

THE IDEAL



Dear Reader,

I wrote this because I am not special. I, like many other women, idolized the heroin-chic celebrities of the 2000s and aspired after them. I grew up with A mother who, like so many others on her generation, was taught that disordered eating was self care. Who lovingly and unknowingly instilled the same fears into their daughters. I am one of many who have struggled with disordered eating and body dysmorphia because of the media we were taught ~~to~~ to emulate. I am not special. And now, as I am healing from my own journey, I look around and see the younger generation being bombarded with the same messages that caused me so much pain. I am telling you this because it is something I wish I knew before going down that road. I am telling you this because hopefully, pulling back the curtain and exposing these trends in ideal bodies might prove to you that these ideals are pure fiction, and that you are so much more than what you look like.

XOXO

- Ellie Mattson

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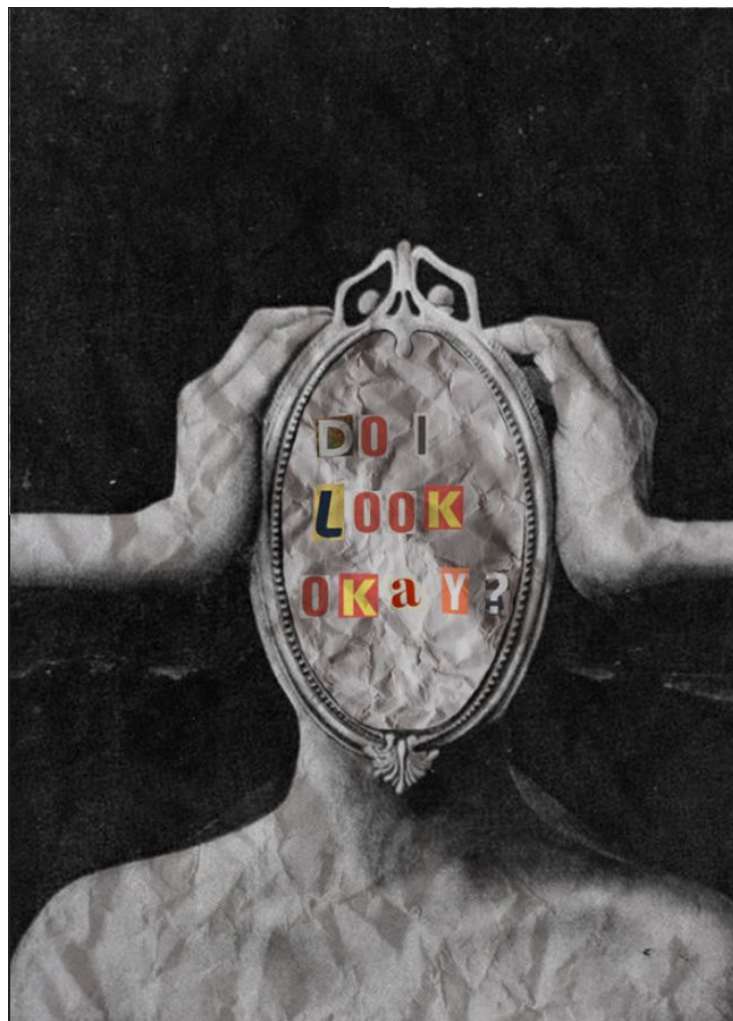
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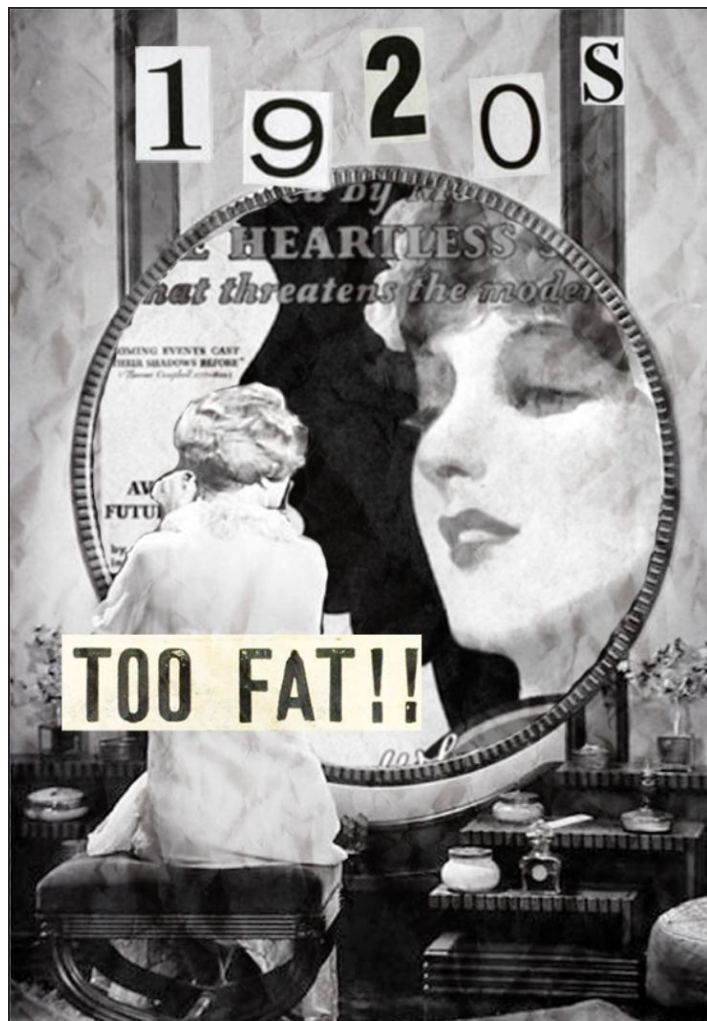
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Introduction

