

FEMALE BODY STEREOTYPE

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THE STEREOTYPE

Since as long as I could comprehend, the female body has been pried and picked at in several degrees. With the unrealistic goal of being super-slim, with a darker/lighter complexion than one has, and a toned breast/butt region, it all becomes damaging. Leading women down destructive paths, which implants negative mentalities and detrimental methods on their natural bodies.

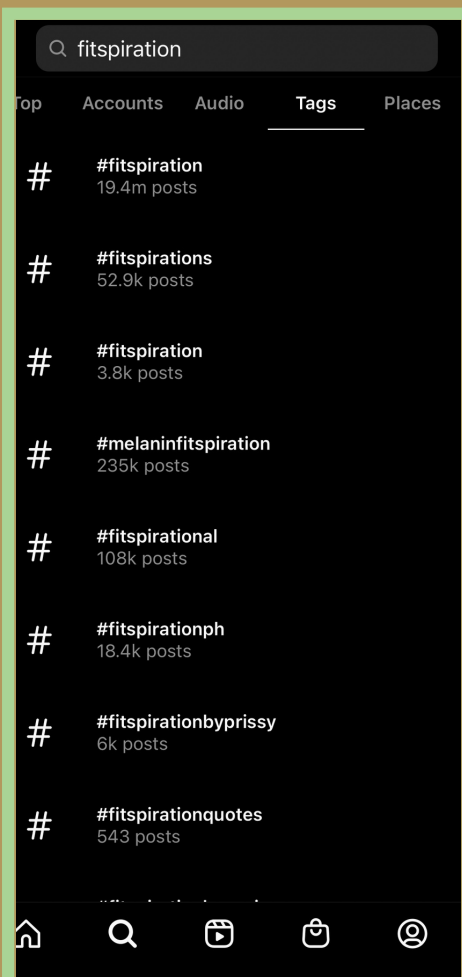


THE REAL WORLD

Social media has rapidly caught the attention of the youth. Platforms allow the freedom of posting what you desire, but with that comes the negative.



The appeal of working the female body into an hour glass figure, has become popular on Instagram. Instead of #Thinspo trending, #Fitspiration has grabbed young female attention.



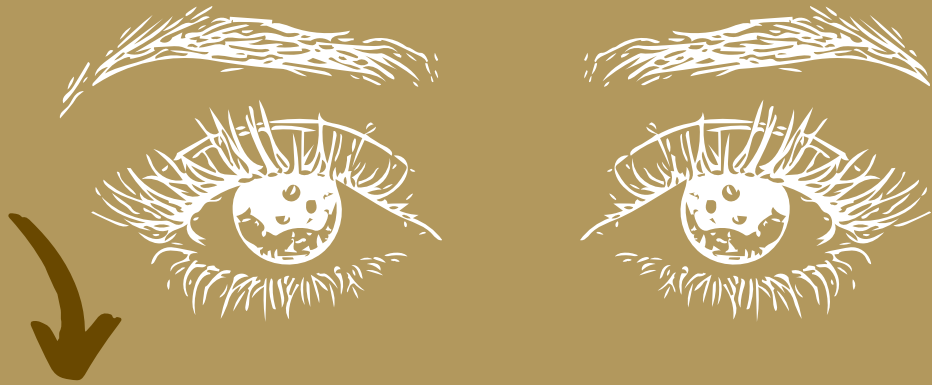
THE HASHTAG WITH MULTIPLE SUB-HASHTAGS WITH NO WARNING FROM INSTAGRAM (#FITSPIRATION).



Ages of all women view can view this content. "The purpose of fitspiration is to encourage its viewers to meet health or fitness goals, however, sometimes this content may generate the idea of social comparison" (Daniels et al).

The post under the hashtags often aren't even encouraging to actually become healthily fit. Rather the post appear to be the opposite "...images have found that they often include guilt-inducing messages that focus on body image (e.g. "Suck it up now, so you don't have to suck it in later")" (Bozsik and Bennett).

The statistics follow with the real world, proving further that this stereotype exists, and is effecting woman of all sizes, colors, and age



THE NUMBERS

When it comes to the standard and ideal body image for women, there is numbers upon numbers that prove the stereotype has an impact. In general "65% of those under 18 and 45% of adults believe in an "ideal body" (Hearts).



