

The *Model for Healthy Body Image and Weight* Responds to Four Toxic Myths That Underlie the Culturally Mediated Risk Factors for Most Body Image, Eating, Nutrition, Fitness and Weight Problems



Myth 1: Image is valued over substance

What it means: “How I look” is more important than “who I am.” An essential criterion for the “right” look is a slim/lean body.

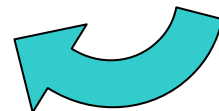
How it works: Mass marketing of ultra thin role models *as if they were normal* has been very effective in creating tremendous appearance anxiety and fear of fatness in individuals who naturally want to be normal and fit in.



Myth 4: Discounting the value of health; Complacency about choices that do not result in the desired lean look

What it means: Eat, drink and be merry... Healthy choices for health’s sake (versus appearance) are too much work!

How it works: When appearance, the drive to be thin, denial of biological size diversity, and the diet mentality dominate, the primary purpose of eating and fitness is lost: “*Why eat healthy (or be active) if it won’t make me thin?*” Given a market flooded with entertainment foods and sedentary pastime options, the number of people who routinely override their internal weight regulatory system, are poorly nourished, and lack basic fitness increases exponentially.



Myth 2: Denial of biological diversity

What it means: Anyone can be slim if he or she works at it. Fatter people eat too much and/or are inactive. Fat is bad/wrong and inevitably unhealthy.

How it works: For the drive to be thin to be widely embraced, biological diversity of size and shape has had to be denied. Instead of accepting that weight is influenced by many factors, and that wholesome eating and fitness result in diverse BMIs, the current norm is to mistrust the body’s ability to regulate weight if/when the end result is or might be visible fat.



Myth 3: Denial of the Effects of externally prescribed hunger regulation

What it means: Dieting is an effective weight loss strategy.

How it works: Since restrictive eating commonly results in short term weight loss, this is routinely presented as evidence that anyone can be slim(*mer*) if they “work at it.” “Dieting” continues to be viewed as the primary means to achieve this, even though the basis for its dismal success rate has been well documented and understood since 1950. At least 90% of weight lost through any type of weight loss plan is regained, often with added pounds.