




Reject the Diet Mentality

Learn how to move away from diet culture and start your focus on healing your relationship with food and your body



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* Available for Adult and Family Medicine, Women's Health, Pediatrics and Optometry. Video visit not available for Optometry.

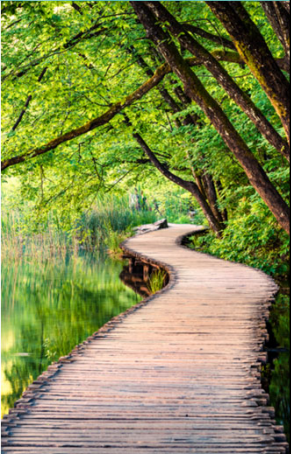
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Class overview

- Diet Culture
- The Non-Diet Approach (also known as the anti-diet approach)
- Health At Every Size (HAES)
- Intuitive Eating (IE)
- Reject the Diet Mentality
- Self-Compassion

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Why are you here today?



What thoughts come up when you hear the word diet?

How has dieting interfered with your life?



What is Pseudo-Dieting?

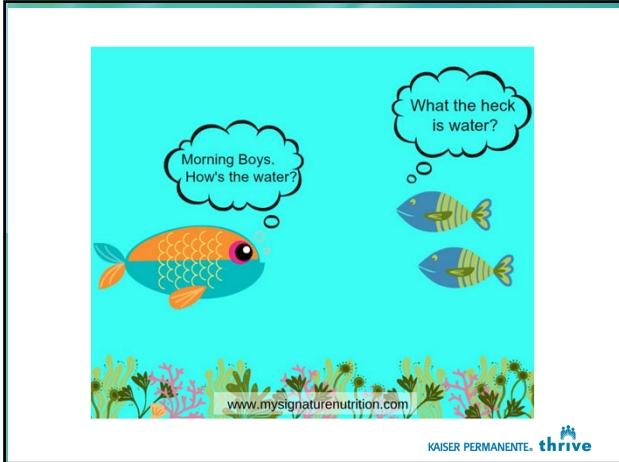
- Counting calories or macros
- Eating only "safe" foods
- Eating only at certain times of day
- Paying penance for eating perceived "bad" foods
- Cutting back on food
- Pacifying hunger by drinking coffee or diet soda



What is Pseudo-Dieting?

- Limiting carbohydrates
- Putting on a "false food face" in public
- Competing with someone else who is dieting
- Second-guessing or judging what you deserve to eat, feeling food guilt
- Becoming vegetarian/vegan or gluten free only for the purpose of losing weight
- It's a "lifestyle" or just eating "healthy" or eating "clean"
- Rigidly healthy







What is Diet Culture?

Diet culture is a system of beliefs that equates thinness, muscularity, and particular body shapes with health and moral virtue; promotes weight loss and body reshaping as a means of attaining higher status; demonizes certain foods and food groups while elevating others; and oppresses people who don't match its supposed picture of "health".

Reference: <https://christyharrison.com/blog/what-is-diet-culture>

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Diet Culture

- Society says that “skinnier/smaller” bodies are more valuable, healthier, live longer. Constant messaging about how our bodies “should” be and how/what we “should” be eating.
- In 1984 the U.S. weight loss industry generated about \$10 billion in revenue, in 2019 it jumped to about \$78 billion.

Reference: <https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/5685208/the-u-s-weight-loss-market-a-statisticalrela0-5313560>

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Diet Culture

- Research since the late 1940s shows that diets do not work. Up to 95% of diets fail and we blame ourselves not the diet. Studies show that up to two thirds of folks will regain more weight than they lost within 5 years.
- Diets do more harm than good (mentally and physically). Research shows that 35% of dieters will progress into disordered eating, and 20 to 25% of those dieters will progress into a full eating disorder. Sadly, research indicates that health professionals are one of the main perpetrators of weight stigma.

ED statistics reference: <https://www.eatingdisorderhope.com/information/eating-disorder/statistics-demographics>

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The Non-Diet Approach

The non-diet approach is based on a core belief that diets are more harmful to health than weight. The data clearly support the concept of a non-diet approach. Diets create health complications and solve none.

People who follow a non-diet approach are often accused of not caring about their health. But the opposite is true: non-diet is pro-health. And being non-diet does not mean you don't eat well and pursue other health-promoting behaviors. It's just that you pursue them without the goal of weight loss or weight control.

Reference: www.more-love.org

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The Non-Diet Approach

Also known as the anti-diet approach

Anti-diet doesn't mean anti-dietER.

