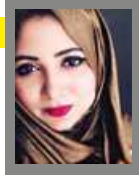


THINSPIRED

SIMRA KHAN
Fitness and Nutrition Coach, Mentor/
Guide at ThinspiredbySimra,
Managing Director Fit Food
Culinary Artist- Specialized in Healthy
Cooking



Embracing Body Positivity for Self-Empowerment

See if this rings a bell: You are at a social gathering, and you often find yourself or other women start their conversation with how you have either lost weight or maybe gained a little from the last time they saw you. This conversation starting point is so toxic that it takes away your confidence level down so much that you start being overly body conscious and maybe stop socialising. This stigma leads to harmful behaviours in women, with negative body image leading them to try out fad diets, starvation, and even bulimia.

In an effort to look perfect, many women fast, go for strict diets, intake chemical slimming (laxative) agents. Anorexia is another form of body negativity which is associated with emotional disorder, making one's obsession to look thin until they are just bones and skin, leading to major health issues such as anaemia, malnutrition and organ failure due to sudden weight loss in the unhealthiest manner.

In pursuit of a toxic body image

In this era, many women, including the millennials, have joined the workforce and for them, creating a body positive society is an important tool to make them feel more empowered. We want to live



in a world where young girls don't feel threatened to meet other fellow women with a toxic mentality.

The rise of social media also adds to the downside of bringing in this hysteria of "perfect body." We participate in this frenzy of body comparison and self-doubt by believing in such unrealistic body types, which most of us don't really have to be honest. Either we are too thin or too fat and never really care how we really feel about our body from the inside.

The unrealistic beauty standards of celebrities, Instagram influencers with that perfect filter or that deceptive pose hits you hard, and you engage in this never-ending pursuit of the 'perfect figure.' This affects your mental and social wellbeing, leading to anxiety, shame, and

guilt, and these feelings hold you back from progressing both financially and socially. You are constantly obsessed and feel discontent in whatever you do. Some women go for drastic weight loss and even gastric surgeries to lose weight.

"Love yourself first and everything else will fall into place."

Nurturing healthy body image

Positive body image and self-esteem are interlinked. Low self-esteem is developed when girls or women have negative feelings about their body shape. This major urge to become perfect makes them chug miracle drinks, follow fasting, and the ever controversial 'fat eating diet.' Inconsolably acknowledging exercise in this equation is always absent. This has an opposite

reaction, as their bodies become lethargic, weak, their skin and hair gets affected, and they ultimately go back to square one which shatters their self-esteem.

Society's recent push to body positivity helped empower many women by boosting their self-image and confidence. Many women are now ready to accept that a healthy body is the right body type. Healthy eating habits such as clean eating, which is more of a lifestyle change than just a simple diet, has made major shifts into understanding the value of eating well and following a fitness regime to feel stronger from the inside.

Clean eating lifestyle choice for healthy body and mind

Clean eating diet allows you to make

good eating decisions and divides your daily meal plan into 4-5 smaller meals. Clean eating is all about eating the right food, such as wholesome food, fibre-rich food, vegetable, protein, vitamins, antioxidants, omega fatty acid and cutting on processed, refined and fast food.

Hydration and reducing stress is essential part of clean eating, so forgoing fizzy carbonated sugary drinks and caffeine is important. Clean eating can help you lose weight in the healthiest manner and it doesn't work overnight. It's a lifestyle change with a holistic approach of eating healthy and timely meals with a daily workout regime.

The benefits go beyond just weight loss; this lifestyle diet will keep you healthy, have more energy, boost your metabolism. You will have healthy skin, hair and vital organs. Exercise is a major part of a person's daily life, since in this diet, you will consume a balanced eating plan, you will have a forte for enthusiastic workout routine.

I feel good, I look good

I was a skinny kid, and was constantly bullied for my skinny figure back in the '90s. I was called malnourished, a stick, and various other comments from everyone around who would always advise me to eat more. Whereas I was an energetic, hyper young girl and ate well, but maybe burned more by my daily activities.

The scenario changed when I was diagnosed with PCOS and this made me gain more in my pregnancies and also develop gestational diabetes. After my second child, I knew I had to do something about my weight, not because I hated being fat, but because it hampered my mobility mostly.

I was bloated all the time and digestion was impaired too. That time, I used to get useless comments from here and there. The body shaming was different this time, as it was more fat-shaming. But that wasn't bothering me more than my unhealthy lifestyle was, like waking up late, not working out, eating fried refined food.

I had to find a sustainable approach for my healthy lifestyle choice and not just a diet. Around the same time, I stumbled across clean eating lifestyle which I found manageable. Adopting this, I knew my weight wouldn't just drop overnight. I lost 9 kg in one year and now, I am eating well, working out daily to maintain my healthy body and to strengthen my core body. I am more concerned about my overall wellbeing, mental and physical strength so that I can keep my family healthy and that gives me the empowerment I deserve.

I believe people should cherish their bodies by eating right and have a daily workout routine to redefine the unrealistic body image in themselves and in others by bestowing that healthy body is the perfect body.



By Simra Khan
Photo: Simra Khan