



Reiki for Body Image

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WHAT DO YOU SEE when you look in the mirror? Do you see your body in a positive or negative way? Have you said negative things to yourself about your body, or perhaps the question should be, how often do you do that? If so, you are not alone. Body image is a concern for both men and women. Depending on the source, an alarming 33% to 91% of men and women dislike their body image, and this ranges from teens to the elderly.¹ The lower number relates to men and the higher number to women.

A survey in *Glamour Magazine* reported that 97% of women have a daily “I hate my body” thought, saying such things as “you are ugly, big, or gross.”² Keep in mind; the research says that the more time a woman spends engaged in reading glamor-type magazines, the more issues she tends to have with her body image.³ Fortunately, we have Reiki to help us heal and transform our body images. With the powerful tool of Reiki, we can learn to see ourselves as the caretakers of our bodies, responsible for loving and nurturing them.

What is Body Image?

It's a mental picture of one's physical body (including size, shape, and appearance), and one's attitude toward the physical self (such as thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about one's body).⁴ According to Ondina Hatvany, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, a “healthy body image means you are comfortable with the body you have. It does not mean you think your body is perfect, rather, that you accept it and commit to loving and caring for it. Meanwhile, a negative or unhealthy body image involves a preoccupation with one's perceived flaws. Individuals may experience shame or even disgust around their appearance. Some may go to unusual lengths to alter or hide their bodies, even at the expense of their well-being.”⁵

When you have a negative body thought, such as when you compare yourself to others, how do those thoughts make you feel? Likely you feel emotions such as shame, guilt, disgust, or helplessness. Then when you feel bad, how do you act? Maybe you stay home or soothe yourself with a bunch of cookies. Likely putting yourself down doesn't make you want to do better, but instead makes you feel worse than before. It is a downward spiral.

Women with a positive body image are more likely to have good physical and mental health. Women with negative thoughts and feelings about their bodies are more likely to

develop eating disorders and depression. Researchers have found that dissatisfaction with their bodies may be part of the reason more women than men have depression.⁶

Body Statistics

As of December 2018, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that American women aged 20 years and above weigh an average of 170.6 pounds, are 5 feet 3.7 inches, with a waist measurement of 38.2 inches, and a body mass index (BMI) of 29.6, which falls into the category of overweight.⁷ As of 2005, 73.9% of all North Americans are overweight.⁸ The average model is 5'7" and weighs 114 pounds, which would be considered underweight.⁹

Check out the healthy weight and BMI standards with this link, <https://www.rush.edu/health-wellness/quick-guides/what-is-a-healthy-weight>. According to this source, an average weight for someone 5'4" ranges from 110 to 144 pounds. *Time Magazine* reports, 56.4% of women said they had tried to slim down over the past year versus 41.7% of men.¹⁰

I found all this information to be sobering. As I reflect on my journey, I came from a family that loved food. My mother always had an abundance of dishes at each meal, and nightly, we ate ice cream. At their highest weights, my mother weighed 340 pounds and my father 300 pounds. I saw the toll it took on their health and determined to do things differently by taking care of myself. By age 35, I learned Reiki and began my self-practice. As the pounds started to pile on, I turned to Weight Watchers® to learn about healthy eating and exercise. I was shocked to find out that exercising once a week at the gym wasn't considered enough exercise. Louise Hay, in her book, *You Can Heal Your Life*, taught me to say loving things to myself and my body. As a counselor, sex therapist, tantra, and Reiki teacher, I worked with many women with body image issues and tried different things. Out of everything I tried, one exercise stands out, so I would like to share it with you.

Body Image Exercise

Follow these steps:

- Write three negative things you say to yourself about your body.

- Activate all the Reiki symbols that you have, including the Distant Symbol, and send Reiki for a couple of minutes to the part of your body that you criticized.
- Tune into that part and hear what it has to say about your criticisms.
- Go on to the next criticism and repeat.
- Then write three positive things you can say to those parts of your body.
- Give Reiki to the list for a couple of minutes each day for a week.

Doing this exercise has given people an insight into how their body felt about the criticisms. Tracey shared that she had a negative thought about her hands. “I sent Reiki and listened to them. Right away, they reminded me of all they do for me, especially being a conduit for Reiki. I felt so compassionate towards them after that.” She also had negative thoughts about her lower abdomen. When she sent Reiki, she felt such sadness there and that it just wants to be accepted and loved. Now she reports that she is conscious of any negative thought about herself and flips it into appreciation.

A woman who criticized her large hips heard her hips say that they allowed easy childbirth. Another woman who criticized her stomach listened to her stomach, saying it wanted to be loved and accepted. Another heard from her belly it wanted to be fed healthier food and given Reiki daily.

Kevin shared the following negative thoughts, “My hair is receding, the toes on my crow’s feet are getting longer, and when did my lovable love-handles turn into something resembling a busted tube of biscuits?” When he sent Reiki to the issues, he realized that he is not his hair, skin, and stored energy reserves. In truth, he is a being of love and light, reminded by mirrors that he is human too!

Tuning Into Our Body

Many Reiki people are already intuitive, and we can use our skills to help ourselves. As you can see, we can learn to tune into our body and Reiki can help to connect with it. Simply activate the Reiki II symbols, and all the symbols you know, to connect with your body. Spend a few minutes daily giving your body Reiki and asking your body what it needs for better health. Ask your body what kind of food and drink it wants and what type of exercise will support it the most. Things may change, so it is important to tune in often, hopefully daily. Occasionally my body doesn’t want to go to Jazzercise® but wants a gentle walk around the block. Ask your body to guide you in better caring for it.

Learn to differentiate between mouth hunger and body hunger. Mouth hunger is the temporary pleasure we receive from eating something tasty. Body hunger is what our bodies need to

function optimally. My mouth may want ice cream, but my body wants spinach. As you give your body Reiki, ask it what kinds of foods will best nourish it and what does it want today. Over a few weeks, your taste buds can start to change where you enjoy eating healthy foods while sugar tastes too sweet. You can consider yourself the caretaker of your body and nurture it like you would a beloved child. Our body is our vehicle on earth, and without it, we would simply be spirit. I like to joke that we can’t sign up for a body exchange program. If we treat our bodies poorly, they will perform poorly and contribute to our misery.

Healing the Inner Critic

Reiki also helps us to heal the inner critic by transforming negative thought patterns and replacing them with healthy thoughts and patterns.¹¹ William Rand writes that as we repeat negative thoughts, it disrupts our flow of Ki and diminishes the flow. Negative thoughts can become lodged in the subconscious mind and disrupt the flow, which, over time, causes our bodies to become ill.¹²

Activate the Distant Symbol along with all the symbols you know and send Reiki to the negative thoughts and feelings about your body. While giving yourself Reiki, ask Jesus or your favorite spiritual being to lift the patterns out of you, heal the areas, and fill them with energy from the highest heavens. I have done this with many clients, transforming shame and guilt into acceptance.

Comparison is a common issue with body image. When we compare ourselves, everyone loses. When we praise ourselves as the glory that God created us to be, we lift ourselves and can see the glory in others. Theodore Roosevelt said, “Comparison is the thief of joy.” Send Reiki to the comparison thoughts.

Consider that beating your body up verbally and emotionally, hoping it will feel and perform better, will not work. Instead, we need to care for our bodies and nurture them lovingly. As we love our bodies more, we naturally want to take better care of them. Daily self-Reiki is the perfect way to love our bodies more.

Loving Our Body

As we give our body Reiki and learn to take care of it, we can find creative ways to support it. One of my favorite things to do is to say things to myself such as, “I love my liver, I love my kidneys, I love my skin, I love my eyes,” and so forth. It may be easiest to start with your organs and then work your way out to areas that you formerly criticized. I have found my favorite time to do this is in the shower, and sometimes it comes out as a song. I once healed something that the doctor said would need surgery by creating a happy body part song along with daily Reiki.

The Bible says, “Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?” (1 Corinthians 6:19) Consider your body as a spiritual gift from God/Goddess. We have been given the gift of life. Sing glory to your body. One of my favorite songs is “Body of the Goddess,” by Michael Stillwater, that says, “My body is a living temple of love.” Find a great version of that song, “Body of the Goddess/I Am,” on the *Sophia Return* CD.

Conclusion

There is more information available to help you learn to love your body. Simply Google, how to have a positive body image. To have some fun with it, listen to songs such as the “But Song,” by Teri Wilder on her *I Choose Joy* CD, and “Taming My Inner Critic,” by Karen Drucker on her *All About Love* CD.

We have explored transforming from criticism and comparison to loving and accepting ourselves. Reiki for body image becomes Reiki for self-love, which was the goal after all. Using Reiki is so much quicker than merely trying to think ourselves into a more positive state of mind. Reiki can transform the negative thoughts and feelings into greater acceptance and love, perhaps quickly, and perhaps over some time. Commit to loving yourself now so you can gain better enjoyment of life, better health, and more ability to express your Divine Purpose on Earth. You will also be a role model for your family and friends, which can ripple out to help many. Loving our bodies is loving ourselves and the life we

have been given. We are worth the effort. Reiki can make this process easy. Our bodies are Divine! ✨



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Endnotes

- ¹ <https://www.dosomething.org/us/facts/11-facts-about-body-image>.
- ² <https://www.glamour.com/story/shocking-body-image-news-97-percent-of-women-will-be-cruel-to-their-bodies-today>.
- ³ <https://www.ssc.wisc.edu/~jpiliavi/357/body-image.htm>.
- ⁴ <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/issues/body-image>.
- ⁵ <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/issues/body-image>.
- ⁶ <https://www.womenshealth.gov/mental-health/body-image-and-mental-health/body-image>.
- ⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr122-508.pdf>.
- ⁸ <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/track/pdf/10.1186/1471-2458-12-439?site=bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com>.
- ⁹ <http://www.blog.tsmagency.com/average-model-height-and-weight-requirements>.
- ¹⁰ <http://time.com/5334532/weight-loss-americans>.
- ¹¹ William Lee Rand, Reiki, *The Healing Touch First and Second Degree Manual* (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, February 2016), 7-9.
- ¹² Ibid.