



Positive Body Image

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Many Americans dislike their appearance.

Girls, and children of parents who diet or have poor body image, are more likely to develop a poor body image. The intense societal focus on how girls and women look, combined with unrealistic media standards of beauty, may contribute to body image issues; boys and men can be affected as well. Being underweight or overweight, or being teased or bullied about your appearance, can also lead to a negative self-image.

Feeling bad about how your body looks can raise your risk of low self-esteem, eating disorders and depression. Fortunately, there are several ways to improve your body image, including:

- Identifying negative thoughts, beliefs and behaviors you'd like to change (e.g., frequently envying a friend's body).
- Finding some aspect you **do** like (e.g., eyes, hair, smile) and focus on that.
- Appreciating what your body can do — not simply what it looks like.
- Working on accepting your body as is. Avoid making negative statements — even to yourself — about your appearance.
- Learning to view food as nourishment, not a reward or punishment.

To help your children develop a healthy body image:

- Avoid negative statements about anyone's food or bodies.
- Compliment your children on their values and accomplishments, not their appearance.
- Avoid obsessing about your own appearance.
- Model healthful habits.

Over time, you can learn to feel better about yourself.

Keto Diet: Pros and Cons

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

The most-searched diet trend in 2021 is the ketogenic (keto) diet. This diet plan is very low in carbohydrates but is very high in fat (about 75%); the USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend only 25% fat. The goal is to get your body into a state of **ketosis**, where you burn fat as energy instead of carbohydrates.

Keto was originally developed to treat children with epilepsy and seizure disorders, and research backs up the diet for this use. But it's more common to see keto used for weight loss or to help manage type 2 diabetes. Is it healthy or advisable for these uses? Consider the pros and cons:

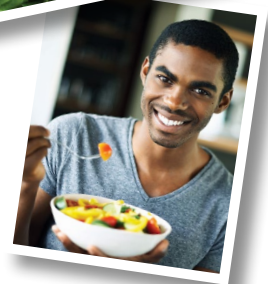
Pros:

- Some studies show it can help with short-term weight loss.
- Research shows it may help people with type 2 diabetes balance their blood sugar levels and improve insulin sensitivity.
- Keto includes high-fat foods, such as red meat, fatty fish, avocado, cheese and nuts, which help with feeling full for longer.

Cons:

- Food choices are restricted, making keto hard to stick with long term and making weight regain common.
- It may cause nutrient deficiencies, since whole food groups are excluded and variety is limited.
- The lack of fiber may negatively affect gut health and cause constipation.
- It could cause kidney stones and raise heart disease risk.
- It's unsafe for those with gallbladder, liver, pancreas or thyroid conditions.

Research is ongoing for using keto to manage type 2 diabetes, weight and some types of cancer. Work with a dietitian to determine the right eating plan for you.



Tanning is skin damage — a reminder during **Summer Sun Safety Month** to protect your skin and health with sunscreen, now and any time of year you are outdoors exposed to sunshine for extended periods. The best prescription: Apply one ounce of broad-spectrum sunscreen with a sun protective factor (SPF) of at least 30 to your exposed skin and reapply every two hours. Healthy skin is protected skin.

The Post-Vacation Slump

Extended time away from work is important. Vacations help lower stress levels and bring you back to work feeling refreshed. But experiencing a post-vacation slump isn't unusual. Here are tips to help you avoid a letdown after vacation:

- Before you take time off, see if you can schedule your first day back for midweek; a shorter week can help ease the transition back into your job. If possible, reschedule low-priority items for later in the week so you'll feel less overwhelmed.
- Before you leave town, tidy up so you don't return to a messy home and extra chores.
- If you return to work immediately, consider getting up a bit earlier than usual to tackle communications you missed and need to go over.
- Feeling down or the need to focus after your vacation? Exercise. Physical activity can boost your mood and focus to help you get over a vacation slump quicker.



Yoga 101

Yoga is not just for the fit and hyper-flexible. But what if you haven't exercised in years or have a health problem, such as arthritis? Yoga truly is for just about everyone because it builds on very gentle, easy poses, including those below, which can be adapted for most people. (Always get your health care provider's okay first.)



Yoga breathing: Sit quietly with eyes closed. Observe your breathing: Is it shallow, slow or fast? Concentrate on slowing your breath comfortably, lengthening exhalations. You'll likely feel tension melt away.

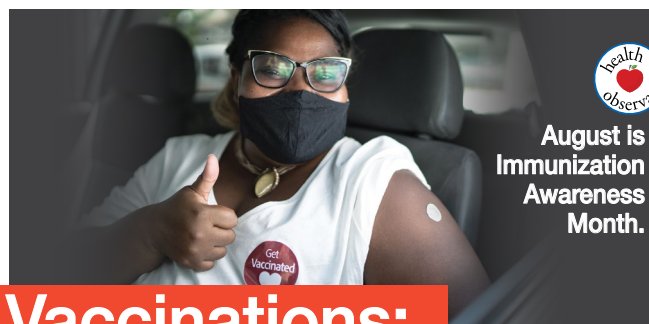
Head movements: To relax face, neck and shoulders, sit in a chair or stand. Inhale slowly through your nose. Exhale as you slowly tilt your head forward. Inhale slowly, lifting your head. Exhale, slowly turning your head to one side, without straining. Inhale, moving your head back to center; repeat to the other side. Exhale, lowering your head toward your chest, then inhale slowly and raise your head again.

Forward bend: For a gentle stretch, stand with feet about shoulders' width apart. Inhale slowly as you slowly raise your arms overhead. Pause. Exhale slowly, bending forward from the waist toward your desk or, if you're very flexible, the floor. Keep knees slightly bent. Pause. Inhale as you slowly straighten your body, raising your arms overhead. Pause, exhale and lower arms to your side.

Repeat all the steps above as many times as comfortable. To learn more, search for **yoga** at nccih.nih.gov.

Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information visit coronavirus.gov.

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Live Stronger**, is at personalbest.com/extras/21V8tools.



Vaccinations: Vital for Those with Chronic Conditions

Vaccines are one of the safest ways for you to protect your health. They work with your body's natural defenses to help you safely develop immunity to disease. In the U.S., vaccines have greatly reduced or eliminated several infectious diseases that once took many lives. However, the viruses and bacteria that cause these diseases still exist, and they can still make us sick if we aren't vaccinated against them.

Immunization is especially important for those with chronic medical conditions, including diabetes, heart disease, prior stroke, liver disease, renal disease, HIV infection, asthma and weakened immunity.

Consider the flu. Most people who become sick with flu recover in a few days. But those with chronic disease can develop serious complications, such as pneumonia, bronchitis and sinus infection. Their weakened immune systems can raise their risk for flu-related side effects, and worsen their health problems.

For example, having a history of heart attack can dramatically raise your risk of being hospitalized with serious flu symptoms, or having another heart attack. Those with **asthma** may experience a worsening of asthma symptoms that flu vaccination can help prevent. It can also help maintain proper sugar levels in those with **diabetes**.

Other vaccinations — especially important for those with impaired health — include:

- COVID-19: reduces your risk of coronavirus infection.
- Tdap: protects against tetanus, diphtheria and whooping cough.
- Pneumococcal: protects against serious lung diseases.
- Zoster: protects against shingles.
- Hepatitis B: lowers the risk of liver cancer.
- HPV: (through age 26 for men and women) protects against most causes of cervical cancers.

Check with your health care provider about which vaccines you need.