

## Activity: What is Perfection?

**Theme: Health and Wellbeing**

**Elements of dance: body**

What is perfection? Dancers strive for it - perfection of body fitness and dance technique. The image of a perfect body is an elusive one for many dancers and to a large degree is reinforced by cultural expectations.

In various cultures, the concept of 'beauty and perfection' varies. For example, on the pacific island of Nauru and in many parts of Africa, obesity is valued and seen as a statement of well-being; in parts of Africa the placement of rings on female children to elongate the neck is a mark of wealth and heredity; the historical binding of feet in China and Japan was to make women appear small and delicate; body and face piercings in Africa and Western cultures; the placement of bottom lip plates worn by women in the presence of men in Africa; body and face tattoos, scarification of the flesh in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific Islander cultures are used as symbols of wealth, power, prosperity, beauty and desirability. We should also consider contemporary body manipulations by plastic surgery in western countries in order to look younger or more desirably perfect.

1. As a class, view the clip, *Perfect*, and have students discuss and examine dominant expectations, ideals and characteristics of beauty within their own culture.
2. Use magazine images of models and celebrities to create a montage of their idea of "perfection", focusing on both male and female bodies. Have students include some fashion styles and accessories that contribute to the overall image.
3. As a class, share these images and evaluate the similarities and differences. Discuss why there are variations, and if not, why not?
4. As a class, discuss how these images or expectations of "perfection" are conveyed to the public. Discuss the dilemma of how we can ignore or change such strong cultural messages.

5. Have students plan and write a letter to the editor of the local paper outlining their 'ideals of beauty and perfection' offering arguments/opinions/suggestions why society should ignore the artificial images seen in advertising.
6. Ask students to complete the **Student Activity Sheet E6.7: The Perfect Person** to document their ideas on the qualities of a perfect person.

### Download

- Student Activity Sheet E6.7: The Perfect Person

### Useful resources

- [Ausdance, Factsheet 16, Caring for the dancer's body](#)
- [Reach Out – Body Image](#)
- [South Australian Government, Young Adult Health, Body Image - Let's Get Real](#)
- [The ideal of female beauty in two different cultures: Socio-Cultural Analysis of Belgian and Malaysian Print Advertisements by Anne De Cort](#)
- [Ford, Paul, \(2009\) Beauty in Different Cultures](#)
- Wolf, N, *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*, 1991, Vintage Books



NAME: .....

Student Activity Sheet: E6.7  
Activity: What is  
Perfection?

Episode 6: Perfection  
Clip: Perfect

## The Perfect Person

What do you consider are the top 5, most important qualities in a person?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

How can you tell if a person is a good person or a bad person?


Is there such a thing as the perfect person? Why or why not?
