



Reshaping Bodies For Beauty

Grade-4

Lesson

1

Lesson Objectives – 1. Students describe at least three ways people in the past have modified their bodies to fit culturally-defined standards of beauty. 2. Students identify at least two ways people today try to modify their bodies that could be harmful.

	Time	Page
Prepare Students	5 min.	78
Attention Grabber	5 min.	78
Explain/Demonstrate/Practice		
Reshaping Bodies	10 min.	79
Review and Preview	5 min.	80
Total Time	25 min.	

- Equipment & Materials**
- ✓ Out-of-date clothing or pictures of people wearing out-of-date clothing in Appendix 4-1A, pp. 81-82.
 - ✓ “Reshaping Bodies Quiz” (one for each student) in Appendix 4-1B, p. 83.
 - ✓ Chalkboard/chalk or poster paper/markers

- Teacher Preparation**
- Prior to the start of this lesson:
- ✓ Make copies of pictures of people wearing out-of-date clothing.
 - ✓ Make copies of the Reshaping Bodies Quiz.

This lesson addresses the following content standards:

Michigan Standards		National Standards	
Physical Education	Health Education	Physical Education	Health Education
Standard #12	Standard #1	Standard #6	Standard #1

This lesson relates to Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education:

Grade 3 Lesson VI-1: Choosing Healthy Habits and Grade 6 Lesson VI-4: Food for Growth.

Additional Preparation

This lesson may generate discussion that reveals a risk of eating disorders among students. Before presenting the lesson, verify procedures for referring a student for evaluation and intervention.

Key Message & Background Information for Teachers**Key Messages:**

I believe there is no such thing as a “perfect” body size and/or shape.

Background Information:

What is considered physically attractive has changed greatly over time, and is different in various cultures and ethnic groups. For example, in some countries being fat is considered beautiful, while in the U.S., being thin is considered beautiful. Throughout history, people have used many harmful and unusual techniques to make their bodies conform to current ideals of beauty. Some of the techniques people use today to fit into the current ideal of attractiveness (such as dieting, fasting, and plastic surgery) may be just as harmful.

Prepare Students**5 min.**

Gather students together in a group seated on the floor.

Introduce the lesson:

- Today we are going to talk about some of the ways people try to change their bodies so they can be considered beautiful. Some of these can be very harmful.

Attention Grabber**5 min.**

Show or model the clothes or show pictures of people wearing clothes no longer in style.

Ask the students what they think of them.

Tell students that while the clothing might seem strange to us now, it was fashionable at one time.

Ask students to identify recent fashion fads they’ve seen at school.

Tell students:

- Like clothing fads, ideas about body sizes and shapes change frequently.
- There have been many odd ideas about what is attractive. Different groups of people have had many different ideas about what a beautiful body should look like.
- Today we’re going to be learning what people have done to their bodies to fit these different standards of beauty.

Reshaping Bodies

10 min.

Explain/Demonstrate

Practice

Have students do “Reshaping Bodies Quiz”:

- Distribute “Reshaping Bodies Quiz” (one for each student).
- Have a volunteer read the first statement. Discuss with the class whether or not this is true. Repeat for the remaining statements.
- All statements are true.

***Teacher tip:** The “Reshaping Bodies Quiz” will tell about different methods that people have used over time to manipulate their bodies in the name of beauty. Many of the practices may seem so bizarre to students that they may not believe they’re true. Expect that students may react with gasps, giggles, or comments such as “gross!” as they read the quiz. Tolerate the reactions, but calmly encourage them to finish the quiz.*

Tell students:

- While we may be shocked by the things some people have done to their bodies, they didn’t think these practices were weird at all. In fact, most people would have considered it strange not to go along with what everyone else was doing. People often ignored the fact that many of these practices hurt their bodies—they were too busy trying to achieve a “perfect” body. In fact, there really isn’t any such thing as a “perfect” body.

Ask students:

- What are some modern “beauty” practices that may be uncomfortable or even painful but that people do anyway because they think it helps them look good?
- Record student responses on chalkboard or poster paper. Possible responses include: dieting, fasting for weight loss, body building, body piercing, plastic surgery, tanning salons, high-heeled shoes, or tattoos.

***Teacher tip:** Be sure to mention dieting or fasting if the students do not mention it.*

Ask students which of these could be harmful. Place a star by those that could be harmful.

Discuss with students how each could be harmful. Be sure to make the following points:

- Dieting/fasting to lose weight—makes people hungrier. They may lead to overeating and can prevent people from getting the vitamins and minerals they need. These can also interfere with concentration, so grades may go down. Dieting can also hurt relationships, since being hungry can put people in a bad mood. It is hard to be friends with someone who is grumpy all the time.
- Body building—can be harmful if drugs are used to build muscle, or if it is done without adult supervision.
- Body piercing—often gets infected. Some people cannot even talk clearly with mouth piercing. These are hard to undo. Some states have laws saying that children cannot have tattoos or body piercing done until the age of 18 without their parents’ permission. This law helps prevent children from doing things to their bodies that they later wish they hadn’t done.

Review & Preview**5 min.**

Remind students:

- The modern “beauty” practices such as fasting, extreme dieting, and plastic surgery are similar to the methods that different groups of people have used over time to make their bodies fit standards of beauty.
- Beauty fads will come and go. We can’t afford to follow fads that promise “good looks” but damage our bodies.
- Remember that healthy bodies come in all sizes. There is no such thing as a “perfect body.”





Reshaping Bodies Quiz

Directions: Circle true or false for each item below.

1. True False In some countries, very long necks were considered beautiful. Some girls wore brass rings on their necks to make them longer.
2. True False Families once folded back their daughters' toes and taped them under their feet, so that their feet would look tiny.
3. True False To prepare for marriage, young women in some countries spent several months in "fattening rooms" to gain as much weight as possible before their wedding.
4. True False In some countries, parents used to squeeze their babies' heads between two boards for a couple of days after birth to make the heads long and flat.

