

# Fat Stuff



## Start here...

We are students at the University of East London who think that being fat is about more than what you eat or don't eat, or what you do or don't do. We believe:

- + It's okay to be fat
- + Fat people are as valuable and as beautiful as anybody
- + Fat is not necessarily unhealthy - and even if it is, it doesn't really matter
- + Trying to lose weight can really screw you up, dieting is a waste of time, and the health benefits of being thin are over-played
- + Fat people are part of the fabric of humanity and are found in every culture and every country, and not everybody feels the same way about fat either
- + Fat people have been around forever, or at least 25,000 years, which is the age Austrian archeologists have attributed to the Venus of Willendorf, an icon shaped like a fat woman that they discovered in 1908

We want to challenge the current mythology that surrounds fat people, which is generally very negative. We're angry about the pervasive cultural messages we come across every day about bodies, health and beauty, instead of swallowing this stuff we want to create a space where we can discuss the truth about what it is to be fat. Moreover, we acknowledge that there are connections between body image, sexuality, class, race and ability - all kinds of issues really. We think that fat is political as well as personal.

But mostly we are excited to see a fat and body-positive culture developing. We encourage everyone to get involved, to develop self esteem, and to know our bodies as strong, powerful and resilient as we move through life.

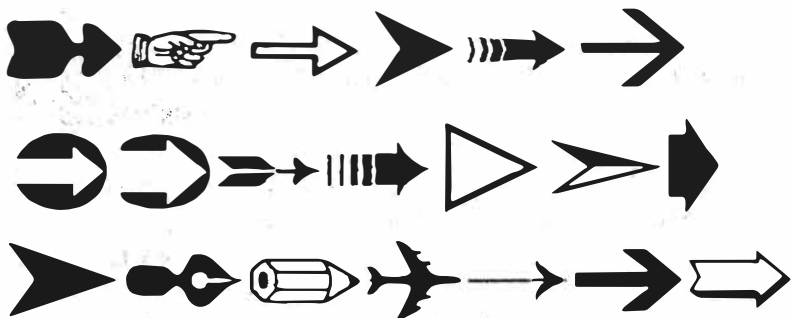
## Why we made this zine

We think that the Student Wellbeing Services' Obesity Awareness Week in March 2007 is kind of rubbish and that everyone deserves better than a patronising healthy eating event, or finger-wagging, shame, pity and guilt about getting or being fat.

We thought maybe people didn't know that weight loss isn't necessarily the healthiest option if you are fat and that there are many better alternatives to it – alternatives that Obesity Awareness Week is unlikely to present – so we decided to make a zine about that, which is what you are reading now.

You don't have to be fat to read Fat Stuff, fear and anxiety about body weight affects just about everyone, whatever their size. We hope this zine will help you feel a bit better about yourself and get you thinking about different, maybe better, ways of being.

Just open up the page and enjoy!



## Instead of worrying about being or getting fat, why don't you...

- + Tell your friends that you love them whatever size they are
- + Read a novel that features a fat protagonist and discuss it with someone you like
- + Organise a demonstration against body size obsession
- + Go and play on the gymsforall equipment at Docklands
- + Go dancing at Unskinny Bop with your mates
- + Treat yourself with compassion
- + Visit Green Street and eat a delicious dosa
- + Tell someone that you're thinking of becoming a fat activist
- + Stop waiting to live your life until you are a size \_\_
- + Learn to meditate
- + Find out about the history of the fat liberation movement and tell someone about it
- + Wear your favourite item of clothing
- + Have a picnic in Epping Forest
- + Have counselling if you think you might need it
- + Organise a fat-friendly swim, a fat trampolining group, a fat rounders team or a fat burlesque troupe - or think about how you could make activities fun and accessible for all
- + Borrow or hire a bike and go for a ride around the docks
- + Snuggle under a duvet and watch a really stupid film
- + Take an assertiveness class and learn how to challenge negative comments
- + Have stroll around Thames Barrier Park and a cup of tea in the pavilion - or play in the fountains on a hot day
- + Take a moment to define what healthy means to you
- + Tell us what you think of this zine: [puppigrrl@hotmail.com](mailto:puppigrrl@hotmail.com)
- + Share a joke
- + Or \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in your own)

## Resources

There are loads of great resources out there - if you know where to look. Useful search terms include "fat rights," "size acceptance," and "fat liberation." But here are a bunch of links, books, films and things to get you started.

