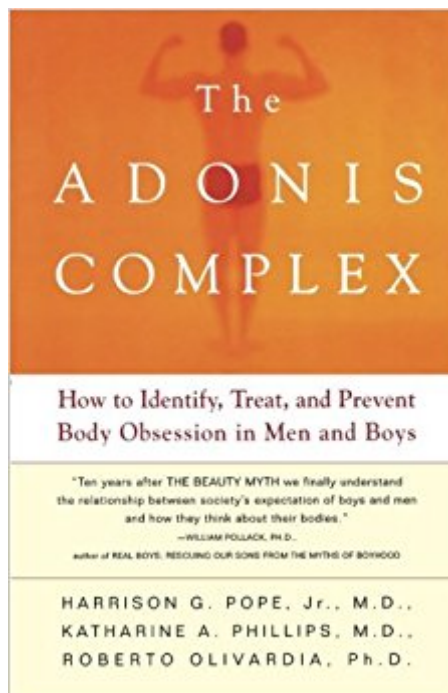




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# The Adonis Complex: How To Identify, Treat And Prevent Body Obsession In Men And Boys



## Synopsis

**A Health Crisis That Strikes Men Of All Ages** Trying everything from compulsive weight lifting to steroids, more and more boys and men are taking the quest for physical perfection beyond the bounds of normal behavior. The Adonis Complex -- the groundbreaking book that first gave a name to this phenomenon and sparked nationwide interest in the subject -- identifies for the first time the symptoms and warning signs of this dangerous problem, including: An obsession with exercise, sometimes to the exclusion of all other activities Binge eating, anorexia nervosa, and bulimia The abuse of steroids, muscle-building supplements, and diet aids But perhaps more important, it offers readers an explanation of the underlying causes of the Adonis complex, together with hands-on advice for those who have experienced body obsessions themselves, or who see these problems in a boy or man they love.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The Adonis Complex brilliantly demonstrates that body obsession is an equal-opportunity menace and that men who seek physical perfection are in an insidious double bind. The "male body image industry" (think Calvin Klein underwear ads) creates impossible ideals of beauty and body, yet men--unlike women--are prohibited from discussing how they think and feel about their bodies. The image industry is displayed in fascinating detail--for example, photos of the new buff makeovers on GI Joe and Star Wars action figures. The book offers stunning evidence of men's silent suffering to achieve Adonis-like beauty: secret dietary rituals, hair transplants, penis enlargement, cosmetic

surgery, and abuse of steroids, ephedrine, fat burners, and diuretics. Two clinical disorders, "body dysmorphia" and "bigorexia," a chilling inverse of anorexia, in which men continue to think they are tiny even when they are alarmingly muscled, are also introduced. The authors' prescriptions are as well targeted as their descriptions. The final chapters offer compelling advice in vivid case studies, self-tests, and one of the author's own stories of recovering from an eating disorder. Parents of growing boys and men trapped in the mirror will find a clear, cognitive behavioral program that allows them to set more realistic goals for their bodies and minds. --Barbara Mackoff

The impossible ideal of the Body Beautiful induces feelings of inadequacy not only among women and girls, claim the authors of this book, but, increasingly, among men and boys. Drawing upon their own clinical work, new studies and cultural observations, the authors--Pope and Olivardia teach at Harvard medical school, and Phillips at Brown University--make a compelling argument that growing numbers of males are exhibiting compulsive behaviors, chronic depressions and eating disorders, and are engaging in the use of dangerous steroids and "supplements." Although they ignore the nearly century-old popularity of Charles Atlas-like muscle-building "courses," the authors use a broad range of examples--including comparisons of the physiques of bodybuilders in the 1960s and the 1990s, a look at the evolution of the G.I. Joe doll's bulk and an examination of the nearly unobtainable body ideal that prevails among Chippendale dancers and Calvin Klein models--to make the convincing case that many men resort to dire actions to assuage their feelings of inadequacy. They bolster their claim with numerous interviews with men and a survey of the existing medical and psychological literature, and include tests by which readers can ascertain if they have an eating disorder or suffer from Body Dysmorphic Disorder. While some readers might take exception to the authors' assertion about the prevalence of the "Adonis complex," their book offers a provocative look at what has been, until now, a largely unexplored subject. Agent, Todd Schuster. (June) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is an effective, data-driven manual to understand muscular body dysmorphia (bigorexia) in men. The book also considers male BDD more broadly to cover other features of the body, particularly hair loss and penis size. I think this is a really useful book. I read it as someone who has lifted weights for a few years and was starting to feel the malaise of more difficult gains. This book is a good window into the reasons that men would feel they need steroids, and offers a really sympathetic portrait of the male mind in the 21st century. My complaint is that, as others have

