

Are you struggling with your Body Image during lockdown?

During lockdown, many people are spending more time online. Social media by its nature is incredibly visual and we are constantly digesting visual messages whether we notice it or not. A lot of people are feeling pressure to 'glow up' during lockdown, put a lot of work into their physical appearance and achieve some kind of transformation. There are vast amounts of posts on social media suggesting that working on and worrying about your body is your top job in lockdown – either an opportunity to work towards to the body you want, or being vigilant not to lose the body you've worked for.

Lots of time at home may also lead some people to focus more on themselves, and their appearance, with apps like WhatsApp, Zoom and Facetime meaning that we're spending more time looking at our own faces. Combine this with more time on social media, potentially looking at posts depicting so called "perfect" bodies and lifestyles, and it's easy to see how for some, lockdown might make us feel worse about ourselves.

The reality is, lots of people are suffering from stress, illness, poor mental health and grief, which not only makes it more difficult to focus on how we look, the pressure to look good might actually make these feelings worse. It can be utterly overwhelming for many people

If you find yourself feeling down about how you look, here's some practical steps you can take:

- ◇ **If what and how you eat is** being affected by your body image, or you are hurting yourself, we recommend you get support immediately. Speak to your GP or one of the hotlines below.
- ◇ Try to **forgive yourself** for feeling like this- with everything going on, it's no wonder. It can be tempting to beat yourself up or feel guilty for having negative feelings about your appearance. It might feel wrong to worry about this when other people have 'bigger problems'. But the reality is, many people are feeling like this and there's a reason! The impact of the pandemic and the lockdown can be so big that we don't actually feel it; stressing about your appearance can be an emotional outlet. The sense of things being out of our control can be quite traumatic and our instinct might be to focus in on the things we feel are in our control, or the things we think should be. But, know that **things won't be like this forever**. Try to forgive yourself for feeling bad; feeling guilty can actually serve to reinforce negative thought patterns.
- ◇ Instead, **nurture yourself** and your body. Take some time to do things for yourself that make you feel looked after. This could be **eating something very nutritious, grooming, reading, learning, sitting outside, masturbating, changing your sheets, dressing up, having a bath, or any number of things**. Check yourself and your intentions, the aim shouldn't be to punish yourself or change yourself but to **be nice to yourself**.
- ◇ It might help to **unfollow social media influencers** or other individuals that perpetuate the idea of a beauty "norm"; particularly if you find yourself having negative thoughts about yourself when reading their content. Instead, make sure at least a third of the people you follow **look like you**, have your particular body type or celebrate the exact features that you've been feeling insecure about. Seeing other people not only embrace their body but love it and thrive with it is incredibly liberating and makes a big difference over time, we certainly don't need to be worrying about losing weight or getting ripped!

Are you struggling with your Body Image during lockdown? (cont)

- ◇ It can be helpful to re-frame thoughts about “**how my body should look**” as the more positive “**what my body can do**”, and to focus on **all the wonderful things your body can do for you**; it’s an instrument, not an ornament. Right now, in the midst of a global pandemic, we don’t need to be productive, we don’t need to go on a self-improvement drive, and we certainly don’t need to be worrying about losing weight or getting ripped! Your responsibility is to stay safe and protect others.
- ◇ Thinking of ourselves as active consumers and being mindful about how we spend our time online can help us to avoid the “mindless scrolling”, self-regulate our screen time, and be critical about how it impacts on our wellbeing. This can help us to achieve a **healthy balance** between passive screen time (e.g. watching YouTube) and interactive screen time (e.g. playing games online or chatting with friends).
- ◇ You might need to get help and that’s okay. We don’t need to gate-keep ourselves from accessing support for these thoughts and feelings. There’s no minimum level of negative feelings you need to reach before getting help. If your negative feelings are too big, persistent, take up too much space in your head or too much time in your day, feel too out of your control or are getting in the way of living your life; speak to someone. **Don’t wait for it to get worse.**

Support & Information

[MIND](#)

[Beat Eating Disorders](#)

[Young Minds](#)

[Centre 33](#)

[Diverse](#)

[Be Real Campaign](#)

[The Mix](#)