 |
| Extreme exercise | 20.2% | 18 |
| Overeating | 12.4% | 11 |
| Chewing food but not swallowing | 4.5% | 4 |
| Anorexia (severe restriction of calories) | 12.4% | 11 |
| Bulemia (purging of calories by means of vomiting, laxatives, etc...) | 16.9% | 15 |
| Surgery | 1.1% | 1 |
| Other | 4.5% | 4 |
| Other (please specify) | | 5 |
| ***answered question*** | | **89** |
| ***skipped question*** | | **19** |

*Additional Comments:*

|  |
| --- |
| * Diet pills |
| * Drinking weight gaining shakes |
| * Didn't I already answer this... Ok, so I sometimes exercise, but not that often. |
| * I have been both anorexic and bulimic in the past and have also suffered from exercise addiction. |
| * Laxatives when I've felt like I ate too much--only when I was younger. |

**SOURCES**

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