



BAD BODY DAY TOOLKIT



Center for BODY TRUST



WELCOME TO OUR BAD BODY DAY TOOLKIT!

WE ARE READY TO HELP.

Let's start with the obvious: blaming your body gets you nowhere. Tough love doesn't work. Your body is not a thing to be objectified or something that's "earned" punishment. It is your human body - it is you. It's a relationship, also. And living in this world makes that relationship more complicated than it needs to be.

Most of us have bad body days. I mean, let's face it. This culture is tough on bodies and really demanding about what we should all be doing to make them better. Bad body days are part of the ride, even when your primary focus is on reclaiming body trust. Over the years we have come up with some wisdom to share, along with tips and tricks that can help keep your bad body day from turning into two or three or more (like the next diet/food/exercise plan). We think our toolkit will really help; it's certainly full of things we rely on ourselves.

We've created this [audio recording](#), and below we offer some strategies for managing a bad body day and resources that you can come back to whenever you need support. We hope it helps. And bottom line... you are so very worthy, vibrant, and amazing, right here, as you are now. We know this for sure.

STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING A BAD BODY DAY

Have you ever noticed that you can go to bed at night feeling one way about your body, only to wake up the next morning and feel completely different?

We encourage you to get curious about this because the size of our bodies doesn't change in this period of time, but how we FEEL about our bodies does. If our body isn't different, then what's really going on?

Few people are immune from having bad body days—days when you feel especially bad about your body or really feel the pull to make a plan to change your eating and/or exercise routine. The culture we live in assigns moral (and health) value based on how our body presents to the world. We are socialized to ignore, suppress, or numb our feelings, especially the uncomfortable, messy or “unacceptable” ones. Living in a culture that reinforces weight stigma at every turn teaches us that we can and should control the size of our bodies and that failure to do so is a sign of weakness or poor character.

Participating in diet culture changes our relationship with ourselves, our bodies, and food, and over time we lose access to the language to describe our emotional world and adopt the language of food and fat (Hirschman & Munter). So, when uncomfortable feelings arise, our body becomes the scapegoat. Instead of feeling angry, we scrutinize our body. Instead of feeling anxious about the big deadline at work, we feel more body shame. Instead of feeling sad because we had a terrible fight with our partner, we think about a plan to control food and our body.

Seeing our own body as the problem lets the culture (and sometimes the people in our lives) off the hook for the negativity or harm that has been projected onto us. This practice perpetuates the marginalization of bodies by



reinforcing personal responsibility rhetoric (If you get sick, it's your fault) instead of keeping our focus on cultural beliefs and structures that cause harm.

WE CAN DO THIS VERY DIFFERENTLY.

Someone who has a strong Body Trust practice is not immune to bad body days. They've developed an analysis of what's ruptured their relationship with their body and know how to skillfully navigate bad body days without being self-destructive. Below are some strategies for you to consider. (You will find more in [the book!](#)) Some will resonate. Some will not...and that's okay. Notice what calls to you.

Turn toward yourself with compassion and kindness. Bad body thoughts put you at a crossroad: you can choose to be compassionate and mindful or make yet another unsustainable plan rooted in shame. We suggest the former. Plans are always temporary fixes, even if your hope is that they will last forever. Tough love won't change you - in fact it puts your inner critic in charge. The inner critic upholds dominant culture. It is not a wise or motivating voice.

Acknowledge that this feeling is temporary. How you feel about your body can change from moment to moment and this too shall pass. Individual emotions last, on average, 90 seconds in the body. Our obsessive thoughts about these feelings make them stick around a lot longer. And longer lasting moods and frames of mind can be influenced by daily life events, social factors such as news and working conditions, transitions, hormonal shifts, trauma history, illness, and more.

Find a mantra to repeat to yourself. Say it repeatedly in your head or out loud. Write it on post-it notes and stick it on every mirror in the house.

"This is me. I am worthy because I breathe."

"This is my body; this is where I live."

"Every ounce of me is sacred."

"I am more than my body."

Be aware of and avoid body checking behaviors. Standing in front of the mirror naked and scrutinizing yourself, weighing or taking measurements, feeling for bones/fat, and comparing your body to others are just a few of the ways people body check. Change your clothes if they are uncomfortable. Minimize opportunities to pathologize or blame your body.

