

# LOVE YOUR BODY

# FITNESS FLYER

By Becky Moran



How do you feel about your body? Too many people don't answer that question in a loving way. Many focus only on what they want to change about themselves. Personally, in the past, I criticized and never saw the good in my body. I didn't realize what a toll it took both emotionally *and* physically. Badness breeds Badness. All of my negativity was actually interfering with the changes that I wished to make. However, when you introduce positivity and acceptance into the equation, you can turn all of that around. This month, in honor of the holiday, why not write a Valentine to your body and find out what happens when you start to love your body instead?

Loving your body and yourself is often easier said than done. What's the first thing you can do to help yourself? Limit your time with the mirror. When people look in the mirror for too long, they often begin to pick apart their appearance and belittle themselves. It doesn't feel good when others say critical things about you, so why would you do that to yourself? Instead, focus on the things that you like. Are your eyes sparkling particularly brightly today? Does your smile reveal a great dimple? If there are things you like less and can fix, go right ahead and fix them (like if your hair decided that it was going to stick straight up on one side of your head...brush it). Next comes the important step...walk away. Is there something you can't fix right now? Yes? It doesn't matter because you've walked away from the mirror and onto the next important thing in your day. By walking away, you have the power, not the mirror. Recognize that not everything can be fixed right now.

Ok...big changes take time. If you are trying to lose weight, the best thing you can do is give yourself the love you deserve while you are doing this awesome thing for your body. If you are trying to get stronger and working hard, you're also doing something amazing for your body. Remember to love your body along the way. If you don't want to change at all that is fine too, but showing your body a little lovin' shouldn't be any less important.

Now that you're on your way to accepting and loving your body, let's talk about some ways that you can make your body feel loved. Everyone is always preaching about eating healthy and exercising (and you should), but those are just

the basics. These things alone will make you feel better - you'll have more energy and (in my experience) feel better

about life. When it comes to loving your body, those things are just the first date. If you really want to spice up your relationship with your body, try some (or all) of the following:

1.) **Get a Massage.** There are many types of massage, each with individual merits, but they all share stress relief and health-boosting benefits. The power of touch alone can be beneficial. Massage offers attention to the muscles that carry you every day and shows appreciation for your body's hard work. *Shiatsu* is a popular type of massage which focuses on pressure points and stretching joints to unblock energy. It is good for stiffness, headaches, and hectic every day life. *Swedish* massage is for deeper tissues and great for muscle fatigue and reducing post-workout recovery time.

2.) **Do some Yoga!** Like with massage, there are many different types of yoga. Restorative yoga is a wonderful type for showing your body some love. In restorative yoga, you hold stretches for long periods of time while being supported by props. This allows you to feel the stretches while remaining more relaxed. YouTube can be a useful tool in finding instructional yoga videos if you can't make it to a class. I have even found morning yoga - with a few stretches that you can do while you are still in bed!

3.) **Take a Bath.** There is an ingenious invention called the bath bomb. My personal favorites tend to not only smell nice, but turn the water different colors, fizz, and melt moisturizing oils into my skin. A bubble bath or epsom salts are other simple options, or if you hate fun, you can always take a normal bath. The warm water will relax away your tension and cares. Listen to some music or light a candle, too.

4.) **Moisturize!** This applies doubly so if you just took a bath! Slathering on the moisturizer is literally the easiest thing you can do to show your body love. Your body's outer core takes a beating (especially during the winter months) and you don't realize how quickly it can dry out and become itchy and uncomfortable. There is little worse than being uncomfortable in your body. Fortunately, routine skin care can easily help alleviate these problems. Bonus points if you have a moisturizer with SPF!

5.) **Try Therapy.** I know what you may be thinking...therapy is for people who are depressed or crazy. This is a common misconception, therapy is for everyone! Have you ever wished you had someone you could just tell everything to without fear of judgment, or wanted someone to be there to help you work through difficult times? That is what therapists can do. They can also help you learn to love yourself. By talking things out, you often find the root of what makes you feel the way you do. By better understanding yourself, you can better love yourself. I'm not saying you have to go every week for the rest of your life, but consider the option. If therapy isn't your thing, try working with a life coach. Emotional and mental wellness are just as important as physical wellness and it's nice to have someone else in your corner.

Loving your body is one of the best things you can do for your own happiness. After all, you spend all day every day in it. In the wise words of Mary Schmich, "Enjoy your body. Use it every way you can. Don't be afraid of it or of what other people think of it. It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own."

**YOUR BODY IS EVERYTHING, LOVE IT AS SUCH!**

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