

## **FAT OR THIN????**

There are few words in our culture more loaded with negative meanings than “fat”. To be fat – especially in women – is often to feel like a social outcast. In contrast to being overly thin, to be overly large is commonly regarded as a sign of greed and laziness – not to mention “unhealthiness”.

But times are changing, as are attitudes, as overly thin folk are now suffering negative putdowns and presumptions and often find themselves treated as social outcasts.

Yet the truth is far more complex and some researchers have concluded that being overweight is healthier than excessive thinness if you have to have one or the other. It is perfectly possible to be fat and fit, while trying to get thin can seriously damage your health.

Excessive dieting can actually lead to long-term weight gain because your body is programmed to get back to a physiological “set point” as soon as possible – and while you have been dieting, your metabolism has slowed down, making it more difficult to lose the weight next time round. Re-setting that ‘set point’ can often be accomplished with hypnotherapy.

However, true obesity (defined as a 20 percent excess of body weight) is a different matter from simply being overweight and it does cause physical problems. If your weight is enough to restrict movement it may be difficult to take exercise. Arthritis may also be exacerbated by weight, and obesity may be a cause of late-onset diabetes, as well as of cancer of the colon and rectum in men. It has also been associated with heart disease and high blood pressure.