

**WHILE** we are all keen to enjoy some much-needed sunshine, the thought of baring body parts that have been covered up all winter can fill us with dread.

However, life coach Puja McClymont says that if we rationalise our feelings and have a positive mental attitude, we can enjoy summer and celebrate our bodies with renewed confidence.

Puja, who hosts the Self Care 101 podcast, says: "The sheer thought of the weather getting warmer can trigger panic. From weather reports to fashion round-ups, the urgency to get fit for summer and buy the most flattering bikini sends many women into an insecurity frenzy.

"It is easy to want to cover up and be a recluse instead of enjoying the weather.

"But whenever I work with a client and they are worried about something, I ask them, 'What's the worst that could happen?' I expect an answer because within the answer lies rationality.

"For example, we might think that because we are overweight, everyone else is looking – but are they? Do people even care? For the most part, no.

"People don't care because they have their own huge list of insecurities and troubles.

"While you can't change how you feel about your body overnight, you can choose how you respond to the way you feel."

Here are Puja's top tips for harnessing your own mental energy to help you be your best self this summer...

# How to be body positive



**1** Working on your mindset towards your body is key. Look at yourself in the mirror and thank your body for everything it has done for you. This might

include surviving birth itself, being in good health, allowing you to move, giving birth to your children, being strong etc. If you are really patient, you'll be able to create a huge list of everything that your body has done for you so far. You can then add what else you're going to do to look after it. By being grateful for your body, you change the association of a negative body image to one that is more positive.



**2** Touch your body. So many of us feel ashamed by what we look at but when you touch your body, you start connecting with it. It's

similar to when we hug someone and oxytocin is released. By touching your own body, you get to know it better. You start to build a relationship with it. You can laugh, you can admire, you can get used to it. I touch my belly fat all the time because until I had my son, it was just fat. After I had my son, it was the pouch that kept him alive. I still marvel at this incredible experience that I've been so lucky to have.

**3** Ask yourself whether you want to spend the rest

of your days hating yourself or loving yourself. Hopefully you choose the latter. If you do, write a list of all the things you're going to do every single day to ensure you are loving yourself. You have to include things that trigger you so you can create good boundaries around them. These may include negative body image associations and sometimes even people.



**4** Surround yourself with people who are body positive and let their energy inspire you. Follow social media

accounts about body positivity that you not only relate to but can also learn from. I follow Lizzo and learn a lot from her behaviours on social media with regards to her body. I learn resilience, acceptance, joy and fun from the body she has. I may not show all my jiggy bits in public but I am more able to talk about them

because I expose myself to body positive content.

**5** Wear clothes that you are 100% comfortable in. If you don't feel happy in what you're wearing, this will show. Choose clothes that make you feel confident as this will shine through and essentially repel any negative comments.

After all, it's all about your energy and staying positive.



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