It means anti-diet culture, and pro-intuitive eating, Health At Every Size®, and fat positivity.

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HAES

A weight-inclusive, anti-diet approach to health care that's designed to help you take care of your body without trying to shrink it.

Health at Every Size® Principles

Healthcare is a human right for people of all sizes, including those at the highest end of the spectrum.

People of all sizes, including those at the largest end of the size spectrum, have the right to healthcare without exception. Fat people's access to compassionate & comprehensive healthcare should not depend on obtaining a certain BMI, pursuing weight loss, and/or holding health as a value or pursuit.

Wellbeing, care, and healing are resources that are both collective and deeply personal.

Because health exists on a continuum that varies with time and circumstance for each individual, Health at Every Size® aims to focus on wellbeing, care, and healing. These are resources from which we can all pull to meet our needs. And we get to have others pour those resources into us and vice versa. Community care and mutual aid is key. Health at Every Size® providers and advocates must work to promote and create the conditions that support wellbeing (i.e. environmental care, clear air & water, equitable access to food, and more). Each person is the expert of their own body and should have the right to make autonomous decisions about their health and wellbeing, including how they value or prioritize health among all the other important aspects that make up a life.

Reference: <https://asdah.org/haes/>

Care is fully provided only when free from anti-fat bias and offered with people of all sizes in mind.

Anti-fat bias, and fatphobia are detrimental to the health and wellbeing of all people, especially fat people. When health research, health policy, health education, and the provision of care does not include the full human size spectrum, it harms people of all sizes and is the antithesis to Health at Every Size®. Those who provide Health at Every Size®-aligned care must strive to dismantle anti-fat bias personally and systemically in order to provide care for all bodies.

Health is a sociopolitical construct that reflects the values of society.

How our society currently defines health is rooted in white supremacy, anti-Black racism, ableism, and healthism. As the values of our society become more rooted in collective liberation, we have the opportunity to critically examine and redefine health, disease, and illness. Regardless of the definition of health, however, access to care must never depend on an individual's or community's health status, pursuit of health, or compliance with health recommendations.



Taking a HAES Approach

- 1. Accept your size.** Love and appreciate the body you have. Self-acceptance empowers you to move on and make positive changes.
- 2. Trust yourself.** We all have internal systems designed to keep us healthy—and at a healthy weight. Support your body in naturally finding its appropriate weight by honoring its signals of hunger, fullness, and appetite.
- 3. Adopt healthy lifestyle habits.** Develop and nurture connections with others and look for purpose and meaning in your life. Fulfilling your social, emotional, and spiritual needs restores food to its rightful place as a source of nourishment and pleasure.
- 4. Embrace size diversity.** Humans come in a variety of sizes and shapes. Open to the beauty found across the spectrum and support others in recognizing their unique attractiveness.

Reference: Health at Every Size by Lindo Bacon

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BMI

1. **The BMI was developed by a Belgian astronomer and statistician** who was studying groups of white men, not looking at individuals and their health outcomes.
2. **It is based on height and weight data taken primarily from white, middle- to upper-class Europeans**, which means it's not a representative sample of the general population and does not account for differences in "average" body sizes in other ethnic groups.
3. **BMI does not take into account age, sex, body frame, body composition, fat distribution, or how muscle mass changes with age.** For example, people who have a high percentage of muscle mass end up being classified as "overweight" or "obese," even if they have low amounts of body fat.
4. **The differences between BMI classifications—i.e., between "normal" weight and "overweight" or "obese"—are largely arbitrary.**
5. **BMI assumes we know someone's behaviors and health status based purely on their body size.**

AMA adopts new policy clarifying role of BMI as a measure in medicine

Do you need a break?

One-to-two-minute
guided meditation?



Intuitive Eating (IE)

- IE is a compassionate, self-care eating framework that treats all bodies with dignity and respect.
- IE is a personal process of honoring your health by listening and responding to the direct messages of the body in order to get your physical and emotional needs met.
- The main purpose of IE is to cultivate a healthy relationship with food, mind, and body. It is a weight-neutral model, meaning that the focus is not on body size, but rather on healing your relationship with food.
- Only YOU will know how hungry you are and what food or meal will satisfy you. No diet plan could possibly know these things.
- IE is not a diet.

10 Principles of Intuitive Eating

1. **Reject the Diet Mentality**
2. Honor Your Hunger
3. Make Peace with Food
4. Challenge the Food Police
5. Discover the Satisfaction Factor
6. Feel Your Fullness
7. Cope with Your Emotions with Kindness
8. Respect Your Body
9. Movement – Feel the Difference
10. Honor Your Health with Gentle Nutrition

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Why Intuitive Eating?



