

Get the Message?

*Want to make your dreams come true?
We'll show you exactly what to do.
Girls: diet until you're supermodel thin,
With a dazzling smile and perfect skin.
Work-out for hours, then a few hours more—
Everyone will love you when you're a size four.*

*Guys: transform yourself into a Greek god,
With chiselled abs and a rock-hard bod.
Steroids are a shortcut to bulging pecs,
If you don't mind the side effects!
You can always be a little thinner,
Bigger muscles make you a winner.
Ask anyone, they'll tell you so.
Even Princess Barbie® and GI Joe.*

Singer Nelly Furtado (left) and actor Zac Efron (right) are amongst the new breed of "picture perfect" young celebrities who seem to have it all: looks, talent, fame and fortune.



What You Get—An Unrealistic Ideal

The fashion industry and the **media**, including mediums such as magazines, newspapers, television and movies, have been linked to having a negative influence on young people. They depict an unrealistic idea of how we should look.

“Beautiful” people seem to be everywhere. Open a magazine and you will see them modelling the latest fashions. Turn on the television and they will appear in the commercial breaks, selling everything from breakfast cereal to motor cars. Attractive people star in blockbuster movies and release chart-topping albums. These people represent the things many people dream of attaining: fame, fortune and success.

Comparing yourself to the images you see of people in the media can give you the wrong idea about your own appearance. Surveys show that 45 per cent of women and 23 per cent of men in the healthy weight range think they are too fat. The problem with this is that the images they are comparing themselves to are unrealistic and sometimes completely fake. So let’s bust the myth on how we should look and explain why “what you see is not what you get”!



“Beautiful” people appear in advertisements for everything from gym memberships to food and drink products.

Weighty Matters

People come in many shapes and sizes. However, some high profile industries, such as the fashion, advertising and television industries, tend to only portray very tall, thin females and toned, athletic males.

Most of the female models in fashion shows and magazines are over 175 centimetres tall and weigh between 54 to 56 kilograms, and have to diet in order to be that thin. Only one woman in every hundred will be naturally as tall and thin as a high-profile fashion model. So the men and women on catwalks are not a true representation of how most people look.

Male models tend to have slim builds with well-defined muscles, which is an unachievable body shape for many males.



The Changing Size of Fashion

Fashion models have always been slim, but over the years we have seen models become increasingly thin, to the point of looking unhealthy. Thirty years ago, female models weighed around 8 per cent less than the average woman. Today, they weigh almost 25 per cent less than the average woman.

Clothing manufacturers have come up with new, smaller sizes for these skinny models to wear. Designers have even developed “size zero” clothes. Size zero is so small that the pants are designed to fit a 55-centimetre waist. That’s the average measurement for an eight-year-old girl, yet these clothes are supposed to fit adult women!

Some people would like to see size zero models banned from fashion shows because they set a poor example for young people. Some top fashion shows in places such as Madrid in Spain and Milan in Italy, have already restricted super-skinny models from the runway, in an effort to project a healthier-looking image.

Supermodels in the past, such as Cindy Crawford (left), had a much more curvaceous shape than the stick-thin catwalk models of today (right).

