

Perfect Body Image on Social Media: Idealistic or Unrealistic?

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Every day we unlock our phones to admire other's lives and looks, regardless of who is profiting off of our self-conscious, we would like to ask the question: is this idealistic or unrealistic? Here are the for and against arguments for perfect body image on social media:

FOR: Seeing all those "10min work-out a day" promos next to someone with a small waist or thick arms gives us the hope that we (being not professional athletes) can achieve those looks. There is no harm to someone exercising and eating healthy while being inspired by others. Also, we are living in a progressive time, only owners of the bodies are people themselves. If a person is comfortable with sharing their face and body on social media, they have the liberty to do however they want to. People also have the liberty to alter something on their body/face by plastic surgery, as long as they are over 18 and not risking their lives. Besides, we are now able to see different types of people who are considered to be beautiful. We can now see an Asian model, an Afro-American influencer or a plus-sized person, with all of the positive comments that they have received. Even if the "official beauty standards" are slow to change in magazines, the beauty culture in social media is providing a very strong platform for the different ideal beauty understanding to perish. If social media did not exist, we would only have blonde, tall and white women represented as the ideal. With social media, a plus-sized person who would lack self-esteem due to the ideal body type of the industry can now see all the people who are considered to be beautiful while being overweight. Social media acts as the driving factor in change for the representation of different groups. As the industry sees the success of these different influencers, they also have an incentive to formally have different models, such as the first transgender models that are on magazine covers.

AGAINST: As progressive as it gets, there is still fundamental racism and ageism involved in the beauty industry which keeps promoting the long-legged, blonde, cis-gender woman as the normal beauty. Lighter and smoother skin is still accepted as the norm and people are getting ashamed for their stretch marks, acne, body hair, weight, and wrinkles on social platforms. This shame culture creates a profitable market for diet-pills and flat-tummy teas which are not only health hazards, and also they cause the pressure of perfection on women to increase. Another pressure mechanism is photoshop applications; since there are no regulations controlling who is using them, it is inevitable that they harming the self-esteem of teenagers and underrepresented communities. Even to this day, there are some groups such as disabled, dark-skinned, transgender/non-binary, or plus-size that we do not see regularly on the fashion pages. Besides, at times when social media did not exist, the only criteria for women in beauty were official models. People felt that they were unrealistic. With the rise of social media, we are now also exposed to the best times of our peers. Our peers' beauty and life put much stronger pressure on us since we now know that these people are real. We start to question why can't we have the body of the girl that everybody admires at our school. This is a more attainable standard than

official blond models of the past, but we still can not be like our peers that we see on Instagram. This creates a more serious lack of self-esteem, especially for teenagers.

These arguments depend not only on our personal experiences but also on our observations as social media users. It is up to you readers to measure and conclude the progressiveness and the effects they have on users of these platforms.