

# The Socially Constructed Body: Insights from Feminist Theory

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Main argument: “Members of a society construct their bodies in ways that comply with their gender status and accepted notions of masculinity and femininity. That is, they try to shape and use their bodies to conform to their culture’s or racial ethnic group’s expectations of how a woman’s body, a man’s body, a girl’s body, or a boy’s body should look.” (p. 261)

One telling men from women: “One of the most crucial aspects of the social construction of gendered bodies is that women and men should be easy to tell apart.” (p. 265)

Four topics of article:

Gender and sports

Risk behavior

Weight and eating disorders

What is an able body?

Themes of feminist research on the body:

1. There are body differences between men and women but most of the uses of these differences are ideological.
2. Most of the naming, depicting, and promoting of the images of women are done by powerful, privileged men.
3. Resisting cultural pressures to adorn, shape, and judge bodies according to conventional standards, especially in relation to gender, is a subversive act.