

How to Become a Body-Positive Supermujer

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¿Sabes Que?

Women of all ages can be negatively affected by mainstream ideals of thinness and white beauty standards in the media. Research shows that proudly embracing your cultura Latina and surrounding yourself with positive role models can improve your body image.



Your body moves you. It carries you throughout the day, sometimes holding el peso del mundo on your shoulders. The stresses of work, school or family can add up, but how you respect and treat your body can protect you.

Treating your body with kindness and respect nurtures it with energy and positivity. Love your body by moving it and keeping it fit. Respect your body by eating delicious and nutritious food. Start looking at your body with appreciation instead of criticism. All these choices help you develop a positive body image.

Having a positive body image and healthy self-esteem is key to living a happy life.

What Is Body Image?

Body image is how you think of your body. When you look in the mirror or picture yourself, what do you feel? Acceptance or criticism? This is part of your body image. Body image encompasses what you believe and feel about your appearance, your weight, shape and height. Your body image is also about how you sense your body as it moves.

We want you to be a Body-Positive Supermujer because negative body image can hurt you. It can affect your relationships and how you communicate with others. Negative body image can contribute to low self-esteem and eating disorders, and chip away at your overall health and well-being.

Take a look at these signs and check in with yourself.

Signs You Might Have Body Image Challenges

- Do you think of a part of your body with distaste or disgust?
- Are you convinced that only other people are attractive and that your body size or shape is a sign of personal failure?
- Do you feel ashamed, self-conscious and anxious about your body?
- Do you feel incómoda and awkward in your body?
- Do you catch yourself criticizing your body or the way you look?
- Do you criticize other women's bodies?

Signs You Have Positive Body Image

- Do you feel acceptance and love for your body?
- Do you celebrate and appreciate your figura natural?
- Do you love your curves?
- Do you understand that how a person looks says nothing about their character and value as a person?
- Do you feel orgullosa and accepting of your unique body?
- Do you love your body as it is now?
- Do you refuse to spend an unreasonable amount of time worrying about food, weight and calories?
- Do you feel comfortable and confident in your body?
- Do you appreciate the way your body serves you?

What Affects Body Image?

How you perceive your body is complex. Many factors affect body image, including where you were born, how you were raised, who your role models are or were, and the social groups you not only interact with, but compare yourself to. Today's media-focused mainstream culture has more power than ever to influence Latina body image.

¿Sabes qué? Latinas who watch four or more hours of TV a day or spend that amount of time on social media have a less favorable body image than Latinas who don't.

Some researchers say it's because mainstream media and advertisers push their distorted definition of beauty. Many times this definition doesn't match ours. They portray certain values, people and themes in a way that make you feel like your uniqueness is wrong. This portrayal creates a warped illusion of reality that idealizes thinness and extreme Western beauty standards. This warped illusion can lead women to create unhealthy comparisons to the women they see in the media. This is bad for all women, but it is beginning to affect Latinas and you need to alert yourselves to it and reject it.

Did you know that...or ¿Sabes Qué? Latinas who watch four or more hours of TV a day or spend that amount of time on social media have a less favorable body image than Latinas who don't.

How your Latina identity can improve body image...Now for the good news...

Latinas are strong, passionate and proud, and all of these characteristics should be embraced to improve your overall self-image. In a recent research study, women who identified as Latina—those who embraced their strong ethnic identity—described their bodies more positively and were better able to fight off the negative effects of media consumption than those who didn't identify as Latinas. So as it turns out, when you embrace your cultural identity—tu cultura Latina—you are more likely to accept and celebrate body types of all shapes, colors, ages and sizes.

Embracing your cultural identity helps combat the over-sexualized or stereotypical body images of Latinas that the media tend to portray. In the language of social research, this is called a Protective Factor. Translation: Your cultural identity can protect you from the distorted body images that are portrayed in the media. ¡Eso!

Here are some ways you can draw from your cultura and boost your body image and self image:

1. Surround yourself with positivity in your social and family environments. Research shows that when Latinas receive strong cultural support, their ideals for extreme thinness and Western beauty standards decrease. This results in a happier, healthier you.
2. Even if you want to shed a few pounds, love your body as it is now. Adorn it, love it, accept it.
3. If you think you might be having body image issues, stop reading beauty magazines that prescribe what a woman is supposed to look like. Look for images of Latinas who are beautiful because they are real, earthy, strong and powerful.
4. Look for your own definition of a Supermujer and remember Latinas come in all colors, shapes and sizes.
5. Next time you look in the mirror, stop to remember who you are and where you came

from. Your heritage y cultura is built on a foundation of tradition, resiliency, love and support.

6. Spend a few minutes a day meditating on your body. Practice being grateful for how your body serves you. Reflect on how you will take care of it starting today.
7. Reject the mainstream definition of beauty and embrace your unique inner belleza and self-love.
8. Enjoy comida y cultura. Express your love for your favorite foods. Learn to cook traditional and nontraditional foods. Cook for others and cook for yourself. Savor food. Enjoy it. Eat when you're hungry. Stop when you're full.
9. Treat your body with love and respect.
 - Comb your hair like a loving aunt or madrina might have when you were a child
 - Treat yourself to a nice bubble bath
 - Ask your partner for a massage, or give someone a deep hug
 - Buy a nice soap or lotion for your skin. Rub your skin gently with lotion or special oils
 - Adorn your body with jewelry or other accessories that express pride for your culture
 - Wear lipstick like your favorite aunt or madrina
 - Take your body for a walk and enjoy nature
 - Dance your body. Move it to your favorite music
 - Make a list of the reasons you appreciate your body