noticed, the book's language is sensationalist. Given a data set, the authors will lean on the most paranoid interpretation of the data to make their point. That said, the sensationalism is not consistent. It seems only to pop up where the authors are hoping to emphasize the muscular dysmorphia is a real problem and that individuals (whether patients or loved ones) should take it seriously. In contrast, their chapter on gay men was very anti-sensationalist. It's a mixed bag on this front, and the sensationalism doesn't really distract from the overall credibility of the work. -Ryan Mease

This book was an eye opener and a powerful read. I am a personal trainer and I constantly see many of the exact behaviors mentioned in the book, regarding muscle dysmorphia, which is highly prevalent at most corporate fitness centers. I can appreciate that Dr's Pope, Phillips, and Olivardia address the most extreme cases, while maintaining that the examples are meant to be extreme, but that lesser forms of the same conditions exist. They also examined that the overwhelming majority of practicing doctors know very little about male body image disorders, and, among the key sub-issues, steroid use. It was once mentioned that a specific experienced steroid user knew more about anabolic steroids than nearly all doctors, which is something I see on a regular basis. This book was a fantastic read and addresses a pertinent, albeit rarely discussed, problem among men.

I met Dr Pope through a friend of mine a few years ago. My friend introduced me to him because Dr Pope was looking for weightlifters to study. It wasn't until I had seen Dr Pope featured as an expert on a couple of different health programs, did I look into his book. The book is quite insightful on how we, as men, view ourselves, which differs on how the world sees us. BTW, if you ever mean Dr. Pope, the first thing you notice is that this 60+ year old man of medicine is quite FIT and energetic. Very intelligent and attentive to detail.

"The Adonis Complex" touches on a subject I've been interested in since childhood: the impact specific body types have on our psyche as well as the opposite sex. The salient point of the book is that male and females view things totally differently in defining attractiveness. According to the study, it isn't always what we think is the ideal, but what we think others believe to be the ideal. From a male perspective, when we see a woman ogling a muscular male, we believe that to be her ideal type. However, in her mind, she may prefer less muscle and more brains. Men, as visual creatures, view her ogling as her standard not indicative of mere appreciation of a certain body type. Consequently, we strive for the kind of body we "think" women want. In other words, what people

say and do, might be different than how they really feel--Cognitive Dissonance."The Adonis Complex" is a good book in explaining how a media-centric society has made males equally insecure and obsessive over their physical appearance as has been the case traditionally for women. The book does a great job of breaking down the components of being physically "Big," but does not make a compelling case on how to overcome media influence. The typical bromides of "Loving yourself for who you are...and looking for acceptance within" are always the high road, but does very little in truly making a person feel complete within a social structure that values physicality. I recommend the book as a means of dissecting this psychosis for male victims and an aid for women who may come in contact with such males.

Edward Brown  
Core Edge Image & Charisma Institute

great book -- definitely reveals a lot about body image in men that i'd never considered before.

This is a fantastic reading that captures a hidden problem within the male gender that receives more attention with females instead. Having body issues has always been labeled as a female issue or a problem only for gay men. This book shows reasons as to what helped to form this idea in the minds of many men and how the idea is perpetuated in magazines and other forms of media.

Invaluable for understanding BDD! A must have for researchers and therapists.

This is on the cutting edge of research in the field of male body image and the influence of steroids on current society. There are important new measures for body image dissatisfaction. This is a necessary book for anyone who has had a concern for their own well-being or the well-being of society.

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