



Spring into Healthy Body Image

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Guest blog post submitted by Stacy Nadeau, Creighton.

Well... we've made it! March is finally here. No matter what the weatherman or the calendar says, the first of March officially marks the beginning of spring (in my book anyway).

So here we go ladies. With the start of spring begins the turnover of retail fashion. Although the temperatures (in some areas of the country) are still frigid and snow lingers on the ground, the department stores fill with bright colors, flip flops, sundresses, and the hippest new sunglasses; all reminders that spring is right around the corner. But I forgot to mention one little thing... the one BIG thing, actually, that is probably on all of your minds. That's right, bathing suits.

Tell me if you are with me on this: for many, spring also brings a certain amount of un-welcome anxiety. It happens the same way every year. We book our spring break plans early, usually in the fall. We think to ourselves, "I have PLENTY of time to get 'skinny' by then and look great in my swimsuit." Then, life gets in the way. We have class, meetings, philanthropy, socials, work, school, and the list goes on and on and on.

Suddenly, as you're glancing at the calendar to see when your next exam is, to your horror, you realize spring break is a mere four weeks away and you haven't worked out in months. You panic. Run to the gym. Vow to eat only fruits and vegetables for the next month. Obsess and dread the pictures that will surface on Facebook immediately following your vacation; only to end up failing to reach the goal you had set, and going to the store and buying the bathing suit with the cutest matching cover-up.

Has this happened to anyone? I can bet it has. I can also bet that if this has happened to you, you did not enjoy your vacation to the maximum ability. Sure, you had fun. You have laughs, stories, and pictures to prove it. But, did you sit on the beach, breath deep, be thankful for your surroundings? Or, did you sit on the beach, suck it in, worry about the cellulite and rolls, and silently compare yourself to the other skinnier, tanner, and "more attractive" women surrounding you?

LADIES! ENOUGH!

We are so quick to feel this immense pressure as soon as we get to spring break time. Even if we were feeling pretty good about ourselves, the words “spring break” suddenly throws us into another realm. Instantly, we want to lose weight, get tan, and charge hundreds to our credit card to ensure we have the cutest outfits and accessories.

I don't want you to continue this cycle. It's unhealthy and it never works.

What can we do?

- Don't lose track. If you were feeling pretty good about yourself and doing the best you can to keep healthy, don't lose sight of that. Focus on your health, versus simply being thin. It's impossible to lose a large amount of weight in four weeks. Eat healthy, increase your activity and focus on how you *feel* not how much you weigh.
- Say “no” to stress and anxiety. It *is* possible, no matter your shape or size, to find a bathing suit you feel confident in. We do not have to feel anxious about picking out a swimsuit. Do not rush or wait until the last minute. Plan and shop! Feel great about your purchase. Pick your favorite color or print and a cut that flatters you. When you walk out of the store with that shopping bag, you should have a smile on your face.
- Be in the moment. When you are lying on the beach, floating in the pool, or enjoying a sea-side meal, STOP thinking about your flaws or how you wished you would have lost ten pounds before coming on this trip. Focus on your friends, the scenery, and beautiful weather. You are lucky to be there; don't miss out. Enjoy every second!
- Cut the negative! Focus on the positive! Friends don't let friend fat talk. Need I say more?

As always, please share your thoughts, stories, and experiences with me!

Have beautiful and safe travels.

DL,

Stacy