

Body neutrality movement may conquer unrealistic body standards

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A Griffith University study found the body neutrality movement has a positive influence on young women's body image may help to conquer unrealistic body standards.

In contrast with the body positivity movement which encourages unconditional love of one's body, Body neutrality fosters a sense of non-judgmental respect and care for our physical selves and shifts the focus from one's appearance toward what one's body does for them.

A total of 189 undergraduate [women](#) aged 17 to 25 were randomly assigned to view one of three compilation TikTok videos on body neutrality, thin ideal, or art content.

The study, "How exposure to body neutrality content on TikTok affects [young women](#)'s body image and mood," was published in the [Body Image Journal](#).

Griffith School of Psychology Dr. Veya Seekis said women in the body neutrality group reported higher appreciation of their body's functionality and higher body satisfaction than women in the thin ideal and art content control groups.

"Relative to the thin ideal group, women in the body neutrality group reported higher levels of positive mood and made fewer comparisons to those they perceived to be better themselves," Dr. Seekis said.

"Although women in both the body neutrality and thin ideal groups thought about their appearance and what they were wearing while viewing the videos, women in the body neutrality group reported those

thoughts were more positive than those in the thin ideal group.

"These novel findings are promising and indicate young women can view social media content about clothing and exercise in a way that inspires them to feel appreciative of their body's functionality and this may help curb the pressure to meet unrealistic beauty standards.

"It also helps us downplay the excessive emphasis placed on our [appearance](#) by encouraging us to recognize other qualities about ourselves such as our body's capacity to heal, move, sense, express, rejuvenate, and communicate, and these things play a significant role in shaping our self-worth."

Body neutrality is particularly useful for individuals who are:

- (a) uncomfortable with the idea of loving their bodies unconditionally (as espoused by the body positivity movement)
- (b) experience [chronic pain](#) and feel betrayed by their bodies
- (c) are in eating disorder recovery, by encouraging them to view their bodies as their home which still requires respect and support.

The body [neutrality](#) trend on TikTok, yielded more than 1 billion views as of May 2023, demonstrating a wide reach and an appeal to viewers who are seeking content which advocates for a respectful and non-judgmental way of thinking about their bodies.

More information: Veya Seekis et al, How exposure to body neutrality content on TikTok affects young women's body image and mood, *Body Image* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.101629](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2023.101629)

Provided by Griffith University

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