- Lower rates of eating disorders/disordered eating
- Less depression
- Less food anxiety, feeling out of control
- Lower levels of body dissatisfaction and shame

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Why Intuitive Eating?



- Increased body satisfaction and appreciation
- Increased enjoyment of food
- Increased self compassion
- Increased psychological well-being and self-esteem
- Improved health outcomes: improved cholesterol and blood pressure

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Why Reject The Diet Mentality?

When you focus on weight, it places your attention on external measures for eating (portions, macros, etc), rather than connecting you with your internal cues.

Diet Backlash:

- Even just contemplating dieting brings on urges and cravings for “bad” foods
- Upon ending a diet, going on a food binge that leads to guilt
- Having little trust in yourself with food
- Feeling that you do not deserve to eat
- Believing you are bad at dieting due to only following a diet for a short time

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Diet Backlash

- The last supper mentality
- Social withdrawal
- Sluggish metabolism *
- Using caffeine to survive the day
- Weight cycling *
- Eating disorders



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Principle 1: Reject the Diet Mentality

“Throw out the diet books and magazine articles that offer you false hope of losing weight quickly, easily, and permanently. Get angry at diet culture that promotes weight loss and the lies that have led you to feel as if you were a failure every time a new diet stopped working and you gained back all of the weight. If you allow even one small hope to linger that a new and better diet or food plan might be lurking around the corner, it will prevent you from being free to rediscover intuitive eating.”

Reference: Intuitive Eating by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch

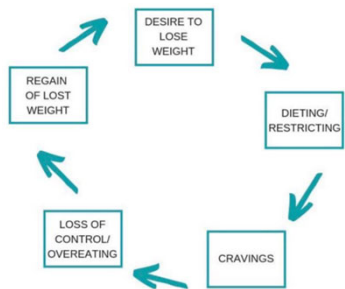
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Fear: If I stop dieting, I won't stop eating.

Reality: Dieting is often the trigger for overeating.

Dieters Dilemma



Eating for Health vs Eating for Weight

EATING FOR HEALTH	EATING FOR WEIGHT
Supportive	Punishing
Flexible	Rigid
Feels empowering	Feels anxious
Built on trust	Built on distrust
Respectful	Manipulative
Connected	Disconnected
Balanced	Extreme
Intention	Reactive
Satisfying	Monotonous
In charge	In control
Self-care	Self-control
Builds confidence	Erodes confidence

How to reject the diet mentality

Step 1: Recognize and acknowledge the damage that dieting causes

Step 2: Be aware of diet-mentality traits and thinking

Step 3: Get rid of the dieter's tools

Step 4: Be compassionate towards yourself



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Step 1: Recognize and acknowledge the damage that dieting causes

Biological and Health-Related Damage

- Knowledge that the harm is real
- As far as the body is concerned, dieting is a form of starvation
- Chronic dieting teaches the body to retain more fat when you start eating again
- Decreases in metabolism
- Increases binges and cravings
- Increases the risk of premature death and heart disease (weight cycling)
- Causes satiety cues to atrophy
- Causes body shape to change

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Step 1: Recognize and acknowledge the damage that dieting causes

Psychological and Emotional Damage

- Dieting is linked to eating disorders
- May cause stress or make the dieter more vulnerable to its effects
- Is correlated with feelings of failure, lowered self-esteem, and social anxiety (independent of body weight itself)
- The dieter is often vulnerable to loss of control, overeating
- Gradually erodes confidence and self-trust

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Step 2: Be Aware of Diet-Mentality Traits and Thinking

- The diet mentality surfaces in subtle forms, even when you decide to reject diet mentality.
- **Forget willpower:** defined as an attempt to counter natural desires and replace them with rules.
- **Forget being obedient:** being told what to do can trigger rebellion
- **Forget about failure:** you can't fail at IE, it is a learning process at every point along the way. Progress, not perfection.



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Step 3: Get Rid of the Dieter's Tools

- The scale as a false idol – ironically a “good” or “bad” scale number can both trigger overeating – whether it’s a congratulatory eating party or a consolation party; the scale sabotages body and mind efforts
- When a pound is not a pound – many factors can influence the number on the scale (water retention – hormones, excessive sodium intake, weather). The scale does not reflect body composition.
- No more weighing/measuring food
- Delete tracking apps

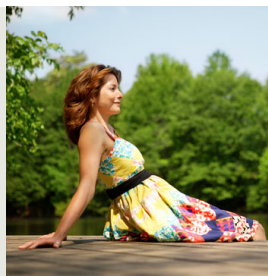


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Step 4: Be Compassionate Toward Yourself

- Self-compassion is associated with well-being; increased feelings of happiness, and greater personal initiative to make needed changes in your life.
- Self-compassionate individuals do not criticize or bully themselves when they make mistakes. This makes it easier for them to admit vulnerability and mistakes, change unproductive behaviors, and take on new challenges such as intuitive eating.



