

# Health Versus Aesthetics – How Social Media is Affecting Your Body Image

It's Mental Health Awareness Week in the UK and this year, the focus is on body image.

[Body image is a term that is used to define how we think or feel about our bodies.](#) With social media now saturated with flawless, photoshopped and surgically enhanced physiques, our body image is unsurprisingly worse than ever.

[Studies have shown that children as young as 5 start to express dislike for their bodies](#) and a report from [The Mental Health Foundation](#) has shown that 1 in 8 adults have had suicidal thoughts over the way they look.

Social media undoubtedly has a huge role to play in this and [Instagram has been reported to be the worst site for body image issues.](#)

Most of the bodies we see on Instagram and in the media fall into three categories:

**Photoshopped**

**Surgically enhanced**

## A genetic lottery win

Most people could not achieve the body shapes they are encouraged to aspire towards because they are either unnatural or genetically out of their reach.

The trend to aim for a thigh gap is a great example. Dr. Esther Fox is a physiotherapist whose is involved in the imaging of pelvic muscles . She concludes that

**“a thigh gap is unachievable for 80% of women at a healthy weight due to the shape of their pelvis, femurs and the presence of muscle on the inner thigh”.**

Despite this, almost every image we see of women's bodies will depict a thigh gap which is often accompanied by an unfeasible large bum. We're encouraged to believed this bum is achieved through squatting (*just buy her workout plan!*). Ironically, squatting will actually build inner thigh muscles which closes the thigh gap (get a refund on her workout plan).