### Online stuff for reading, doing, Ideas and fun



#### Big Fat Blog

News and comment in the world of the rotund  
<http://bigfatblog.com>



#### The Chubsters

They're mean, tough, aggressive and angry  
[www.chubstergang.com](http://www.chubstergang.com)



#### Unskinny Bop

Fat-friendly nightclub with the best DJs in town  
[www.unskinnybop.co.uk](http://www.unskinnybop.co.uk)



#### Charlotte Cooper's Fat Pages

She's fat and she's proud  
[www.charlottecooper.net/docs/fat.htm](http://www.charlottecooper.net/docs/fat.htm)



#### Fat Studies

Forum for this new academic discipline  
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/fatstudies>



#### Fatshionista

Socially conscious fat fashion discussion list  
<http://community.livejournal.com/fatshionista>



## **NOLOSE**

US event for queer fat women and their allies  
[www.nolose.org](http://www.nolose.org)



## **Size Queen and Fat Girl**

Radical pro-chub zines from San Francisco  
[www.sizequeenzine.org](http://www.sizequeenzine.org)



## **Susan Stinson**

Awesome writer of great fat characters  
[www.susanstinson.net](http://www.susanstinson.net)



## **The Fat Liberation Archives**

Exactly what it says it is  
<http://largesse.net/Archives/index.html>



## **The Gossip**

Fat superstar Beth Ditto rules the school  
[www.gossipyouth.com](http://www.gossipyouth.com)



## **Naima Lowe**

Film maker, activist and all-round great gal  
[www.naimalowe.com](http://www.naimalowe.com)

## **Council on Size and Weight Discrimination**

**CSWD** Working for institutional change in the States  
[www.cswd.org](http://www.cswd.org)



## **Fat is Contagious**

Fun/inspiring essay about fat activism  
<http://tinyurl.com/35ag33>



### **Junkfood Science**

The truth about food, fat and health  
<http://junkfoodscience.blogspot.com>



### **NAAFA**

The biggest fat rights organisation in the world  
[www.naafa.org](http://www.naafa.org)



### **Fat!So?**

Legendary activist Marilyn Wann's online home  
[www.fatso.com](http://www.fatso.com)



### **Nomy Lamm**

Artist, writer, zinester, musician and more  
[www.nomylamm.com](http://www.nomylamm.com)



### **Body Image Bibliography**

A good place to do some research  
<http://www.offourbacks.org/bodimbib.htm>

## **Films featuring amazing fat characters who won't Insult your Intelligence**



**Bagdad Café** (1987) by Percy Adlon

**Hairspray** (1988) by John Waters

**Heavy** (1995) by James Mangold

**Palindromes** (2004) by Todd Solondz

**What's Eating Gilbert Grape?** (1993) by Lasse Hallström (there's a copy of this in the library)

## Dates for your diary

**International No-Diet Day** – 6 May

**Love Your Body Day** – 18 October

## UEL Library

Although the uni library hosts the usual kind of stuff you'd expect on obesity, there's not much about fat from an alternative perspective, though you might like to check out:



Cooper, C. (1998) **Fat & Proud: The Politics of Size** London: The Women's Press

Cooper sets out the debates regarding fat lib based on research undertaken at this very university!



Schoenfelder, L. and Wieser, B. (1983) **Shadow On a Tightrope: Writings by Women on Fat Oppression** USA: Rotunda Press

Hugely influential anthology, slightly dated now, but still well worth a read



**Health at Every Size**

HAES hosts multi-perspective discussions about fat and health. An electronic version of this journal, 2004-present, is available in Academic Search Elite though the EBSCO database – ask

a librarian for help if you're not sure how to access it.

Don't forget that you can always ask for inter-library loans of books, video/DVDs and other resources that you come across.