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Step 4: Be Compassionate Toward Yourself (continued)

Three Key Steps to Self-Compassion – Kristin Neff, PhD

1. Ouch! Acknowledge the moment of suffering, no matter how small. This can include your self-talk, behaviors, emotions, or situations that cause pain.
2. Affirm that suffering is part of life. You are not alone in your suffering. It's normal to struggle.
3. Say something kind to yourself. This can include statements that begin with "May I"... _____ . (be kind to myself, be patient with myself, accept myself, forgive myself and let go of my mistakes)

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So where do we go from here?

Aim to focus on Health vs Weight

1. Do not skip meals
2. Do not cut out food groups/macros, all foods can fit
3. What can you add to your diet to support your health?
4. Find movement you enjoy and do as able
5. Explore more work/education around Intuitive Eating



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Questions/Comments/Take-Aways

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Resources / References

Books

- "Anti-Diet" by Christy Harrison
- "Intuitive Eating" 4th edition by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch
- "The Intuitive Eating Workbook" by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch
- "The Intuitive Eating Workbook for Teens" by Elyse Resch
- "Intuitive Eating for Every Day" by Evelyn Tribole
- "How to Nourish Yourself Through an Eating Disorder" by Wendy Sterling and Casey Crosbie

Websites

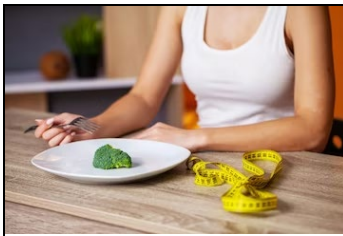
- <https://asdah.org/health-at-every-size-haes-approach/>
- <http://www.intuitiveeating.org/>
- https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/self_compassion_break
- <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>
- <https://alissarumsey.com/lose-weight-intuitive-eating/>

Podcasts

- Food Psych
- Body Kindness
- Maintenance Phase
- Food Heaven

Social media

- @l_weight
- @ragenchastain
- @marcird
- @whitneytrotterrd
- @beauty_redefined
- @thebodylovesociety



Reject the Diet Mentality

Inventory of how dieting has interfered with your life. Check all that apply to you.

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS	SOCIAL SYMPTOMS	PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS	BEHAVIORAL SYMPTOMS
Weight gain	I eat differently when others are present	I worry about my eating	If I break a food rule, I eat even more of it
Blunted metabolism	I compare my food to what others are eating, in quantity and type of food	I have strict rules about eating	If I eat too much, I make up for it by skipping a meal or eating less at the next meal, even if I am hungry
Excessive cravings for carbs	I worry about what people think of my eating	I think of food as “good” or “bad”	I eat more food when I am stressed
Blood sugar swings	I worry about what people think of my body	I feel guilty if I eat “bad” food	I exercise only to burn calories or lose weight
Disconnected from hunger cues	I try to eat the same type and quantity of food that others are eating	I have mood swings	I talk a lot about dieting, weight, and food
Disconnected from satiety cues	I cancel social events because of the food or meals served	I am afraid of feeling hungry	When I am on vacation, I ignore my food rules and eat more than I need, no matter how full I feel
Chronically tired, even when sleeping well	I avoid eating in social situations	I am afraid of feeling too full	I engage in binge eating
Hair loss	My behavior and beliefs about my eating and body have interfered with my relationships	I don’t trust my body	I avoid physical intimacy
Missed or inconsistent menses (ladies)		I am afraid that if I start eating “forbidden” foods, I won’t stop eating	
Physical numbness		I fantasize about food	
		I am preoccupied by thoughts about what I eat and don’t eat	
Other:	Other:	Other:	Other:

Reference: Intuitive Eating book by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch

Issue	Dieting Mentality	Non-diet Mentality
Eating/food choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do I deserve it? ▪ If I eat a high-calorie food, I try to find a way to make up for it. ▪ I feel guilty when I eat high-calorie foods or foods high in carbs. ▪ I usually describe a day of eating as either good or bad. ▪ I view food as the enemy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Am I hungry? ▪ Do I want it? ▪ Will I feel deprived if I don't eat it? ▪ Will it be satisfying? ▪ Does it taste good? ▪ I deserve to enjoy eating without guilt.
Movement benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I focus primarily on the calories burned. ▪ I feel guilty if I miss a designated exercise day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I focus primarily on how movement makes me feel, especially the energizing and stress relieving factors.
Progress is viewed as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How many pounds did I lose? ▪ How do I look? ▪ What do other people think of my weight? ▪ I have good willpower. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ My weight is not my primary goal or an indicator of my progress. ▪ I have increased trust with myself and food. ▪ I am able to let go of "eating indiscretions." ▪ I recognize inner body cues.

