

# *Embracing Your Confidence: Body Image: Maintaining Positive Habits*

## *A Core Confidence Course Written by Abundance Emi*

In this multi-part Core Confidence Course we will be diving into BODY IMAGE! Complete the first part of this series “Body Image: Cultivating a Positive Body Image” before starting this one. First we will look into what it looks and feels like to maintain positive habits. Then outline action steps you can take towards maintaining positive habits. In this second part of this multi-part course we’ll be highlighting physical health through nourishing the body and physical movement.

### **Background**

I’ll start this course by sharing my experience with habits in relation to my body image.

- What’s my story? What feelings have I experienced? What struggles have I experienced? (Article)

Throughout the years of exploring my health, the word *habit* has always highlighted how I care for my body. I’ve assessed the way I take care of myself through looking at all of the little things I do all the time. All of the small things that add up. This is essentially what habit is. It’s a task or activity you complete on a regular basis. Things you do without giving much thought to them because they are simply part of your routine, your *usual*. Growing up I always heard my father say “humans are creatures of habit.” (I got a lot of my organizational skills and passion for structure from my father). It’s really true though. We are a culmination of the actions we take every single day.

Overall, I’ve done a pretty good job throughout the years maintaining positive habits. But like everyone, I’m not perfect and there’s always room for error and room for improvement. I often go through waves of working with one habit at a time. When I decided it was time to improve my body image and take charge of my over-eating and sedentary lifestyle, I didn’t tackle every bad habit all at once. I had to break things down into small attainable goals.

- How did I begin to make a change? (Article)

I decided to make a change because I was not happy with how I felt in my body. I knew I was capable of a lot more than what my body could currently do. I didn’t *feel* good about how I was living and taking care of myself. Often turning to food for comfort. Growing up with a mother who struggled with eating enough, I grew anxious of under-eating. I ended up overcompensating

because of this anxiety. This led to consistently over-eating and turning to food for comfort. As well as not moving my body enough because I was swept away by a lot of my anxious cycles. I had to decide for myself that enough was enough, I was tired of treating my body this way. I needed to be nourishing my body more intentionally, and be moving my body on a regular basis - even if only for 10 minutes a day.

Regarding my diet, the first thing I started with was listening to my body's cues. Most days I would find myself bloated and over stuffed. I would eat just for eating sake. I decided to take a step back and listen to my body. I would only eat if my body told me I was hungry. Once I got more in touch with my body's hunger cues, I decided to start counting calories and paying more attention to the type of food I was consuming. Counting calories was something I always wanted to avoid but I really wanted to get a clear vision of how much I was consuming, and how much I really *needed* to consume. Counting calories gave me a better idea of portion size and encouraged me to prioritize nutrient dense foods. When I had a clear vision of portion size & the type of food I was consuming, I started researching intermittent fasting. I listened to the book "The Obesity Codes" by Dr. Jason Fung and got inspired. I learned the importance of reducing snacking, giving your stomach proper time to rest, and learned how to reduce my sugar intake. All of these changes happened gradually over a span of 6 months. Making changes to your habits ultimately requires a lot of patience, self perseverance, and time to equip yourself with the proper knowledge and resources... but it is always worth it.

Regarding incorporating more intentional movement into my routines, this is also something that happened gradually over time. I started with giving myself a 30-day challenge. The challenge was I would put on a 10-minute exercise at least 3-4 days out of the week for a month straight. This made incorporating movement easy because I just needed to put on a YouTube video and workout until the video was over. This gave me a good starting point because it required very little effort. The most important part was I was getting into some sort of routine or rhythm. I did this for a month then took on a new challenge.

I started a journal page and logged every day that I did some sort of intentional movement and would log my weight progress. I told myself to keep up the regular movement until I filled two complete pages and see how my progress changed. This meant that I was broadening the ways I moved and had some sort of visual reference of my progress. At this time, I started incorporating more stretching, biking, hiking, and walking into my weeks. I made efforts to go on at least one bike ride around the neighborhood per week because I wanted to be able to bike with my friends. The first 5-10 bike rides I went on, my butt hurt immediately after, and I was out of breath within mere minutes. But I kept with it because I wanted to feel strong.

I started incorporating more walks into my routine as a night time unwinding activity with my partner. We would do a loop around the neighborhood and talk about our days together. This made physical movement something to look forward to and a byproduct of spending time with my loved one.

The next challenge I gave myself was to tone up my upper body. I got two 10 lb weights from a friend and told myself I needed to at the very least *touch* the weights every day. This way, I started the routine of using them. Most of the time when I could pep talk myself to at the very least touch them, I would end up doing a few reps anyways. A month or so later I started seeing definition in my arms and my strength improve. The common theme in all of these challenges was I was making a super duper small goal in order to get into the *habit* of doing the thing I wanted to be accomplishing. These super small goals over time led to adopting a much healthier lifestyle and body image.

## Positive Habits

Now let's take a look at what it means to maintain positive habits.

