

BEAUTY REDEFINED

Girls and Body Image

Girl Scouts of the USA/Girl Scout Research Institute

KEY MESSAGES & FINDINGS

► **Girls attribute media and fashion to the pressure to be thin.**

- Nine in ten girls say the fashion industry (89%) and/or the media (88%) place a lot of pressure on teenage girls to be thin.

► **Girls say they would prefer to see more “natural”/“real” images in the media.**

- Eighty-one percent of girls would rather see “real” or “natural” photos of models than touched-up, airbrushed versions.
- Seventy-five percent would be more likely to buy clothes they see on “real-size models” than on super-skinny ones.

► **Girls have a love/hate relationship with the fashion industry.**

- Three in four girls (75%) say that fashion is really important to them.
- Forty-eight percent wish they were as skinny as the models in fashion magazines.
- Forty-seven percent say fashion magazines give them a body image to strive for.
- Forty-one percent say they prefer to see the latest fashions on skinny models rather than on fuller-sized women.

► **However:**

- Sixty-five percent of girls think that the body image represented by the fashion industry is too skinny; 63% think it is unrealistic; and 47% think it is unhealthy. More than a quarter (28%) say the fashion industry body image looks sick.
- Sixty percent say that they compare their bodies to fashion models.
- Only 46% think the fashion industry does a good job of representing people of all races and ethnicities, with Caucasian girls the most likely to say this (52%, compared to only 42% of Hispanics and 32% of African Americans).
- Thirty-one percent of girls admit to starving themselves or refusing to eat as a strategy to lose weight.

► **African American and Hispanic girls have a more positive body image.**

- A higher percentage of Hispanic girls (79%) say they are satisfied with their bodies compared to their African American (76%) and Caucasian (72%) counterparts.
- Seventeen percent of African American girls are completely satisfied with the way their body looks, compared to 14% of Hispanic and 10% of Caucasian girls.

Methodology: Online national sample conducted November 19–December 4, 2009 by TRU, with 1,002 13- to 17-year-old girls.

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