

## ***Learn How to Create a Positive Self-image (and Love Your Body)***

What does body positivity mean and how do I become confident in my body? Here we share tips on improving your self-esteem and creating a positive body image.



We are constantly surrounded by opinions on women's body image in the media. We hear things like "she needs to lose weight," "she needs to eat a cheeseburger," "she has gained a lot of weight during her pregnancy" or "she hasn't aged well."

It's no wonder that female body image issues are a big problem in the United States. Many women have heard the little voice in her head telling her, "Your body isn't perfect. You could be prettier, happier or a better person."

Despite what the evil little voice has to say about your appearance, it's time to replace it with a voice that is loving, reassuring, stronger and most importantly POSITIVE!

You wouldn't tell your friend to stay in a relationship with someone who is constantly bringing them down, telling them they're not worthy or telling them they are disgusting. Just like your friend should break off that relationship, it's time to dump the negative voice inside your head as well.



## What is a positive body image?

Practicing body positivity means accepting the body you have as well as the changes it may undergo due to nature, age or personal choices throughout your lifetime.

Body positivity is a movement that calls both men and women to recognize that all bodies are beautiful no matter the size, shape, color, etc. Practicing body positivity means taking care of your body while also having a positive self-image and practicing positive self-talk.

"Despite what the media makes you think, there is not a 'perfect' body," said Dr. Meredith Langhorst, non-operative spine physician at OrthoIndy. "Likewise there is no such thing as an imperfect body."

A positive body image is an acceptance of your body, both the good and maybe the parts you sometimes feel like you want to change. Not only does body positivity inspire confidence, but it also makes you comfortable in your own skin.

"We are all created to be unique," said Dr. Langhorst. "Finding a way to be positive is the key to building a healthy body image and positive self-esteem."



## Why is having a positive body image important?

You should be proud of the person you are both inside and out. A negative body image can impact your self-esteem and make you unsure of the talents and qualities that make you special.

"You should appreciate the person you are and your individual qualities, character, skills and accomplishments," said Dr. Langhorst. "A negative body image can make you unsure of yourself in every aspect of your life. Life is too short and precious, strive to find joy in yourself each day."

A positive body image can also inspire confidence in work meetings, with class presentations or in trying something new you didn't think you could before.

The effects of a negative body image can not only hurt your self-esteem, but it can impact your relationships with those closest to you as well.

A negative body image might make you unsure about being intimate in your relationship. Or it might make it difficult for you to enjoy social activities with your friends.

Life is short and isn't meant to be lived this way.

If you are a parent, it would devastate you to know that your son or daughter thought negatively about his or her own body. The same situation applies to anyone close to you. You wouldn't want your loved ones thinking negatively about their own body or qualities that make them special and loved by you. The next time you think negatively about yourself, remember the impact.



## How can I improve my self-esteem?

"Improving your self-esteem starts by being grateful. Be thankful for what makes you special and unique. Focus on how you can give back and inspire others," said Dr. Langhorst.

The world and the people in it can be mean and not make sense sometimes. However, you have the power to perceive yourself and any situation however you want.

If you focus on the negatives of a situation, you may feel bad about it and yourself. Instead, try to see the good in a situation, even in the darkest times, it can help you feel positive about what may happen in the end. You are in charge of your own perception of reality and improving your self-esteem.

“Accepting yourself as you are doesn't mean you can not change or make improvements. It simply means loving who you are. Each day we should strive to be the best versions of ourselves.”

- Dr. Meredith Langhorst,  
OrthoIndy Non-operative Spine Physician

## 7 Tips for Developing a Positive Self-esteem

1. Write down your favorite qualities
2. Set new attainable goals and make a plan to work towards them
3. Help someone without asking for anything in return
4. Try something new by yourself or with someone close to you
5. Go on a vacation or learn something new
6. Surround yourself with people who make you feel good about yourself
7. Accept yourself as you are now

YOU ARE  
BEAUTIFUL



## How do you create a positive body image?

"Creating a positive body image doesn't have to be an overwhelming experience," said Dr. Langhorst. "Doing small things daily can help you become more positive about your body."

It's also important to treat your body with kindness and respect. A good healthy diet and exercise have been proven to increase self-esteem and make you feel better about yourself.

