

The Body Project: Facilitator Fact Sheet

1. **Fashion Magazines** (According to *former fashion magazine editor*; International Conference on Eating Disorders)

- **Function of a fashion magazine:** To convince women that something is wrong with them (e.g., hair, body, sex life, etc.) so that they can sell their product (i.e., the content of the magazine) to fix it. The more anxious they make you, the more likely you will buy the magazine and the larger their readership, which increases advertising sales.
- How they convince you something is wrong
 - **Lead articles:** Pulitzer Prize winning article on eating disorders or cancer not going to win author a big bonus. However, writing an article which produces the following title will: “You never knew what your butt looked like from the rear! Strategies for a better behind.”
 - **Idealized images:** Digital enhancement, make-up, clothes pinning etc.
- At this editor’s magazine, many of the key staff had eating disorders due to a culture of disordered eating and weight/shape attitudes.
 - Couldn’t bring food onto the floor, because it was too upsetting for some staff
 - One woman brought scale to work and moved scale around bathroom floor until she got an acceptable weight.

2. **Advertising Strategies**

A. Physical Tactics

- Bras are stuffed with pads to fill out the front of a dress that is too loose.
- Padded underwear is also used to fill out the back of a dress.
- Duct-tape is often used to tape breasts together to create cleavage.
- Girdles are used to squeeze the flesh of models into a dress sample size that is too small.
- Excess flesh is duct-taped in the back for a front angle photograph depicting a taut, streamlined, wrinkle-free body. Models can be taped from the front for a rear or side angle photograph showing tight, firm hips, bottoms, legs, and arms.
- Heavy clamps are used to cinch clothing in and weigh it down to create an illusion of the perfect fit.

B. Computer Tactics

- Once a photo shoot is complete, images are altered even further through a process called re-imaging. By scanning the photograph into a computer, the image can be altered in thousands of ways. Almost every magazine uses computer re-imaging.
 - Complexion is cleaned up, eye lines are softened, chins, thighs and stomachs are trimmed, and neck lines are removed.
 - Some pictures of models in magazines are not real. The pictures are computer-modified compilations of different body parts.
 - 20/20 aired a story of a photo shoot of supermodel Cindy Crawford. How much time was spent digitally editing and airbrushing her face and body? **2 hours.**

3. The average American woman is 5'4" tall and weighs 140 pounds. The average American model is 5'11" tall and weighs 117 pounds.
 - The average American woman wears a size 12 to 14.
 - **Marilyn Monroe**, Hollywood goddess, wore a size 12.
4. Most fashion models are thinner than 98% of American women (Smolak, 1996).
 - Twenty years ago, models weighed 8 percent less than the average woman. Today they weigh 23 percent less and many fall into an anorexic weight range.
 - Kate Moss is 5'7" and weighs 95 pounds. That is 30% below ideal body weight. Supermodels Niki Taylor and Elle Macpherson also meet the Body Mass Index criteria for anorexia.
5. Only 5% of women have the body type (tall, genetically thin, broad-shouldered, narrow-hipped, long-legged and usually small-breasted) seen in almost all advertising. (When the models have large breasts, they've almost always had breast implants.)
6. Americans spend over \$40 billion on dieting and diet-related products each year (Smolak, 1996).
 - A study of mass media magazines discovered that women's magazines had 10.5 times more advertisements and articles promoting weight loss than men's magazines did (Guillen & Barr, 1994).
 - 95% of enrollees in weight loss programs are women although the sexes are overweight in equal proportions.
 - Women who have a history of chronic yo-yo dieting can decrease their overall lifespan of up to 20%!
7. In 1995, before television was first introduced to Fiji, there were no cases of eating disorder. Sixty-five adolescent school girls were followed over 3 years...
 - After the introduction of British and American television, **12.7%** of the girls had developed high eating disorder symptoms after 1 month and **29.2%** after 3 years.
 - Self-induced vomiting as weight control went from **0% in 1995** to **11.3% by 1998**.
8. Often, body doubles are used in films, TV commercials and advertising.
9. Celebrity work-outs ranging from 90 minutes to up to 6-7 hours A DAY at times.
 - P. Diddy has a personal trainer that makes \$500,000 a year on Puffy alone (VH-1).
 - Usher does 1000 crunches per day plus daily "forty minutes funk" (stretching & cardio) and strength training.
 - Hilary Swank for *Million Dollar Baby*: 4.5 hours per day, six days per week (from Oprah on line).
10. A study in 1995 found that after just three minutes spent looking at models in a fashion magazine, 70% of women reported feeling depressed, guilty, and ashamed of their bodies (Stice & Shaw, 1995).

11. A 1996 study found that the amount of time an adolescent watches soaps, movies and music videos is associated with their degree of body dissatisfaction and desire to be thin (Tiggemann & Pickering, 1996).
12. If shop mannequins were real women, they would be too thin to menstruate and bear children.
 - **Could Mannequins Menstruate?** (British Medical Journal; Rintala, Mustajoki, 1992)
Store mannequins do not have enough body fat to menstruate. The researchers visited clothes stores and based on measurements of their mannequins calculated the percentage body fat that a woman the shape of a mannequin would carry. In direct contradiction to the slim, healthy and fertile physique that mannequins seek to portray and inflict on women, the finding of the study was that, overwhelmingly, shop mannequins, if they were people, would be infertile!
 - Clothing on mannequins is pinned, so clothes would never look the same on a real person unless it was pinned exactly perfect.
13. Women naturally carry fat on their hips and thighs - it is vital for fertility, prevention of osteoporosis, healthy skin, eyes, hair and teeth.
14. The National Weight Loss Registry, which tracks those that have achieved significant, long-term weight loss and is run by the Universities of Pittsburgh and Colorado, has documented that not one person has been successful by eliminating or severely restricting one of the macronutrients (protein, carbohydrate and fat).
 - Long term weight loss typically associated with low-fat, low calorie maintenance diet along with 1 hour of moderate exercise most days per week.
15. In the study, *Exposure to the Mass Media and Weight Concerns Among Girls*, the authors use a cross-sectional survey of 548 girls in 5th grade through 12th grade to assess influence of the media on weight concerns, weight control behaviors and perceptions of body weight and shape.
 - A majority of girls (59%) reported dissatisfaction with their body shape, and 66% expressed the desire to lose weight; the prevalence of overweight in this study was 29%.
 - Girls were asked about their frequency of reading women's fashion magazines. Some 69% reported that appearance of models in the magazines influenced their image of a perfect female body, and 47% desired to lose weight because of the magazine pictures.