

## The Body Connection

**It makes sense to want to look your best. Being physically active and eating a healthy diet are smart choices to achieve a healthy body that works for you.**

### RESPECT YOUR BODY

- **Be realistic.** Bodies come in all shapes and sizes. Appreciating the body you've got is the first step.
- **Resist media-driven images** of how men are "supposed" to look. Remember that ads are meant to sell you something. Being a man is about who you are and what you do, much more than how you look.

### EAT A HEALTHFUL DIET

- **Eat for power.** A healthy diet includes lots of fresh vegetables and fruit, moderate quantities of carbohydrates and protein, and 20–35% or less of your calories from fat.
- **Know your fats.** Saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol in butter, margarine, shortening and meats increase heart disease risk. Eat less of these. Oils in fish, nuts and vegetable oils protect against heart disease. Eat more of these.
- **Start small.** Trying to go from a potato-chip diet to mega-healthy in 24 hours is unrealistic and discouraging. Build a healthful diet gradually.

### GET PHYSICAL

- **Talk to an expert.** A doctor or personal trainer can help you come up with a healthy physical activity plan. Getting expert advice is especially important if you're out of shape or have an injury.
- **Be active.** Physical activity can reduce stress, increase energy and alertness, and lower the risk of other health problems such as heart disease.
- **It's easier than you think.** Health experts say that 30–60 minutes of aerobic activity a day (walking, biking, running, swimming) is ideal, especially if combined with some load-bearing activity such as weight-training and flexibility exercises.
- **Start out easy.** If you get little or no exercise now, start with modest changes and work your way up. Climb a flight of stairs instead of taking the elevator. Once or twice a week, take a walk instead of watching TV. Add a little more to your routine each week or month.

Substitute 1 healthy snack  
such as fresh vegetables for  
1 high-fat snack per day.

Eat fresh fruit instead of dessert  
a few times a week.

## When to Get Help

Eating disorders, muscle dysmorphia and other body image problems can be successfully treated. The greatest obstacle for most men is admitting these concerns.

### Think about talking to a health professional if:

- You are very distressed about how you look.
- You spend a lot of time and energy thinking about exercise, diet and/or appearance.
- You feel a lot of pressure from yourself or other people about how much you should weigh or how you should look.
- Your workout habits get in the way of relationships or responsibilities.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

Written by Melinda Mueller, MS.

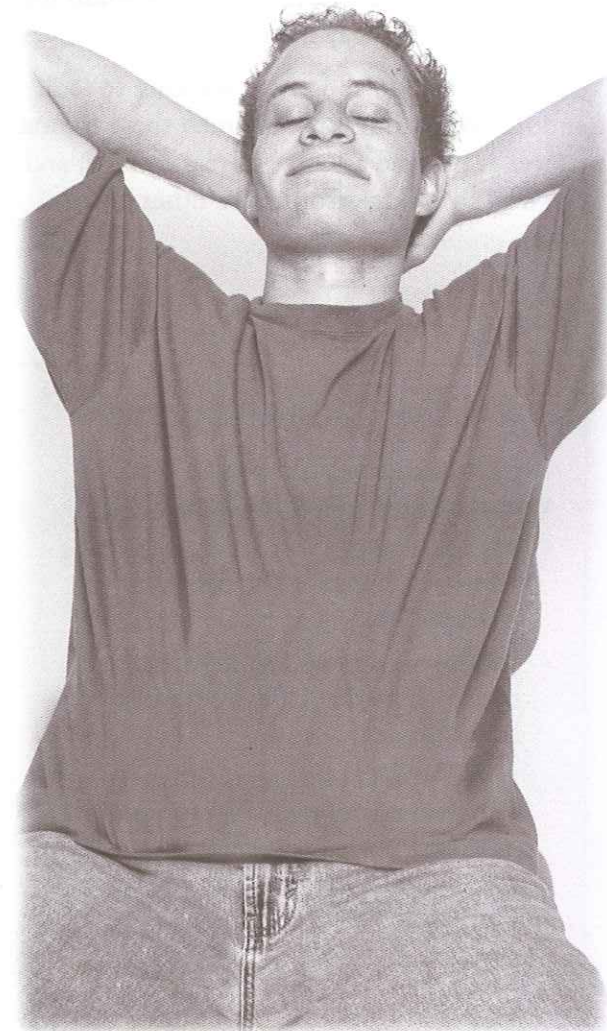
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# Men You & Your Body



# Are You Happy with the Way You Look?

**If you answered no, you're not alone—45% of men in one study were dissatisfied with their bodies.**

Another study found that as many as 80% were. Dissatisfaction was equally common for both straight and gay men.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to look and feel good. But for some men these normal concerns become a source of real distress, and can lead to eating disorders or other body image problems.

## Do You Judge Yourself?

Stereotypes define masculinity by the appearance of physical toughness.

- Ads on TV and in magazines show male models with "perfect" bodies and "six-pack" abs.
- Today's movie stars are defined by superhuman physiques and feats of strength.
- Toys are part of the trend. GI Joe figures once had the normal proportions of a fit man. Now Joe has biceps so huge, they could only be achieved in a real body by using steroids.

# Men and Eating Disorders

Most attention on eating disorders has focused on women. But an estimated 1 million men in the United States have some form of eating disorder.

**There are 3 main eating disorders:**

- **Anorexia** is characterized by intense fear of gaining weight. People with anorexia often follow extremely low-calorie diets and/or exercise to excess.
- **Binge eating** is characterized by eating large amounts of food at one time.
- **Bulimia** is characterized by eating large amounts of food at one time (bingeing), then vomiting to control weight (purging).

All these eating disorders carry health risks. Anorexia and bulimia can be life-threatening.

Many men with eating disorders suffered serious teasing about being underweight or overweight when they were young.

Men in some sports and performing arts feel strong pressure to lose weight. This may put them at higher risk for developing eating disorders.

Researchers find an increasing tendency for men to be judged—by themselves and others—in terms of how they look, not who they are.

# A Body Image Problem

Some people have an unrealistic self-image of their bodies. They see themselves as fat, even though they are thin or even emaciated.

One type of distorted body image is more common in men than in women. Researchers call this condition "muscle dysmorphia." It's also called "bigorexia," "megarexia" and "reverse anorexia."

**Men with this disorder:**

- **Believe they are "small" or "puny"** despite being well above average in muscle development.
- **Work out excessively** and follow strict diets, even if it means neglecting relationships and responsibilities.
- **Feel anxious** if they go off their diet or miss a single day of exercising, even if they are ill or injured.
- **Stay away from social events**, or wear bulky, loose-fitting clothing to avoid exposing their bodies.
- **Are at increased risk** to abuse steroids and supplements.

For people with muscle dysmorphia, physical activity isn't a source of stress relief, better health or greater confidence. They feel unattractive and anxious, and miss out on normal relationships and activities.

# What About Steroids and Supplements?

Some athletes and others feel they can't achieve their desired muscle bulk or performance without using supplements or steroids.

- **Supplements include** creatine, ginseng, ma-huang (Ephedra) and androstenedione.
- **Some sport organizations** ban some of these supplements. Long-term health effects of their use are not known.
- **Athletes who use supplements** are at increased risk of using anabolic steroids.
- **Using steroids without a prescription is illegal** in the United States. Steroids are banned by amateur and professional sports organizations.
- **People who use steroids and then stop** may have mood swings, fatigue, restlessness, reduced sex drive, loss of appetite and depression.

## Health Risks Associated with Steroids

- Acne
- Breast development in males
- Erection and fertility problems
- Heart attack and stroke
- Cancers of the liver or prostate
- Irritability and depression