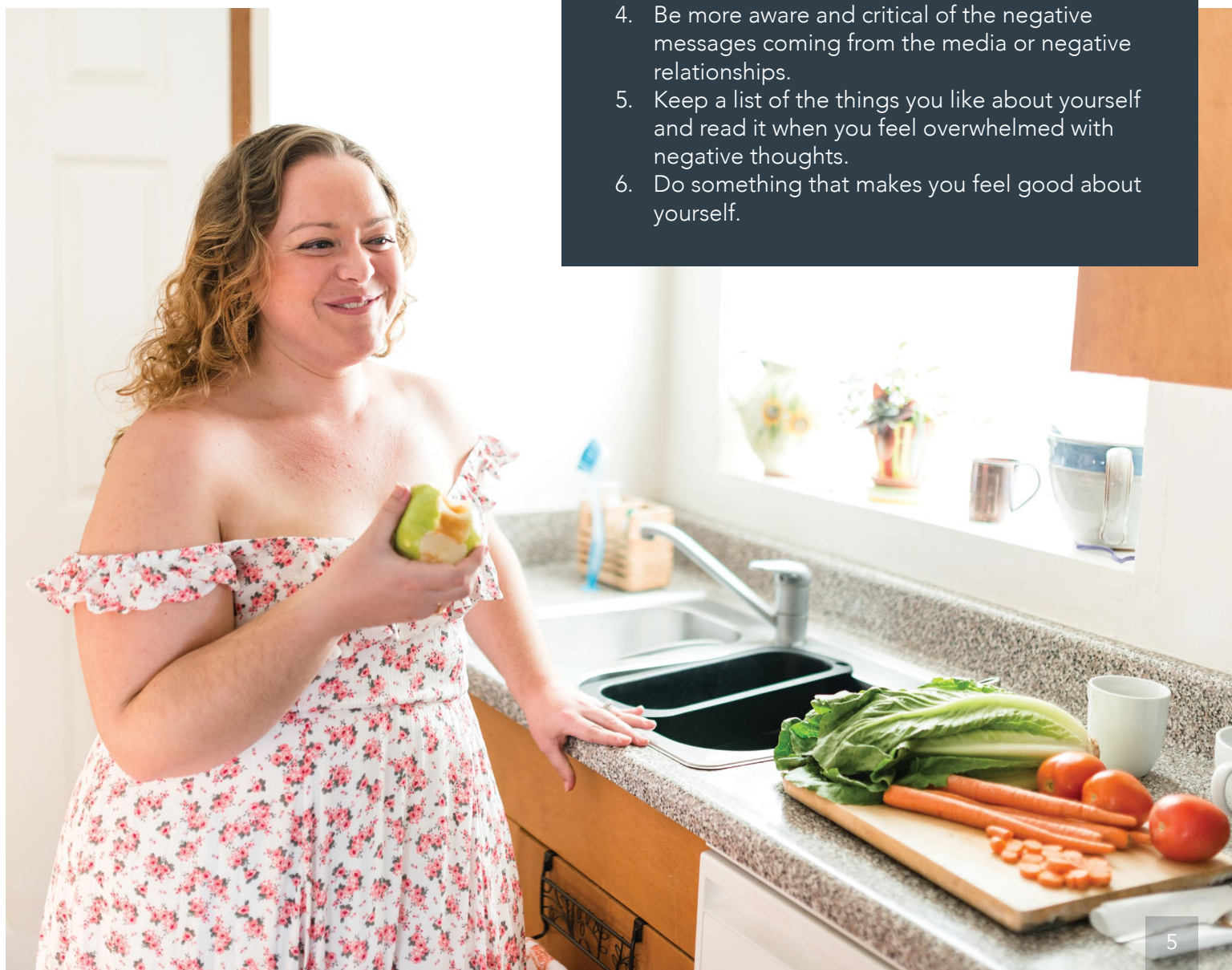
"Healthy eating and exercise don't need to be obsessive to achieve your goals. Learning moderation and self-control is part of the body positivity journey," said Dr. Langhorst. "Spiritual and mental

mindfulness need to be practiced as well to exercise our minds."

Mindfulness means awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and the surrounding environment in the present moment you are in. For example, if you are eating, be aware of what you are putting in your body or if you are exercising, focus on becoming stronger and healthier.

### 6 Quick Steps to a Positive Body Image

1. Life is a journey - appreciate everything your body has allowed you to do already in your life.
2. Learn to replace the negative voices in your head that tell you, you aren't good enough.
3. Be grateful for the things you have in your life.
4. Be more aware and critical of the negative messages coming from the media or negative relationships.
5. Keep a list of the things you like about yourself and read it when you feel overwhelmed with negative thoughts.
6. Do something that makes you feel good about yourself.