Name the systems of oppression that were put into your consciousness and your body without your consent. So much of our work is divesting from and unlearning the ways we've internalized dominance and oppression. When we recognize and name the weight stigma, fatphobia, misogyny, patriarchy, ableism, white supremacy, and other forms of oppression that are operating within us and causing us to blame our bodies, we can externalize those forces, and put the blame where it belongs. There is incredible power in asking questions like, who profits from my belief that my body is a problem? Who is making money off my shame? Who says so, and do I really care what they think?

REMEMBER KINDNESS IS THE WAY OUT. ALWAYS.



CENTER FOR BODY TRUST RESOURCES

Choose a card from our [Reclaiming Body Trust® Card Deck](#) for daily inspiration.

Hang our [Weight-Inclusive Zone Door Hanger](#) or [Poster](#) as a reminder to reduce body checking.

Place our [Body Trust® is My Birthright Angel](#) somewhere to help you hold your sacred ground.

Wear our [Reclaim Body Trust® Necklace](#) as a reminder that there are others on the path, and wrap your hand around the charm when you are having a bad day to know you are not alone.

Our [No More Weighting: The Body Trust® E-Course](#) can be a great way to get support and find community while you explore your path to Body Trust.

You can read about all our offerings [here](#).

RECOMMENDED READING

Reclaiming Body Trust: A Path to Healing and Liberation by Hilary Kinavey & Dana Sturtevant

The Body is Not An Apology by Sonya Renee Taylor

Pleasure Activism by adrienne maree brown

Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice by Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha

What We Don't Talk About When We Talk About Fat by Aubrey Gordon

Fat Girls in Black Bodies: Creating Communities of Our Own by Joy Arlene Renee Cox, Ph.D.

Anti-Diet by Christy Harrison

The Body Positive Journal by Virgie Tovar

VIDEOS

[The Beauty of Being a Misfit](#) by Lidia Yuknavitch

[Boomerang Valentine](#) by Andrea Gibson

[The Body Is Not An Apology](#) by Sonya Renee Taylor

[Wild Geese](#) by Mary Oliver



SUPPORT FOR CHRONIC ILLNESS

[When Healthy Isn't An Option: How I Learned To Love My Chronically Ill Body](#) by Jody Allard

[On Illness, Belief, & Saying Yes](#) by Andrea Gibson

[In My Chronic Illness, I Found a Deeper Meaning](#) by Elliott Kukla



THE FAT ACCEPTANCE MOVEMENT

[A Brief History of the Fat Acceptance Movement](#) by Sirius Bonner

[The Fat Underground](#) Video

Belly of the Beast: The Politics of Anti-Fatness as Anti-Blackness by D'Shaun L. Harris

Fat Activism by Charlotte Cooper



PODCASTS

Hilary & Dana on The Dear Sugars Podcast: [Trust Your Body](#)

[Rebuilding Body Trust](#) with Christy Harrison

[Fatphobia is a Social Justice Issue Part 1](#) with Nicole Lee

[Fatphobia is a Social Justice Issue Part 2](#) with Nicole Lee

Vanessa Rochelle Lewis on Finding our Way Podcast: [Reclaiming Ugly](#)

Sonya Renee Taylor on Food Psych Podcast: [How to Cultivate Radical Body Love](#)

Sand Chang on Food Psych Podcast: [Disordered Eating & Gender Identity](#)

Ijeoma Oluo on Food Psych Podcast: [How to Stop Pursuing Weight Loss](#)

MUSIC PLAYLISTS

We've created this [Bad Body Day Playlist](#) and filled it with all kinds of songs that our community has recommended.. We hope you find something to help you lean in and let go when you're having a tough time. Listening to music can help us move through difficult feelings and emotions, and dancing often enhances our experiences of embodiment.

We also really like the [Bitch Magazine Body Positive Anthems Playlist](#).

We hope the tips and resources in this toolkit are helpful to you. We encourage you to save this toolkit, as you will likely find yourself wanting to return for the reminders again and again. Remember you are so very much not alone on this path.

And do know that the healing is in the return! To your human, imperfect, wonderful self, over and over again.

In Solidarity and Body Trust,