Body image starts to impact girls starting at the young ages of four or five. Young ones expressing their bodies looked different; "They Are Fat": 37% "I Am Fat": 31% "I am Ugly": 10%" (Hearts).



As young girls enter middle school, the impact of meeting the ideal body type DOES NOT go away. Statistics prove "5% say they'd prefer to be thinner 6% report weight loss attempts 8% state they want to be larger 4% are already at healthy weights" (Hearts).

"YOU DEFINE BEAUTY YOURSELF. SOCIETY DOESN'T DEFINE YOUR BEAUTY." - LADY GAGA

The numbers even prove that "85% of women skip important activities due to body dissatisfaction" (Hearts).

THE IMPACT

When the stereotype is constantly pushed onto women, it also pushes for too much self-reflection. Whether it's reflection in the mirror or on the scale. This leads to possibly taking more physical actions to change an appearance. The medical terminology of an eating disorder is, psychological disorder characterized by the abnormal or disturbed eating habits. Overall "An estimated 20 million women will have an eating disorder during their lifetime, according to the National Eating Disorders Association" (Menker).



The pandemic forcing everyone inside, didn't help with the situation. It forced faces into phones, into endless hours of scrolling on social media. With nothing better to do than scroll, "Social media offers a constant way to compare yourself to others and to rely on superficial means of building self-esteem, such as how many 'likes' or comments you get on a post," Dr. O'Melia said" (Menker).


The mindset that leaves females in can be detrimental to their daily living and routine, "...people are comparing themselves to an unrealistic and often impossible standard, which can lead to dangerous behaviors in an attempt to achieve something unachievable" (Menker).



MY STORY

The facts can be presented to someone as much as you'd like, but it never becomes the truth until it happens. Being an active young woman on social media, I have scrolled past dozens of posts involving the female body stereotype. When all the posts seem to be of skinnier girls with clothes you could only imagine on you, what do you do? When all of a sudden a size 4 is a little concern, what do you do? When having wider shoulders, and no hips isn't feminine, what do you do? When everyone around you floats like a elegant flower, and you are still trying to bloom in the bosom, what do you do? It was the battle with my body to fit society standards that were always projected towards me. In my mind eating had no longer become a necessity, but an option. The number on the scale needed to be lower, for my hip bones to become more prominent. My stomach needed to be flatter so my new swim suit looked fitted. My round face needed to be deconstructed to have that sharp jawline.






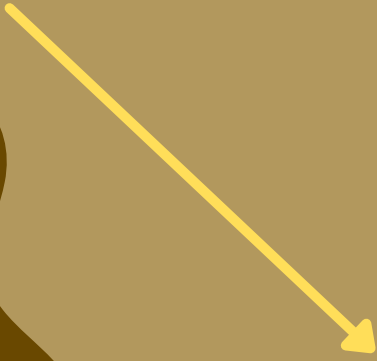
No matter how much hair fell out in the shower or how many times I said "no" to a meal, I was going to fit into a size 0. No matter how many drained days I had to push through, or how many emotional breakdown I had. No matter how awful the rotting in my mouth tasted, or how loud my stomach would call out for help. I was going to be like the girls on my screen. In my head destroying my body was more important than my mindset would ever be. Being thrown into treatment, was what my body craved even if my mind detested the idea. Through multiple session of being forced to talk about why I was draining myself to the bone, and multiple meals were the calories conspired in front of my eyes, I did it. The days therapy became less frequent, and the food on plate looked like a treat, and no longer threat, I accepted myself a little bit more. It was a moment of standstill, somewhere in me, I was going to have to accept the girls on my phone would never be me, but I was going to have to love myself for what I was. The stereotype is real, beyond real. It impacts millions, but as a young woman learning to love the flaws and not rip away at them, its time as a society to change our ways.



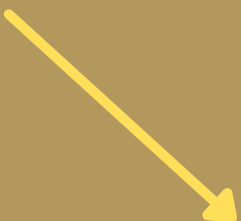
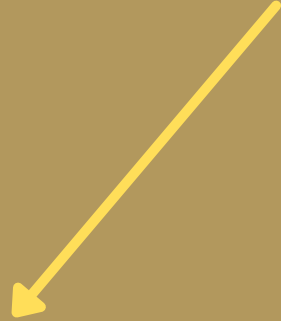
THE CHANGE



MEET TESS HOLLIDAY



Tess Holliday has made a place in the modelling industry, whilst also helping spread awareness for body positivity movement. Growing up Tess was not the average slim waist, perky butt girl in the hallway. Tess did learn to find strength in herself, "...without a support system at home, she had to find the confidence within herself to keep going. I developed a thick skin; I knew what [the bullies] were saying was hurtful, but I didn't let them get me down" (Augustine).



