

Chasing Perfection

Tips for creating healthy fitness goals and loving your results

▶▶▶ **"I AM FAT! I LOOK TERRIBLE IN THESE JEANS!** I hate my body! I will not go anywhere that requires wearing a swimsuit!" Have you ever said any of these things? Know someone who has? Chances are that either you have said this, or you know someone else who has. However, a large number of people who feel this way are actually in what is deemed optimal health and fitness based on their body fat (25-31% for women and 18-25% for men). If you are in optimal health, but still chase perfection, this article is for you.

Perfection can be defined as having no flaws. Based on this definition we can see that that is not a realistic goal for the human body, but many people are chasing that target. There are a number of reasons that can lead to one's desire for a perfect body. Magazines that have edited models' photos and athletes who privately go to extreme and unhealthy lengths to achieve a look can lead to the unrealistic expectation that most individuals could achieve the same results.

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The following are signs that you should look for in yourself and others to make sure you and/or they do not have an unhealthy or unrealistic body image:

- Constantly pulling your shirt down or fidgeting with your clothes.
- Wearing clothes that are too big.
- Avoiding mirrors.
- Avoiding activities that would require you to be in shorts, a tank top, a swimsuit or other revealing clothes.
- Stressing about missing workouts.
- Putting exercise before other important things such as work, family or health.
- Always feeling fatigued and/or getting injured.

Fortunately, there are ways to adjust your thinking and to embrace your body. As a certified fitness coach, who specializes in aesthetics, I feel that my expertise can provide some healthy tips for individuals looking at fitness as a means to an end for

looks. I was voted the number one trainer in the nation for pageant training in 2013, have competed in natural body building and have trained dozens of clients who have placed and won overalls in competitions, and now I want to help you.

Here are a few of my best tips:

- **Know your genetics.** While I do not think genetics always prevent us from achieving our ideal look, they are important. Some people will say that since their parents were overweight, they have the same destiny — while studies do show that people who have overweight parents have certain predispositions, everyone can still choose to live a healthier, leaner life. However, if you have a long torso, shorter limbs, or you are tall, short, etc. these things cannot change. You must shape the physique you have by eating healthy and exercising.
- **Love yourself!** Realize you are special and find at least one thing you love

about yourself, focus on it, and remind yourself of it daily. As you go forward, try to find something new you love about yourself. Don't just focus on looks. Maybe you are a good planner; you are clean, intelligent, kind, etc. Write it down and repeat it when you are feeling down and out.

- **Set S.M.A.R.T (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely) goals.** Knowing that perfection fulfills none of these parameters, set attainable goals such as, "I will not drink more than one glass of wine each night," "I will not eat refined sugars or foods with trans fats" or "I will go to the gym 4 times this week." I suggest you write down these goals and share them with an accountability partner. Write daily goals to help build up your confidence and even make some that focus on more than physical health.

A quote that I remind clients of when training is: "Success is a journey, not a destination," spoken by Ben Sweetland. Knowing that you are making healthy choices should be the goal. Whatever look comes with the healthy choices is just a bonus. ◀

With nearly 20 years of experience in the fitness industry, internationally recognized trainer Scott Keppel is the founder of Scott's Training Systems. He has trained everyone from body builders to new moms and specializes in an individualized approach to fitness based on personality, lifestyle and fitness goals. For more information, visit www.scottstrainingsystems.com.

