10 Tips and Tricks for Feeling Better in Your Skin

Feeling down about your body? You may think that losing weight or toning up is the best way to feel better in your skin. The truth is, focusing on changing your body size and shape may make you feel worse in the long run. Here are things you can do right now to change the way you think about yourself and boost your body image.

1. Take Good Care
Nurture yourself with things like bubble baths, a manicure/pedicure, a nap, a massage, or a back scratch. Cuddle with a pet, make plans to hang out with a supportive friend, watch your favorite movie, listen to calming music, do deep breathing, meditation or prayer—whatever it is, make sure it’s something self-soothing.

2. Get Movin’
Exercise enhances body image regardless of changes in body weight/size/shape. Record your mood on a scale from 1-10 (1 being very depressed/anxious/stressed and 10 being very happy and carefree) before doing physical activity, and then do the same thing after physical activity...notice any difference?

3. Notice Your Thoughts
Notice the negative thoughts you have about your body. Consider even writing them down. Come up with positive alternative statements that you can think to replace those negative thoughts. Here’s an example: “I have thunder thighs” → “I have powerful legs that allow me to run for miles.”

4. Ditch the Diet
Trying to lose weight is not only exhausting and miserable, but rarely results in a better body image. Plus, most dieters lose weight and then regain the weight, plus a few extra pounds. So dieting isn’t the solution. Gentle self-care is the solution. Instead of working on changing your body, work on eating well and being physically active and let your body do what it’s going to do. In the meantime, find other ways to love and respect your body.

5. Focus on the Inside
Who do you look up to? Who inspires you? What attracts you to those people usually has nothing to do with their appearances. Consider all the qualities they have that make you appreciate them. It’s our dreams, passions, goals, morals, insight and character that truly define who we are. Celebrate your many talents and character strengths.
6. Trash the Scale
Does weighing yourself all the time really make you feel good? For most, using the scale to track progress results in an emotional rollercoaster. Weight naturally fluctuates due to shifts in fluid. If you find that jumping on the scale makes or breaks your day, then throw it out. Who needs it? It’s not an accurate representation of your health status. If you’re looking for other ways to keep tabs on your health status, consider counting up your fruit and veggie servings, or your heart rate after an aerobic activity. Focus on fitness and developing a healthy relationship with food. Let go of the number on the scale. It’s just a number. It does not reflect your worth or value.

7. Be Kind to Yourself
While it’s tempting to beat yourself up about your body, what good does that do? Shaming yourself or others rarely leads to permanent behavior changes. It really just results in you feeling badly about yourself. Treat yourself with compassion. Instead of engaging in unhealthy and abusive behaviors, make a list of self-care strategies that promote health and well-being (see tip 1). Loving your body takes time. When you notice self-disparaging thoughts, don’t beat yourself up for them. Notice them and let them pass.

8. Cut Back on Media and Social Media
Studies have found that the more time someone spends on social media the more insecure they are. You may find it tempting to compare yourself to your “friends” on social media. If taking a break from social media sounds frightening, try to follow body positive media campaigns.

9. Go Shopping
Shop for clothes that fit well and feel good. Grab a supportive friend and agree to have a “no fat talk” shopping trip and only say positive things about your body. Try on clothes and assess whether they are comfortable and make you happy. Fill your wardrobe with those items. Short on cash? Check out thrift and consignment stores.

10. Celebrate Your Differences
Just like variation in height, hair color, skin color and eye color, genes play a significant role in directing body shape and size. The culture may define beauty, but you don’t have to agree to their definition. Make up a new definition for beautiful and live it.