Each decade, a new ideal body is introduced, and the beauty standards shift to fit the mold. From the boyish silhouette of the 1920s, to the Marilyn Manroe curves of the 1950s, body trends have changed drastically over the course of history. Throughout these pages, we will explore the 'ideal bodies' of the 20s, 50s, 60s, 2000s, 2010s and presentday. We will expose how the media we consume impacts how we view ourselves, past and what the 'perfect body' might be next.



In the US, the 1920s ushered in a new fitness craze known as 'reducing'. Reducing was one of the earliest examples of diet culture, which is now a permanent fixture in our media. Unlike the diets of the past, this movement was all-encompassing and heavily involved popular media, new markets, and a growing consciousness of the importance of health the upper class was gaining.

Previously having fat on the body was seen as a status symbol, showing the ability to live in excess. However, in the 1920s, people began to view the ability to restrict their food consumption as a sign of strong moral character and civility. From this shift in perspective, the female beauty standard quickly moved away from the corsetted hourglass figure of the past and moved toward a thin and androgynous silhouette. The rise of consumer culture quickly contributed to the reducing trend. Companies saw the potential revenue that came with using advertising an ideal body and subsequently selling products to 'help' women achieve it. To be fat was to be unhappy.

Additionally, Hollywood stars began to have a stronger influence on popular culture. This began with the practice of magazines detailing the health and beauty routines of actresses. Hollywood stars were a mirror for measuring one's own physique against. As images of slim actresses appeared in magazines weekly, marketers used this to promote merchandise that would supposedly transform the average woman into a Hollywood star. These reducing tools ranged from exercise courses and creams to early dieting pills.

Reducing remained immensely popular throughout the 1920s and only saw a decrease in demand with the Wall Street Crash of 1929. While the Great Recession may have halted the reducing craze, the factors that drove the trend, such as body consciousness, consumerism, and popular media, continue to greatly impact how we view ourselves today.

AMAZING NEW EASY WAY CAN QUICKLY PUT POUNDS AND INCHES OF FIRM, SOLID FLESH
THIN FOLKS WHEN

1950s

Discovered! The All-in-One Concentrated Meal of Easier Digested
Body-Building Calories You've Long Heard Was Coming.

If you are skinny, thin and underweight because of poor appetite or poor eating habits, WATE-ON is normal health report weight gains of 5 pounds, 10 pounds and more so fast. WATE-ON is not intended to cure obesity. WATE-ON is a pleasant to take and easy used by the amazing successful length-building Vitamin B-12 and

Skinny Girls ARE NOT GLAMOUR GIRLS

THE AMERICAN RESEARCH INSTITUTES...
underweight figures that extra calories fill body. WATE-ON appetite, gives energy against fatigue, endurance, strength. WATE-ON your body building...
a new HOMOGENIZED food (also like after meals yet is so concentrated, will daily dosage exceeds many a skinny person...
IT GAINS OF 5 POUNDS AND INCHES OF FIRM, SOLID FLESH? Then simply fortify your put firm, healthy flesh on face, neck, bust, arms, legs. Who let life slip by without crying WATE-ON?

AN BE UNDERWEIGHT...
your eating habits often lead to underweight...
men, women and children Express their Appreciation for WATE-ON

ENDORSED...
letters are on file. Your own...
MEN WOULDN'T LOOK AT ME WHEN I WAS SKINNY

ANOTHER 5 POUNDS...
I gained 5 pounds and I want to keep on taking WATE-ON. I have spent quite a lot of money on different things and nothing made me gain until I read WATE-ON. Mrs. Josephine Sturgill, Memphis, Tenn.

WATE-ON...
Homogenized Pleasant Handy Food Easy To Eat

In the post-war 1950s, young Americans had more disposable income and enjoyed greater material comfort than their predecessors. Allowing them to devote more time and money to the consumption of popular culture. The ideal body of the 1950s was a stark contrast to the ultra-slim body of the 1920s. In the Golden age of Hollywood, Celebrity culture impacted the way women viewed themselves more than ever before. Celebrities like Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor were viewed as the epitome of beauty. With hourglass curves, slim waists, and large breasts being coveted traits.

The norms of consumer culture and domesticity were disseminated through new forms of entertainment, which became a fixture in middle-class American households during this time. Such as women's magazines, television, and cinema. Advertising pushed products like weight gain supplements, and even wore hip padding to 'round out' skinny figures. Things like 'bust cream' and torpedos bras were also heavily advertised. Both Playboy magazine and Barbie were created in this time, echoing the tiny waisted, large-chested ideals.

After the conclusion of World War II, men who returned home reclaimed their jobs, and women returned to their homes, there was a push to encourage them to regain their femininity. As America tried to move on from the war, the separation of gender roles returned. A substantial part of women's roles was to look good for their husbands or potential suitors. This brought with it an obsession with how women looked, and they returned to the use of corsets and girdles to enhance their curves to conform to the trendy hourglass figure. As the idolization of Celebrity and popular culture increased in the 1950s, so did ways to access it. As these ideals were more easily accessible, they became a permanent institution within American society.



The 1960s was a time of revolutionary ideas. Bringing in a sexual revolution and the second wave of the women's rights movement. In a prosperous post-war era, willowy fashion models presented a body ideal for women. Ultra-slender, with no waist definition and especially thin thighs, arms, and stomach. There was a conscious effort to shift away from the pinup models and hourglass figures of past generations. This androgynous look for women was part of the counterculture movement that rejected the conformity of the previous decade.

British fashion model Lesley Lawson, known as Twiggy, was emblematic of the beauty standards of the time period. Foundation garments were swapped with diet and exercise. This sharp swing in ideals, from hourglass to stick figure, was especially difficult for women to keep up with and fuelled massive growth in the diet industry. This ultra-slim ideal caused incidences of severe anorexia nervosa, requiring hospital admission to increase through the 1960s. The idea that a body was only truly fashionable if it was being worked on or improved in some way rose in popularity through the 1960s. This value is still subscribed to in present-day and made way for new harmful messages to sprout up in the media.



The 2000s saw a substantial increase in diet culture and weight loss in prevalent media. The ideal body was to look so thin it bordered on danger. The tongue-in-cheek term "heroin chic" entered the cultural lexicon to describe one of the trendiest looks of the mid-90s to early 2000s: gaunt thinness akin to a hardcore drug user. Women's media was flooded with tips on the fastest way to lose weight while simultaneously demonizing any other body that did not fit this ultra-thin standard. Tabloids crucified celebrities for being seen in unflattering angles showcasing any fat and would especially target women who have appeared to gain weight or 'let themselves go'. Conversely, if a celebrity was deemed too unhealthily skinny, they would be criticized in the same tabloids for promoting harmful body image standards. Once again, anorexia nervosa diagnosis increased, and through the internet, young girls formed 'pro ana' communities that shared 'thinspiration' and encouraged each other to progress deeper into their illness.

The 2000s also gave way to many reality TV shows surrounding diet and weight loss. The most popular being *The Biggest Loser* which first aired in 2004. The show featured overweight people who competed to lose the greatest amount of weight. The contestants were divided into two teams, each working out with a specific trainer while facing temptations and challenges. At the end of each week, each contestant is weighed, and the participants vote out one of the two contestants who lost the least percentage of weight during the week. *The Biggest Loser* promised viewers dramatic weight-loss transformations every week. Each season, filmed over the course of about six months, pushed contestants to lose as much weight as possible as quickly as they could. Despite the program's claims that the extreme weight loss was in service of the contestants' health, *The Biggest Loser's* approach sharply diverged from longstanding best medical practices. This gave audiences extremely unrealistic and harmful views of weight loss and exercise, which were then normalized for everyday people.

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How do i look like kim k

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- how to use face tune
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The 2010s brought with it the rise of social media and the ability to change our bodies at our fingertips. In a new digital age, technology like Facetune and Photoshop allowed users to edit out anything deemed imperfect before posting it for the world to see. Through Instagram, we saw a new version of the hourglass body emerge. Women who fit this ideal sported airbrushed skin, snatched waistlines, large and perfectly toned butts, and slim thighs. While all body ideals have been somewhat unrealistic, the 2010s beauty standards were virtually impossible to adhere to without some level of cosmetic enhancement, digital or otherwise. Along with the ability to digitally enhance ourselves, we also saw a rise in plastic surgeries.

The Kardashian family quickly became 'American Royalty' after the debut of their reality television series Keeping up with the Kardashians. The influence of the Kardashian-Jenner family can be traced to plastic surgery trends, beauty-product categories, magazine sales, and advertising. In 2014, Kim Kardashian "broke" the internet by recreating a controversial Jean-Paul Goude photo for the cover of Paper magazine, the obsession with her butt became inextricably linked with rising consumer interest in butt lifts. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, between 2000 and 2018, such procedures increased by 256 percent.

While social media usage increased, so did the pressure to adhere to an ultra-perfect beauty standard. Women were exposed to more unrealistic expectations than ever before.

NOW

Viral TikTok trend that features Bella Hadid's voice and sees users proudly posting videos of their 'skinniest' moments is **SLAMMED** for 'triggering and glamorizing eating disorders'

The End Of The BBL Era?

Today, we are at a cultural crossroads. As we become more aware of the negative rhetoric that was pushed in the past, the body positivity movement is gaining momentum, especially in online circles. People are now more critical of media and what kind of message it is sending. However, this is not to say that we are free from the pressures of adhering to beauty standards. Speculation about what the next trend in ideals will look like has begun to circulate on social media. The verdict is that the 'BBL Epidemic' of the 2010s is on its way out now that celebrities like Kim Kardashian have been seen getting their procedures removed and losing weight rapidly. Instead, people are turning their attention to figures such as Bella Hadid, who have a blend of both a slender frame with remnants of an hourglass figure. In a Tweet that's since sparked controversy, the NYF headline 'Bye Bye Booty: Heroin Chic is Back' was posted alongside a collage of images of catwalk models and BBL-less Kardashians. This is a drastic shift from the "slim thick" look of the 2010s and the body positivity that had been in vogue previously.

Public outcry against this change in the ideal body has been pouring out across social media platforms. Many people pose an important question: Who decides which bodies are fashionable and why? With trends changing shape at breakneck speed, we can only imagine the impact this will have on a younger, more impressionable generation. While this forecasted shift is worrying, it may be preventable. We now have a surplus of information at our fingertips. It is the responsibility of older generations to share these resources and stop the vicious cycle from beginning again. It is unrealistic to assume that this will stop harmful beauty standards from dispersing. But we now have the ability to impact the media like never before, and it is up to us to decide whether or not the cycle continues.

Q & A

Norah Skinner: 16 year old student

Do you think social media has impacted how you feel about your body?

"Growing up with Tiktok, I feel like I am constantly comparing myself to girls like Addison Rae and Charlie D'Amelio. It feels like people online look so grown up and flawless that I feel pressure to try to compete with them. Also, it feels like a lot of fashion trends that are popular online, like 'Balletcore' and 'Twilightcore' are super centered around being skinny because all the girls following them are. I really like those styles, but I hate the way they look on my body."

Do you think the body positivity movement has impacted younger generations?

"I definitely think we have more role models to look up to, which is great. But with social media, it still feels like the majority of our favorite celebrities are conventionally pretty and thin, so at the end of the day it still has a long way to go. Especially because I think that it mostly lives online because in the real world people are still very fatphobic. For every one person commenting on Lizzo's post saying she looks beautiful, there are 100 trolls calling her a whale. I'm also learning that it's just not realistic to expect to love your body every day, I think that body neutrality is a much better viewpoint."

What is 'Body neutrality'?

"Body neutrality is the idea that you don't have to love or hate your body, just respect it. It takes the pressure off of you to love your body on days you may not and is the practice of just accepting it as it is and appreciating it."

Do you see/hear your peers struggling with body image?

"All the time. I hear things like 'ugh I feel so fat today' or 'ew I look disgusting' like 50 times a day when I'm at school. A lot of my friends go through phases of doing intense workout or diet plans they find on Instagram and get upset when it doesn't work. One of my friend's posts 'what I eat in a day' every day on TikTok. Its only gotten worse as we get older."

What, in your opinion, is the "ideal body" today?

"I think that the beauty standard is definitely shifting to more a super skinny look. Like, a lot of girls want to look like Emma Chamberlain and Zendaya. But at the same time, it feels like we're supposed to still have curves. Its very confusing because I feel like the internet is split on it and so am I. It feels like i'm supposed to be two things at once."



PLAYLIST

Track One: Diet Coke- Leanna Firestone

Track Two: Mirror Ball- Taylor Swift

Track Three: Picture Me Better- Weyes Blood

Track Four: Liquid Smooth- Mitski

Track Five: Porn Star Tits- Eliza McLamb

Track Six: Jealousy, Jealousy- Olivia Rodrigo

Track Seven: Just A Girl- No Doubt

Track Eight: Body Terror Song- AJJ

Track Nine: From Queen- Beach Bunny

Track Ten: You're On Your Own Kid- Taylor Swift

