

Solutions:

- The Media Awareness Network (2010) “focuses its efforts on equipping adults with information and tools to help young people understand how the media works, how the media may affect their lifestyle choices and the extent to which they, as consumers and citizens, are being well informed.” Educating adults on the topic of negative media portrayal is one way to help reduce the drastic measures in which young girls go to in order to fit the ‘thin ideal’ of American society. Young People today need nonparent adults (such as teachers) who will support and encourage them

- [The Body Positive](#) is a great site committed to helping women feel good about the bodies they have. Their motto, Change Your Mind, Change Your Culture, and Let Your Body Be, informs their website, which suggests, among other things, “Taking up occupancy inside your own skin, rather than living above the chin until you're thin.” When young people believe in themselves and feel optimistic about their future they are willing to make a change for the better

Where you can go for more information:

- The Dressing Room Project (<http://www.thedressingroomproject.org/index.html>) was begun by girls who were angry about mainstream media's portrayal of women and about how these unrealistic ideals contribute to the prevalence of negative self-image and eating disorders. They began creating cards that say things like "Beauty is Within" and "Worry about the size of your heart, not the size of your body"

- <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm> is a great Canadian based website with helpful games and plenty of resources for parents and teachers on media awareness. It is their goal to educate parents and teachers about the media and how it may affect their children.

Sources:

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Media Portrayal on Young Women

Self-
Improvement or
Self-
Destruction?

Why is it a problem?

Media – television, music lyrics, video games, magazines, sports media, internet, music videos, and advertising—is everywhere. The type of media that is currently in the United States is shaping the future and our societal views of beauty. This type of media allows young girls and women to self-objectify their bodies and to wish for something that they don't have. In a recent study (Hayes and Tantleff-Dunn, 2010) "Girls as young as 6 years old experience body dissatisfaction, as evidenced by a preference for an ideal figure that is thinner than their perceived current body size."



What can negative media lead to?

- Eating disorders that may negatively impact both physiological and physical health (Daniels, 2009)
- Anorexia Nervosa & Related Eating Disorders, Inc. says that one out of every four college-aged women uses unhealthy methods of weight control—including fasting, skipping meals, excessive exercise, laxative abuse, and self-induced vomiting. The pressure to be thin is also affecting young girls (Beauty and body image in the media, 2010)



- In 2003, Teen magazine reported that 35 per cent of girls 6 to 12 years old have been on at least one diet, and that 50 to 70 per cent of normal weight girls believe they are overweight (Beauty and body image in the media, 2010)
- Overall research indicates that 90% of women are dissatisfied with their appearance in some way (Beauty and body image in the media, 2010)

Interesting statistics:

- The average female model is not only taller than the average women; she also weighs 25% less (*Global status of women 2009*)
- Nearly three-quarters of all female characters in sitcoms are underweight, and those that are overweight are often the subject of comments or jokes about their bodies made by male characters (*Global status of women 2009*)
- When the Australian magazine *New Woman* departed from usual procedure and ran pictures of overweight or even normal weight women, they received letters overwhelmingly in support of this realism from readers. However, advertisers reacted negatively, and the program was discontinued (*Global status of women 2009*)

Is there such a thing as positive media?

Of course! Maybe not as much of it, but it is still out there. In a study by Elizabeth Daniels (2009) at the University of California, Los Angeles, Daniels reports that, "performance athlete images promoted less self-objectification, suggesting the need for more of this imagery in mainstream media."