

## Body Shaming Phrases

*"I hate my body"* – It's normal to be dissatisfied with things about your body from time to time. However, "I hate my body" is all-too-often used as a way of dismissing the amazing things your body is capable of, just because you're not as thin or as toned as you'd like to be. If we think more critically about this statement most people will often realize it's not entirely true.

*"Flattering"* – The idea that there's a universal idea for is flattering or what flatters someone is harmful. When you deem something flattering or unflattering, you're making it clear that you consider your opinion to be the gold standard when it comes to judging attractiveness. Flattering is also often used as a veiled synonym for 'slimming'.

*"Bikini-ready"* – There's no rule that only people under a certain percentage of body fat or a certain amount of muscle tone can wear a bikini. If you have a bikini and you put it on, you're bikini-ready.

*"I could never pull that off"* – Sure, there are items of clothing, hairstyles, or makeup looks that not everyone feels comfortable in. But there's no reason to assume you couldn't go out in public wearing something because of your weight, body type, or age. It just takes one person to buck the trend and start changing minds.

*"I feel fat"* – As countless mental health professionals will tell you, fat is not a feeling. You might not love everything about your body, it might not look the way you want it to, or you might have more fat on your frame than you want. But the only thing you'll achieve by saying you 'feel fat' is giving yourself a negative body image and additional misery.

*"I can't believe I ate that – I'm so bad"* – while many people indulge the impulse to deem their food choices as moral or immoral, it's time to unburden yourself from that mental baggage. Eating cake doesn't make you bad, and eating vegetables doesn't make you virtuous. If your food choices haven't been as healthy as you want them to be, you get plenty of chances to change it.

*"I look so old"* – aging certainly presents some difficulties, from aching bones to increased risk of illness. But getting older doesn't mean a loss of attractiveness. It's actually a privilege. Those fine lines and gray hairs are just a reminder of a life well-lived.

*"Do I look fat?"* – if you have to ask someone this, odds are you already have an answer in mind. And by forcing someone to tell you that you don't look fat, you're not only fishing for compliments, you're also reinforcing the notion that looking fat means looking bad. That's a dangerous message for anyone to hear, but it's an especially hurtful one for those with larger bodies.

*"Not until I lose weight"* or *"When I lose weight"* – why should your weight hold you back from doing the things you want to do? There's no reason you shouldn't enjoy the beach, ask someone out, or love yourself just because you're carrying around more pounds than you'd like.

*"Slimming"* – while some garments may make you look thinner than others, describing something as 'slimming' just perpetuates the notion that thin is better or ideal.

*“Perfect body”* – instead of suggesting that your body or someone else’s is ‘perfect,’ compliment the specific things that can make someone look great: a kind smile, great hair day, toned muscles, etc.

*“Skeletal”* – speaking negatively about thin bodies can be just as hurtful as doing the same about larger ones. And calling someone ‘skeletal’ just because they carry less weight on their frame – whether they intended to look that way or not – can instantly make that person feel unattractive and size-shamed.

*“Thunder thighs”* – referring to your legs (or someone else’s) as ‘thunder thighs’ infers that people with larger (or sometimes stronger) legs are somehow less than desirable or inferior.

*“Flabby”* – you may not have as much muscle tone as you’d like, but describing your body as ‘flabby’ casts those less-than-firm parts in a not-so-positive light. Remember, even professional athletes have some body fat on them.

*“Real women have curves”* – the idea that there’s such a thing as a ‘real’ woman is bad for men, for women, and for everyone who doesn’t quite fit into either category. The idea that thin women, or those without prominent busts or backsides, aren’t ‘real’ is just another awful, and totally unnecessary, way of pitting women against each other.

*“Anorexic-looking”* – anorexia is a serious condition that has the highest mortality rate of any psychological disorder. With that in mind, it’s time to retire the phrase ‘anorexic-looking’ from vocabulary. Using that phrase makes light of a deadly disorder, and it equates what is often a natural body type with a serious mental and physical health issue.

*“You’re not fat” – you look great”* – who says looking fat and looking great are mutually exclusive? If you use these kinds of assurances to make your friends feel better, that’s exactly what you’re suggesting. You might see it as a compliment, but saying something like this can contribute to someone’s negative body image.

*“Slutty”* – just because someone is wearing revealing clothes, has a lot of makeup on, or has a certain body type doesn’t mean they’re promiscuous. Using this phrase continues to incorrectly put the onus for harassment and assault on the person being hurt or shamed.

*“Ugly”* – while not everyone in the world has supermodel good looks, that doesn’t mean those without them are ugly. Or even close. There’s someone who finds virtually every look out there beautiful, even if you don’t. And using this in reference to another person, or even towards yourself, is just plain not nice.

## Ways to Be Nicer to Yourself

1. Write yourself a forgiveness/compassion letter
2. Start taking compliments like a champ
3. Spend time alone
4. Take yourself out to dinner
5. Take yourself to a movie
6. Treat yourself like you'd treat your best friend (would you tell your best friend how much you hate their thighs? Focus on the things you love about yourself)
7. Rid your home of clutter
8. Put your phone on silent for a while
9. Ask yourself what you need – HALT – are you hungry, angry, lonely, or tired? Tune in to what you need or are feeling and choose how to better care for yourself
10. Say yes and mean it, say no and don't feel bad
11. Invest in yourself (classes, career options, personal goals)
12. Sign up for cooking classes
13. Focus on accomplishments not failures
14. Get more sleep
15. Meditate
16. Take up yoga
17. Take more walks
18. Ditch the scale – stop bashing your worth on an ever-changing number
19. Quit counting calories
20. Try daily affirmations
21. Stop obsessing about the past
22. Allow yourself to be vulnerable
23. Take time to do things that make you happy
24. Celebrate the goals you've achieved
25. Use up your vacation days
26. Take advantage of personal days, too
27. Change the way you criticize yourself
28. Make yourself laugh or watch funny shows
29. Don't obsess over clothing sizes
30. Drink your favorite coffee drink
31. Stop trying to do it all
32. Get a massage
33. Be patient with yourself
34. Purge the negative people from your life
35. Practice forgiveness
36. Quit taking everything so seriously
37. Start journaling
38. Make a bold change
39. Ask for help when you need it
40. Order dessert