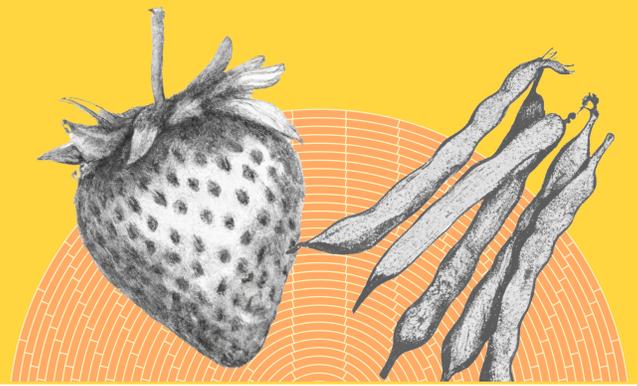


How to ditch diet culture



What is Diet Culture?

Diet culture is a belief that appearance and body shape are more important than physical, psychological, and general well-being, leading you to focus more on if you lose or gain weight than on your health. Diet culture has taught us how we should eat and look, and that if our bodies look a certain way – we are more acceptable. Diet culture makes alluring promises of structure and lasting results, but in actuality, pushes unsustainable patterns of eating that keep you trapped in the yo-yo diet cycle. There are so many different diets out there that are confusing, restrictive, and overwhelming. Food has plenty of appropriate uses in our culture, including nourishment, celebration, enjoyment and satisfaction, but trying to manipulate our body size is not one of them.

Diet culture focuses on thinness over health and well-being. Often times, diet culture encourages us to cut out entire food groups (like carbohydrates) to lose weight and makes us believe that some foods are “good and bad,” “real and fake,” and “clean and dirty.”

Why is diet culture harmful?

Health is not based on your size or number on the scale because health cannot be determined based on how we look. Diet culture can be harmful and put you at risk for developing an eating disorder or forming disordered eating habits.

Diet culture normalizes labeling food as good or bad. Placing one way of eating or food above another and thus leading people to label themselves as good and bad when they do eat those foods.

Steps on How to Ditch Diet Culture:

1. Stop Dieting and let go of diet food

If you lean towards choosing foods that make promises like "diet," "keto," "heart-healthy," "low-carb" etc. because you think they are better or healthier for you, then think again. Oftentimes these products are actually less nourishing and offer less satisfaction than the non-diet version. If you choose diet foods because you actually like the taste of them and they feel good in your body then there's a place for them. The main questions to ask yourself are, "Why am I choosing this?" and "Do I like my reason?"

2. There is no good, bad, right or wrong foods

From chips to vegetables, truly all foods can fit into what you want to eat. A mistake we often see is that when you believe in "bad" foods you tend to over-restrict them only to overindulge in them down the road, feeling bad physically and mentally. When you can ditch the diet and make peace with food, then you can include all foods as often as you'd like without feeling out of control. No more willpower is necessary!

3. Stop comparing yourself

It is natural to draw comparisons between yourself and others, or even your present self and the younger you. However, it can damage our self confidence when we make value assumptions about those comparisons. You may notice a friend has lost weight and assume they are happy and well, when they may be experiencing disordered eating, life changes impacting appetite, or illness. You may also think back to a time when your body looked different and only focus on how you looked instead of how you felt. When you can accept where you are at now, then you can move forward. This takes practicing gratitude and self-compassion.

4. Throw out your scale

You don't need it. Weight is not the only determinant of your health. Think back to all the times you have ever stepped on the scale, has it ever ended in a positive outcome? It is a constant pull back into the vicious cycle of "I'm not good enough, so let me control my food and body more." Letting go of the numbers on the scale is an important step toward making peace with your body.

5. Clean out social media

When you have a social media that is steeped in diet culture or weight loss then it can feel like that way of living is normal and acceptable. Take time to clean up your feed and add in more positive accounts. This is something our dietitians like to do together in our sessions with patients.



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Tune out the noise

Diet culture is everywhere, and it can be hard to escape its messages. One way to combat this is to learn to tune out the noise and focus on what feels good for you. This might mean unfollowing social media accounts that promote diet culture, or setting boundaries around the conversations you have with others about food and body image. It's important to prioritize your own well-being and do what feels best for you, rather than trying to conform to the expectations of others.



Be kind to yourself

Breaking free from diet culture can be a challenging process, but it is also incredibly rewarding. By educating yourself about diet culture, reflecting on your own beliefs and behaviors, practicing self-compassion, focusing on health and well-being, finding support, and being mindful of the media you consume, you can learn to nourish and care for your body in a healthy and positive way. Remember to be kind to yourself and recognize that your worth is not determined by your appearance or your ability to conform to certain beauty standards. All bodies are good bodies, and it's important to learn to love and accept yourself just as you are.

What is Nourish?

Nourish offers evidence-based medical nutrition therapy from registered dietitians over telehealth, covered by commercial insurance and Medicare.



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How it works:

