



PIPING HOT: NAKED PIZZA PARTY!

THERE IS A PICTURE OF ME when I'm 13, lined up in a gaggle of swimsuit-clad girls, complete with over-size teeth and nascent breasts. For some sadistic reason, the eighth grade ended with a class-wide beach trip to the New England coast. At first glance, you'd notice the cute Persian girl in a teeny flowery bikini and the tall dirty-blonde in the white tankini. And then you'd notice me. I'm the one swaddled in enough fabric to safely parade through downtown Riyadh.

The only one wearing a one-piece, I have one towel draped over my shoulders and a second wrapped around my waist, its edges trailing in the sand. Even at that age, having kissed one boy, read zero books by Virginia Woolf, and traveled only as far as Massachusetts, I was positive that my thick thighs and bulbous arms were best admired behind fabric. Lots of it.

At 33 years old, with those same inflated thighs and hockish arms, I've realized that I was kinda wrong. Truth: The fewer clothes I'm wear-

ing, the better I look. If anything, I actually look my best stark-ass naked.

My thighs touch, or rather press with force against each other; in yoga pants, I feel like I have a mermaid tail. My calves aren't exactly slender, so skinny jeans make me feel anything but. (See also: capris, culottes, midi skirts.) My arm-to-chest flab ratio makes a sleeveless top look preposterous. Ditto skimpy tanks and anything strapless. Let's be clear: I'm not obese, and I don't suffer from an unfortunate health issue. Clothes just don't really flatter me.

I was always quietly mindful of my body's inadequacies, but my career put the issue on blast. In my 20s, I worked for the kind of women's publication where most everyone is slim and stylish. I did my best to play along. I bought skinny jeans that I could never pull up all the way (the crotch saddled a good three inches lower than it should have). I teetered

“Why I Look Better Naked”

I feel great about my body. It's clothes that get in the way.

BY HANNAH MORRILL

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in heels that made me feel a bit like a bear on a unicycle. When my Twiggy cubemates complained about the arctic AC during summertime, I kept silent. My cardigan wouldn't be coming off, even if we were in the Sahara.

Everything changed when I started going to SoulCycle—but not exactly physically. In the *Lord of the Flies* atmosphere of the post-class locker room—a sea of sweat, thongs, and cellulite—I started to notice some things. I did a double take at a lean Kendall Jenner-type with a lumpy, paunchy tummy. The Kate Moss look-

as I could manage until all my locker roommates slipped back into their clothes and looked better than me again. It wasn't schadenfreude. It was reassuring. They were beautiful, fit, and taking care of their bodies and their minds. Right or wrong, it made me feel better to know that even the women who kill it in crop tops are human beings with imperfections.

And here's the thing: That's something men already know. The female form, in all its varied renditions, is pretty appealing to heterosexual men. I've yet to hear about a guy kicking a girl out of bed because she didn't have a thigh gap or "her knees were weird." And no man has ever complained about my body, at least not to my face. My deep desire for emotional connection and fetishistic love of hot sauce? Yes. But not my body.

It seems like the fashion industry is warming up to more realistic proportions too. Curvaceous model Ashley Graham was in the pages of this magazine in both April and August, looking hot AF in lingerie. And Barbie, with her new, more full-figured physique, can log on to Mattel.com and purchase a sleeveless mesh slip dress that fits her like a glove.

While I'm excited about all this new inclusivity, I'm actually increasingly at peace with my body...and my relationship with clothes. Whether I'm at breakfast with female colleagues or at a baby shower with my aunts, I'm never the thinnest one.

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alike from bike five had knees that bumped in the middle and ankles that looked like they could snap. The superathlete with the down-to-there ponytail had an ass that looked like a bubbling pancake. And the instructor? Sans sports bra, her perky breasts were intricately webbed with stretch marks. I'd stare as uncreepily

I'm not trying to slay in some bodycon dress. I'm happily middle-of-the-road in this area. It's at home where I excel, where I walk around naked, liberally and often, where I'll admire my flat stomach and shapely hips, and where, when it comes to the bedroom, I always make sure the lights stay on. ■