- What does maintaining positive habits look and feel like? (Article)

Maintaining positive habits looks really rocky at first. It's normal to not be hitting your goals 100% of the time. It looks more like striving for 50% or better. It's important that we keep this in mind because striving for perfection will only leave you disappointed. Maintaining positive habits feels like you're getting nowhere for a long time then all of a sudden you see progress all at once. Like when I started lifting weights on a regular basis... There were weeks and weeks where I was simply *doing the thing*. Then one day I looked in the mirror and went "Oh damn! My arms look good!" To be honest, maintaining positive habits can feel really boring and tedious for long stints of time. This is why motivation and accountability are such key components of establishing healthy routines. Maintaining positive habits should also feel reassuring and instill confidence in yourself. Knowing that you're taking good care of yourself is foundational for seeing your body in a positive light. When you have confidence in your actions, you gain confidence for yourself.

## Action steps

Let's take a look at some things you could take action on right now. For these Action Steps you'll need a pen and some paper.

- Action step 1 Nourishing the Body (Article)

This exercise is meant to assist you in exploring your relationship with nourishing your body and how you can seek out better habits through education and accountability. Let's take a look at what you're consuming and how your body feels from what you consume. Are you eating mindlessly or do you eat when you feel hungry? Are you eating just for taste or are you eating with the intention of caring for yourself? Do you know how to eat for your body type? Taking a step back, slowing down, and asking yourself questions is critical in creating more mindfulness around your routines.

**Write a few sentences about your relationship with nourishing yourself and how you feel about the way you're taking care of yourself.**

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Now based on what you just wrote, let's go a little deeper. What small changes in your routine could you shift? For me, I incorporated more healthy snacks, tuned into my hunger cues, and looked further into the nutrition facts of what I was consuming. Other possible changes could be slowing down when you eat, sitting at a table to eat with no distractions, or looking up new recipes.

**What are two ways you can incorporate more mindfulness into nourishing yourself starting right now?**

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- Action step 2 Moving the Body (Article)

This exercise is meant to motivate you to move your body and support you in creating a positive connection with your body and routines. Let's take a look at your current habits with moving your body and reflect on incorporating positive changes. First let's think about any movement you currently do - at any level. It could be as simple as walking around at your job or cleaning your house. It could be as complex as participating in a group sport or going to the gym. Think about this type of movement and how you feel about it. Do you even think about it, or is it just part of your "norm"? Is it something that you dread in your week?

**Make a list of the ways you currently move your body and write down how you feel about each of these movements. What does your strength, mobility, and physical capabilities look like? Are you able to move in all the ways you want your body to be able to move in?**

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Now from this list of movements, look at any of the positive feelings you have written down. If you don't enjoy any of these movements, think about the type of movement you might enjoy. Or a movement that would get you closer to your ideal mobility and strength. Maybe it's something you've never tried before but is enticing to do. Also think about what's more reasonable for your lifestyle. Is incorporating daily movement possible? Maybe only committing to one day a week of intense movement is more ideal for your lifestyle. The important part is that movement doesn't feel overwhelming. It could be as simple as taking a few minutes every morning or night to stretch. Or in my case, *at least touch the weights*.

**Write down the types of movement you enjoy doing or are curious to try. Then, write down how much time these movements would take and the possible times and days you could incorporate them.**

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It's important to be realistic when making new goals. You know yourself better than anyone else. It's also important to envision yourself fully realizing them. Imagine if you were to commit to this movement starting this week. Imagine how you would feel if you stuck to this movement for a month straight.

- Staying Motivated

Lastly, let's talk about motivation. Hopefully, you've found your motivation already by the previous prompts. If not, take a moment to think about it, as it's crucial in maintaining your positive habits.

For me, I was motivated to take better care of myself because I wanted to feel better. I wanted to have more energy, clarity, and ability to participate in group activities like biking and hiking. I was motivated by the desire to take better care of myself and ultimately have an overall better quality of life.

**What motivates you to make positive changes in your life?**

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I encourage you to write this motivation on a separate sheet of paper and hang it up somewhere you will see it on a regular basis. When you fall short on your goals it's important to be able to pick yourself back up and be reminded of why you started this habit in the first place.

## Conclusion

Let's wrap up this course with a check in.

- Course check in

How do you feel about how you are currently nourishing your body?

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What are two ways you can incorporate more mindfulness into nourishing yourself?

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How do you feel about your mobility, strength, and physical capabilities?

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What type of movement could you easily incorporate into your routine starting this week?

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What is your motivation to maintain these positive habits?

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Are you ready to take action in feeling your most healthy, radiant self?

☐ Yes!!

## Congratulations!

You just took actionable steps towards a healthier relationship with yourself! A positive body image comes from the confidence in knowing you are taking the best possible care of yourself. A great place to start this practice is in properly nourishing the body, and regular physical movement. These are two things that are essential for daily function, and make a huge impact on feeling your best self. Those little changes really add up over time!

If you are seeking further clarity or accountability for reaching your goals, check out my one-on-one services: Conceptualization Consultation & Accountability Assistance. Book a Free Discovery Call to learn more!