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Local Fashion Show Battles Super-Thin, 'Size-Zero' Culture

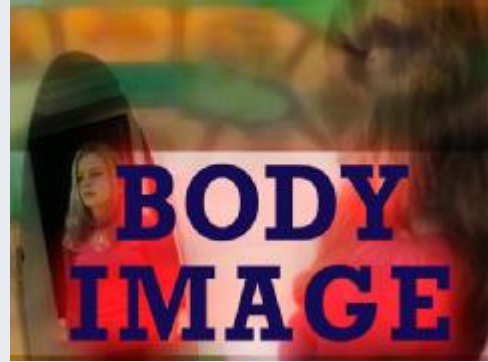
Philly U Fashion Students Show Different Size In Fashion

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One thing you don't see on the fashion runways too often is an average-looking woman. Super-thin is always in and if you're a starlet you'd better stay that way.

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Britney Spears back at the height of her fame and Britney this year at her comeback MTV appearance showed differing body weights and she took heat for being "overweight." She might be a little nutty these days, but overweight? Most women would probably love to be her size. Lindsey Lohan took thin too far at one point and so too did Nicole Richie. But on this night at this event in Philly -- average-sized women rocked. "I'm 5'-3". I have hips and I'm proud of that tonight. I'm proud of my body for once, and it's a great feeling," said Emily O'Neill, a Philadelphia University fashion student. Philadelphia University held a fashion show to showcase its students' designs -- the one rule -- the designs had to be for average-sized, and plus-sized models. "What we're trying to let younger women know is that we are all beautiful at whatever size and shape that we are," Ivy Silver, fashion show organizer, said. The fashion students focused on "realistically-sized" women because, from a business standpoint, they said they believe it is an under-served demographic. They said while not all women are super tall and super skinny, all women deserve to feel good in clothes. "It's really high waisted so it's flattering to all body types so you don't have to be concerned about a little pudge in the middle or wide hoofs and it has a deep cut V to bring attention to the face," Shevare Perry, a Philadelphia University fashion student, said. The design students also focused on average-sized women because they want to tell young girls that it is OK to be an average size.

"You hear girls as young as six or seven talking about going on a diet or being overly concerned about exercise. We're seeing at younger and younger ages that girls are being consumed with this issue in a not so healthy or balanced a way," Natalie Weathers, fashion marketing professor, said.

Boys have body image problems too but girls tend to be more deeply affected by what they see and hear in the media.

To help young girls deal with this, the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration suggest letting your daughter know that weight gain is a normal part of growing up, especially during puberty.

Try to avoid negative statements about food, weight and body size. Offer healthy snacks at home. Watch TV with your daughter and talk about the images she sees.

Finally, encourage your daughter to exercise or take walks as a family.

The fashion students said anyone will look good in the clothes they wear as long as they wear them with confidence, just be proud of your body.

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