She always aspired to work her way into the modelling industry but acknowledged that her dream would be pushed to the back burner because of her size and the lack of openness in that career. Years later Tess would be modeling plus-size companies like Torrid, but also be placed on billboards for millions to see. Soon enough her social media exploded, this lead too her own personal moved called #effyourbeautystandards, "She posted four photos in outfits plus-sized women are often told they can't wear. She shared it on Instagram, telling people that if they're also sick of being told how to look, just say eff it like her" (Augustine).

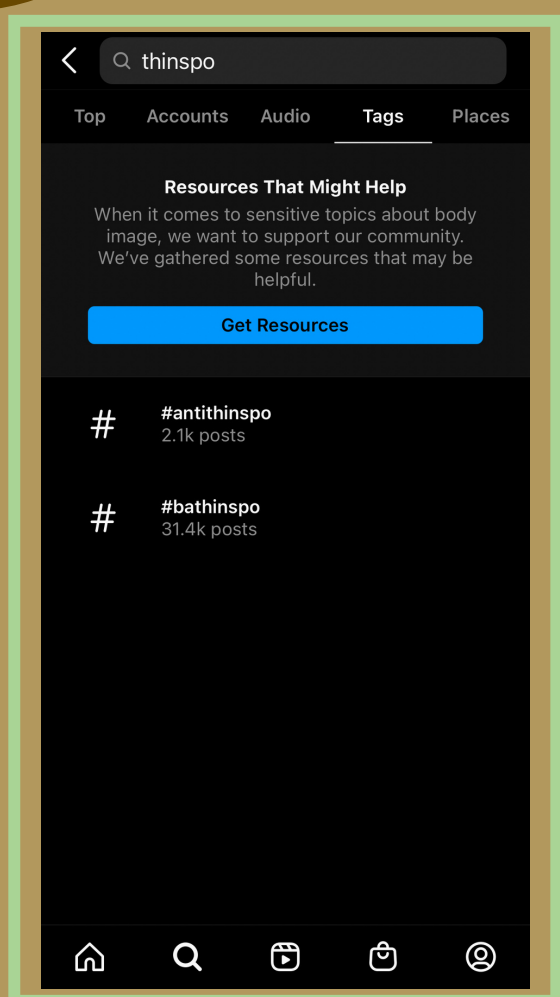


Tess made a voice for girls all over the world, she spoke up when told to silence herself. Millions of women look to Tess not only for the confidence she radiates, but to learn that beauty truly has no standard. You can be any color, any race, any age, and any size, and be absolutely beautiful, because just like Tess said "Be yourself at any cost. Don't make any apologies and don't give a f—k. Because you are great just as you are and if people don't believe it, then you show them" (Holliday).



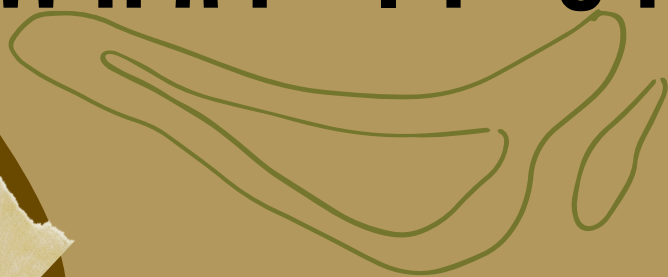
INSTAGRAM'S CHANGE

Recently Instagram, has taken the step to censor content that may not support a positive community. With that comes certain hashtags being censored, such as #Thinspo. Instagram has instead, presented hashtags that go against the harm, such as #AntiThinspo, whilst also informing the damages that the sensitive content could bring.



Instagram, censoring and offering alternatives to negative content, related to body positivity (#AntiThinspo).

WRAP IT UP



The female body, may never see the day were it isn't reconstructed and rewritten. For now, as a young woman in society, we must take small steps. Learning to accept our bodies for what they provide us rather than for what they do not. Understanding that the media is purposely forced to construct someone into how they look. Lastly, learning that all body types are beautiful and unique, and there isn't just one type of standard. Our bodies are beyond earthly, lets start embracing them more.