

COLLEGIAN COLUMNISTS

We deserve to feel neutral in our bodies



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Moving to college and adapting to a new, more self-sufficient environment can be extremely difficult. Whether it's struggling to meet new friends or experiencing changes mentally, physically or emotionally, this part of growing up can be uncomfortable. In other words, being a freshman is scary!

One of the bigger uncomfortable topics is the dreaded freshman 15, which is where incoming students gain weight as they adjust to a new lifestyle.

First, let me be clear — the freshman 15 should not be a dreaded topic at all, but it can definitely feel like an added stressor on top of all the changes you're already experiencing.

We, as blossoming young adults, deserve to feel comfortable — or at least neutral — in our own skin. Adjusting to a new environment is already stressful,

and we shouldn't be made to feel uncomfortable with any bodily changes that come with it. We can't always feel body positive, but we can work to feel body neutral.

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I have struggled with disordered eating for years, and when I moved to college, those feelings were amplified by the already-stressful experience of losing the routine I had at home. Everything I built up for myself in my routine was changing, and I felt like I needed to hold on to how I looked to feel some sense of security when meeting new people and experiencing new things.

Our bodies are doing exactly what they need to be doing to keep us safe, healthy and ready to take on the world, and feeling uncomfortable with how we look — although it is a natural part of growing up — is unproductive and gets in the way of actually making memories and enjoying life.

Now this is not to say that you have to completely fall into a body positive mindset because that's not always the most achievable standard. Instead, we should strive to accept our bodies as they are and engage in body neutrality.

The body positive movement can be another form of peer pressure, and it could promote unhealthy behavior because you feel like you should love your body. Your self-worth is not based on your appearance or your ability to love your body — there should be no link at all.

We all deserve to feel good about our body's ability to be a body. It protects our organs, it keeps us warm, it heals our wounds and it communicates with us. You don't have to love every single part of your body, but you should be kind to it because its only goal is to keep you moving and living your life.

According to Healthline, body neutrality is linked to mindfulness in many ways and “helps you recognize and prioritize how you feel in your body.”

You can work to be body neutral in a variety of ways, such as removing the link between exercise and earning calories. Just because you ate something that wasn't healthy doesn't mean that you now have to go burn all of those calories off. Food is fuel for your body, but it is also for pleasure.

“If you're going to incorporate fitness into your routine, do it because you want to, not because you feel like you have to.”

Every cell in your body works to keep you alive, and we shouldn't feel like we need to meet a made-up standard on the outside by disrespecting what we have on the inside.

We are so much more than what we look like, and women

especially should not be made to feel like we are less worthy based on a number on a scale. If you're going to incorporate fitness into your routine, do it because you want to, not because you feel like you have to.

As we grow, our bodies will grow with us; it's a constant ebb and flow as a result of our lifestyles and experiences. If we spend time worrying about the physical aspect of this growth, we miss out on all of the emotional, spiritual and mental growth.

If you do want to incorporate fitness into your life, Colorado State University's Student Recreation Center is a great place to get active. If you're uncomfortable going alone, there are a variety of options for personal training sessions or group classes where you and your friends can go together.

If you'd prefer to work out when the Rec Center is slow, you can check the cameras and live counts to see the activity in certain areas before leaving to come for your workout.

You're not alone if you're struggling with body image during this incredibly transitional period. You don't have to feel body positive all the time, but you deserve to feel body neutral.

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