'Don't beat yourself up':
10 ways to feel happier with your body as the world reopens.
https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2021/aug/02/dont-beat-yourself-up-10-ways-feel-happier-body-world-reopens

Many of us are returning to the office or socialising for the first time in a year – and may be feeling anxious about physical changes. Here's how to feel a little bit better about yourself.

Exercise self-compassion

"We all feel conscious about our bodies sometimes," says the body-positive activist Courtney Belle. "But it's normal for your body to fluctuate, and that is absolutely fine. Bodies change all the time, and it's not the worst thing in the world to put a bit of weight on. Don't beat yourself up for something that's completely normal."

Ignore critical voices

That said, although most people won't care about how you look, or even notice a difference, there are people out there who may comment on your appearance, or make you feel bad about yourself. After Belle was diagnosed with an underactive thyroid aged 10, she was regularly encouraged to lose weight by family and friends. "My parents wanted me to be smaller," she says. "I don't know if they were worried I would be bullied. But it had a bad impact on me." For years, Belle took diet pills, stopped eating properly and tried various remedies to lose weight. "I spiralled," she says. "I got to the worst place I have ever been." But Belle came to a realisation. "I couldn't live like that any more," she says. She decided to work on her relationship with food, and stop dieting. "If people are quick to judge me, that's them pushing out their own insecurities on me," she says. "I wish them well. It's their problem, not mine."

Find your true priorities

There have been a lot of people expecting to lose weight and get shredded during lockdown, and placing huge pressure on themselves to have this dream body. But that should not be your No 1 priority. Instead, decide what is important to you. Is it reconnecting with family? Nurturing your mental health? Getting back into your hobbies? Put your focus into these things, instead of worrying about how your body looks."

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For people feeling anxious about re-entering the world, psychologist Dr Suzanne Manser encourages them to switch their focus. "When you are feeling like you hate your body," she says, "connect with what is meaningful to you in that moment. So if you're out with your friends and feeling uncomfortable, think about what you're doing. You're spending time with your friends. Having a connection. If you're worried about your colleagues seeing you at work, think about what is important to you about your work. Try and take your mindset away from any focus on your body appearance."

Remember that confidence is a work in progress

"I think people sometimes assume that I woke up one day and told myself I feel good about myself," says Belle, "and everything was smooth from then on. There are still a lot of setbacks. There are some days that I wake up and think: 'My belly is massive.' But instead of spending hours focusing on that, I tell myself that I'm not going to spend time hating myself for it."

Put on clothes that make you feel good, not restricted

We all have something in our wardrobe that reliably makes us feel good. Now is the time to dig it out. "Go for those clothes that you know you can pull out if you're having a bad body-image day," says the body-confidence and anti-diet-culture advocate Alex Light. Craddock advises her clients not to opt for anything tight-fitting. "I always say to people, make sure you can eat a proper meal in your clothes, bend over and sit down in them," she says. "Otherwise, you will feel uncomfortable, and that will trigger negative thoughts as well."

Curate your social media

All the experts strongly advocate a social media purge. "We're constantly consuming content," says Light. "If you can make the content you are consuming positive, it will have a massively beneficial impact on your mental health."
This worked for Light, who started out as a fashion blogger, posting heavily edited pictures of herself online, while secretly struggling with her body image and eating disorders. "I've recovered from eating disorders. It's been a tumultuous journey. But what massively helped me was finding the self-acceptance community online, and learning about what diet culture was. During my recovery, I started opening up about my progress and posting about it on Instagram. Initially the things I was posting I believed, but not for myself. But the more I spoke to women around the world, the more I truly began to believe it for myself. I think if I can get to a good place with my body, anyone can."

Are these sentences true or false?

		T	F
1.	Belle felt very undermined as a child, because people would make comments about her body.		
2.	Belle still feels very insecure about her body.		
3.	According to the text, you will worry less about what people think of you, if you keep focusing on things you enjoy at the moment.		
4.	One of the experts mentioned in the text says that it's important to make sure you'll still feel comfortable in your clothes after eating.		
5.	According to the last paragraph, social media can share content that can have a negative impact on out mental health.		

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🏠 pl. Bernardyński 1A/1, 61-844 Poznań   📞 61 8513141, 662 958 514

Key:
1T; 2F; 3T; 4T; 5T;