# Concerns rise over the SkinnyTok trend promoting dangerous weight loss practices



A concerning phenomenon known as “SkinnyTok” has emerged on social media platforms, amassing millions of views on TikTok, Instagram, Reddit, and YouTube. This trend promotes extreme weight loss practices, restrictive eating behaviours, and a troubling notion of “discipline” as essential pathways to perceived happiness or thinness. Experts and individuals who have battled disorders related to eating caution that this trend is leading vulnerable users into perilous situations.

Phaith Montoya, a body-positive influencer and eating disorder survivor, expressed worry over the platform's messaging, stating, "I know that if I had seen that [advice] when I was younger, I would have thought I needed it, too," while speaking to TODAY.com.

Despite TikTok's apparent attempts to curb this trend by displaying messages like “You are more than your weight” and linking to resources for eating disorders, the platform inundates users with videos that advocate dangerous advice. Suggestions include skipping meals, consuming excessive coffee to suppress hunger, and celebrating calorie deficits. Some of the posted slogans resemble veiled encouragements towards self-harm, such as “If your stomach is growling, pretend it’s applauding you” and “You don’t need a treat. You’re not a dog.”

Medical professionals, including Dr. Asim Cheema, flagged the trend for its potential health risks, highlighting that it glorifies starvation and trivialises nourishment. Stephen Buchwald from Manhattan Mental Health remarked that SkinnyTok represents a rebranding of early 2000s “pro-ana” (pro-anorexia) communities but presents these harmful ideals under a more contemporary guise. He noted, “This mindset dismisses the complex realities of genetics, mental health and socioeconomic factors, promoting shame over support. It’s a toxic narrative disguised as empowerment.”

TikTok's guidelines state the platform prohibits content that displays or promotes disordered eating and hazardous weight loss strategies. Users are permitted to filter out triggering hashtags; however, content encouraging “potentially harmful weight management” may still remain accessible to audiences, albeit restricted to individuals aged 18 and over and excluded from appearing on the For You page.

Experts highlight the detrimental effects this culture may have, especially among adolescents. Buchwald commented, “Seeing curated, unrealistic images of thinness on a daily basis can make people feel like they’re never ‘good enough,’ creating a cycle of self-criticism and low self-worth, which can escalate into anxiety and depression.” He pointed out that the neurologically driven need for approval and belonging makes teenagers particularly susceptible to trends like SkinnyTok.

Despite efforts to address fatphobia and diet culture, SkinnyTok demonstrates that the idealisation of thinness remains prevalent. Author Martha Laham noted in an interview with TODAY, “SkinnyTok is just another version of something we’ve seen in the past... the thin ideal has always been there.”

Andrea Mathis, a dietitian and blogger, warned that although some SkinnyTok creators may have benign intentions, they may inadvertently disseminate nutrition advice that can lead to unhealthy habits. “Maybe it starts one way, but the more you do it with that mindset, it can turn into obsession,” she stated.

Nutrition expert Maria AbiHanna further asserted, “People blame willpower when they can’t stick with a diet. The truth is your body is built to resist rapid fat loss.” This concern aligns with sentiments expressed by Edwards-Gayfield, who remarked that the transition into disordered eating patterns is a concerning progression.

The emergence of SkinnyTok reflects ongoing struggles with body image and societal expectations regarding weight, signalling a complex dynamic that continues to evolve within social media landscapes.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.vice.com/en/article/the-skinnytok-social-media-trend-explained/> - Corroborates the SkinnyTok trend's promotion of unhealthy weight loss practices and restrictive eating behaviors, despite TikTok's attempts to offer support resources. It highlights how such trends can lead to serious health issues like disordered eating patterns.
* <https://www.misbar.com/en/qna/2025/04/14/what-%E2%80%9Cskinnytok%E2%80%9D-trend-tiktok> - Provides an overview of the SkinnyTok trend, which emphasizes extreme thinness and restricted eating habits, and references sources from major news outlets regarding its implications.
* <https://munsifdaily.com/the-dark-side-of-skinny-tok-why-this-viral/> - Explores the dark side of SkinnyTok, revealing how it promotes unhealthy habits disguised as wellness and aesthetic lifestyles, leading to serious health risks like starvation and nutritional deficiencies.
* <https://aldianews.com/en/wellness/specialties/alert-skinnytok-under> - Highlights the dangers of SkinnyTok, including its harmful impact on mental health by promoting disordered eating behaviors and reinforcing harmful body image stereotypes among young audiences.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RszseX19Yjs> - Discusses the broader context of TikTok trends that influence body image perceptions, including the removal of a 'chubby filter' and the concerns about promoting unhealthy weight loss goals through social media.