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Going Gaga over weight gain:

Aesthetics shouldn't be the only concern

LADY GAGA'S recent weight gain has been quite a hot topic lately. She attributes her fuller, curvier figure to her dad's Italian cooking.

And another reason for her weight gain? Her 'drunk diet'! She told *Sirius FM*: "I like to drink whiskey and stuff while I am working ... the drunk diet."

The singer says she is now dieting "because I gained, like, 25 pounds." The Grammy winner isn't ashamed of it. In fact, she's happy.

No one likes to criticize someone who has put on weight. We should feel happy with our oversized bodies but something in the back of my health-conscious mind is telling me that it's not right. Obesity is medically and emotionally challenging.

A new study shows that poor self-perception about weight actually contributes to obesity. If our society manages to come to terms with obesity and override our current body-size expectations, does this mean we can eat as much as we want of whatever we want without any social pressure to do otherwise?

What if the constant diets and the preconceived idea that a slim body is what keeps us from being sick or dying? Negative thinking dictates a self-fulfilling prophecy.

We need to understand that our opinions about fat have as much to do with health as it does with aesthetics – or at least that it should be. Encouraging people to love their bodies is

Top 5 tips for a healthier, slimmer Thanksgiving

- (5) **Go Easy on Alcohol.** Drink sparkling water or water between alcoholic drinks
- (4) **Start your meal with lowest-calorie foods.** By the time you get to the other foods, you won't be so hungry.
- (3) **Drink water** before or between your meal.
- (2) **Create a calorie deficit** by exercising to burn off extra calories.
- (1) **Be mindful when eating.** Eat slowly, put your fork down between bites, and taste each mouthful.

great. We need to accept the fact that we can have flaws, but we should also know that we can also act against them, just as Lady Gaga is doing.

Bench Gym: A secure mooring as I ease into retirement

I have been a member for about a year and a half, but knew Jon, his team and Bench Gym for several years before that. Joining Bench Gym at last was part of my plan for retirement, and I did so. It was a great decision that has paid off in both expected and unexpected ways.

About the expected benefits, I can only echo the remarks of previous contributors. The facility, the training methods, the variety of exercises and the professional capacity of trainers – both in giving individual sessions and in mapping out tailored courses of training – are all topnotch.

And, then there is the strong hand in the velvet glove (!), with the trainers so friendly, kind and encouraging, yet also making sure we, the trainees, make our maximum effort to achieve our fitness goals. I look forward to every training here and to spreading the word where possible about the excellence of Bench Gym, Jon and his team.

Now, as to the unexpected benefits: I worked for 33 years in a very demanding environment in the Executive Office of the President. I long planned my retirement and entered it with a clear sense of what I wanted to do. Sometimes in life, though, things don't go as expected. I began then at Bench Gym just as one expected life change – retirement – was multiplying into several more unexpected and challenging life changes. At times, in this unsettled period, Bench Gym and training here felt like one of my few secure moorings in a period of stormy seas.

Jon and the whole team here have been just wonderful in their support and understanding. Bench Gym didn't just keep me from falling apart physically, as sometimes happens in such situations, they also greatly aided me, to an extent they may not realize, in navigating successfully through rough waters.

This is a wonderful place, with a great staff, offering first class training. Joining Bench Gym was certainly one of my best "retirement moves," and I am very grateful to Jon and his team. — David Walters



David Walters