Reference: Intuitive Eating book by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch

Your Body is Your Home journal prompt:

You are not a body – rather you have a body, which houses your consciousness, your soul, your spirit, your life force (whichever resonates with you). What if you viewed your body as your home for the rest of your life? Every cell in your body is truly part of your one and only home. You don't have to like your home, but it's important to respect it and treat it with dignity. What kind of home environment cultivates loving kindness for yourself and makes you feel welcome? What interior might need rearranging – perhaps how you talk to yourself? Perhaps how you treat yourself?

Affirmation exercise:

Affirmations are statements about yourself that assert a positive quality, strength, or value that exists within you (even if you don't quite believe it yet). A body of research shows that there are significant benefits to cultivating positive affirmations, including increased well-being and the rewiring of your brain for positive self-regard. Place your hand on your heart - this nurturing action releases oxytocin, which is a health-promoting natural hormone that confers anti-stress effects, healing, and the feeling of connection. Visualize and intensify that positive feeling that you are experiencing.

Try this with the affirmation "I am lovable." Hand on heart, close your eyes, recall a situation/person/thing that made you feel loved and safe. When this situation is clear in your mind, place your awareness on the felt sense of feeling loved and repeat slowly to yourself "I am lovable."

Eating for Health	Eating for Weight
Supportive	Punishing
Flexible	Rigid
Feels empowering	Feels anxious
Built on trust	Built on distrust
Respectful	Manipulative
Connected	Disconnected
Balanced	Extreme
Intention	Reactive
Satisfying	Monotonous
In charge	In control
Self-care	Self-control
Builds confidence	Erodes confidence

Self-Compassion Exercises

1. Think about times when you were struggling with your eating. How do you typically respond? Write down what you typically do and what you say to yourself. Be sure to notice the tone of your thoughts - are they harsh and intense or gentle and kind?
2. If you had a dear friend or loved one who was struggling with his or her eating, how would you respond? Write down what you would say to your friend. Also note the tone you would use with a friend or loved one - is it harsh or kind?
3. Is there a difference between the way you would talk to your friend and the way you talk to yourself? If yes, what factors or fears come into play that lead you to treat yourself and others so differently?
4. How might things change if you responded kindly to yourself (like the way you typically respond to a close friend who is struggling)?
5. Bullying and fearmongering in the name of health do not work and may actually worsen your health in the long run. Do you use self-criticism or self-bullying as motivators for your eating issues? Reflect on a recent difficult situation with your eating or body. As you call the situation to mind, see if you can actually feel the emotional discomfort in your body. Describe how this feels.
6. What compassionate words or phrases could you use to replace the inner bully? Think of a kinder, more supportive inner dialogue. It may help to think of what a caring friend would say to you when you are suffering. How does that make you feel emotionally and physically?

Self-Care Activities:

- Take a 15-minute time out to close your eyes
- Ask your partner/roommate to make or pick up dinner
- Get to bed a little earlier
- End work on time, rather than working late
- Choose a bath rather than a shower, for a little more relaxing downtime
- Watch a sunset
- Watch the sunrise
- Think of your own self-care activities and make a list

Resources/References:

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- “The Intuitive Eating Workbook” by Evelyn Tribole and Elyse Resch
- “The Intuitive Eating Workbook for Teens” by Elyse Resch
- “Intuitive Eating for Every Day” by Evelyn Tribole
- “Health At Every Size” by Lindo Bacon

Websites:

- <https://asdah.org/health-at-every-size-haes-approach/>
- <http://www.intuitiveeating.org/>
- https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/self_compassion_break
- <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>
- <https://alissarumsey.com/lose-weight-intuitive-eating/>

Podcasts:

- Food Psych
- Body Kindness
- Maintenance Phase
- Food Heaven

Social media:

- @i_weight
- @ragenchastain
- @marcird
- @whitneytrotter.rd
- @beauty_redefined
- @thebodylovesociety