

Defining beauty...



The votes for our Next Fitness Star are now officially in! Check out our October issue for the big reveal.

Earlier this summer, a freelance journalist from Kansas City named Esther Honig sent a photo of herself out to Photoshop gurus in more than 25 countries around the world. In the photo, she looked as natural as possible, with bare shoulders, her hair tied back, and with no visible makeup. She had one simple request: to digitally alter the image to reflect that country's view of beauty. The results were amazing—aside from the clear cultural influences (such as a hijab being added by those in Muslim countries), the differences in what made her “beautiful” in their eyes blew me away. Everything from the size of Esther's eyebrows to the colour of her hair or eyes was transformed in some places—and that's before even counting the major differences in makeup. Which just goes to show, there truly is no such thing as a global beauty standard. Even within a single country, each person's idea of what makes one beautiful can be so vastly different that it's almost essential in this day and age to never let someone else's perception of beauty define your own.

In a region where expatriates form such a large part of the population, our varying ideals can spell out a fair amount of debate when it comes to our definition of beauty, but I think we can all agree on one thing: being fit and healthy is always a good thing, and your choice in lifestyle

habits can make a noticeable difference to everything from your skin to your hair. Which is why we like to approach our beauty regime from an inside-out perspective—sure, we love a great lipstick as much as the next girl, but understanding how certain products work and how best to take care of what our genetics have blessed us with is key to looking good for life.

Equally as important is being beautiful on the inside—and I don't just mean in terms of what you eat. I firmly believe that there's a certain psychology to attraction, and that the more you get to know—and like—a person's character, the more beautiful they become in your eyes. Experts agree: various studies have found that personality can indeed influence our perceptions of physical attractiveness, with people bearing positive traits rated as more attractive. It goes without saying that the reverse is also true. Maybe that's why a great, genuine smile is so often said to be the best accessory a person can possess. So here's to a beautiful, smile-filled September. We hope you enjoy the issue—see you next month!

Yihwa

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TIME FOR A CHANGE

IF YOU HAVE...

1 MINUTE

Make a phone call to your gyno and book yourself in to be tested for PCOS. Diagnosis could save you from a host of other serious health issues. “Balancing Act,” p.50

5 MINUTES

Quit being such a flake and RSVP—honestly—to your next social gathering or a catch-up with friends. Trust us, you *will* be glad you did later! “I'd love to see you, but...” p.80

10 MINUTES

Toast some whole-grain frozen waffles, top with fruit, nuts and yoghurt, and eat it for breakfast—no excuses! It could help you lose weight and will keep you energised all day. “Rise and Dine,” p.61

15 MINUTES

Sit down and think about what exactly you'd like to achieve through your training programme, then map out a plan for hitting your goal with this unique guide. “Your Formula For Full Body Fitness,” p.41

30 MINUTES

Skip the blowdry and air-dry your hair; while it dries, chow down on Omega 3s. Both keep your looks young. “Thintervention,” p.14, Beauty Bonus

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