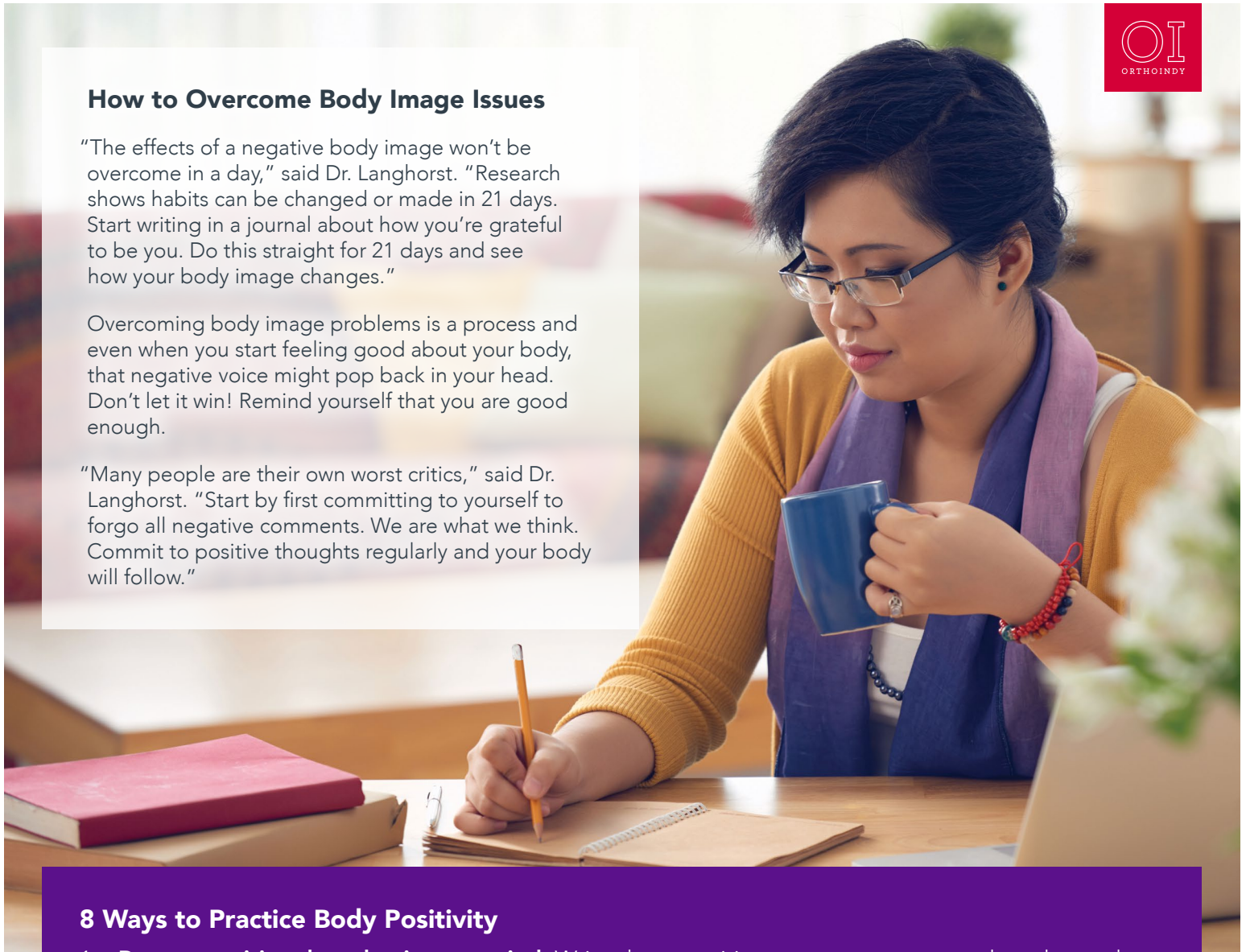


## How to Overcome Body Image Issues

"The effects of a negative body image won't be overcome in a day," said Dr. Langhorst. "Research shows habits can be changed or made in 21 days. Start writing in a journal about how you're grateful to be you. Do this straight for 21 days and see how your body image changes."

Overcoming body image problems is a process and even when you start feeling good about your body, that negative voice might pop back in your head. Don't let it win! Remind yourself that you are good enough.

"Many people are their own worst critics," said Dr. Langhorst. "Start by first committing to yourself to forgo all negative comments. We are what we think. Commit to positive thoughts regularly and your body will follow."



## 8 Ways to Practice Body Positivity

1. **Repeat positive thoughts in your mind:** Write down positive messages or repeat thoughts such as, "I see beauty in myself" or "I'm in control and can do anything I want." It may seem cheesy at first but it will help lessen the negative self-talk.
2. **Do something active:** This doesn't mean you have to intensely exercise with a goal to lose weight. Find an activity you love and enjoy what makes your body feel good. Try yoga, hike with a friend, kayak with your dog or swim with your kids.
3. **Compliment others:** You aren't alone in feeling negative about yourself. When those negative thoughts feel overwhelming, look for the good in others and then see the good in yourself too.
4. **Don't judge others:** We spend enough time judging ourselves for how we look. Make a mental note to stop judging others and you'll spend less time thinking they are judging you.
5. **Get rid of the negatives in your life:** If your scale makes you feel unworthy; get rid of it. If a picture of yourself from when you were young and wrinkle free makes you sad; hide it!
6. **Eat healthy and nutritious food:** This doesn't mean going on a strict, 'if you're not starving, you're not doing it right' diet. Try incorporating unprocessed foods in your diet or try new recipes and snacks that make you feel good when you eat them.
7. **Make a promise to yourself:** If you aren't happy, find out what it is that is making you unhappy. Then promise yourself to take steps that will make you feel better. Make a plan and stick to it. Breaking a promise is like cheating on yourself.
8. **Stop comparing yourself to others:** This is easier said than done, but no matter how good it looks like someone else has it, the grass is not always greener. Follow your own path to greatness.



If you are injured or living in pain and unable to live a healthy lifestyle, [make an appointment](#) and let OrthoIndy's team of experts help you get normal back, whatever your normal looks like.



To help you better understand how to eat healthy, exercise and maintain a positive outlook on life and achieve your lifestyle goals, read our [Ultimate Guide to a Healthy Lifestyle](#).