

Q "Help me be more confident!"

Wish you were more confident, assertive or sure of yourself? You're not the only one: 92% of us say we lack self-confidence in certain situations. To the rescue: Clinical psychologist Daniela Schreier, confidence expert Judith Briles and psychotherapist Mary Jo Rapini reveal the tricks and techniques that'll have you striding into any situation feeling great about yourself!

1 Mental tricks that boost confidence!

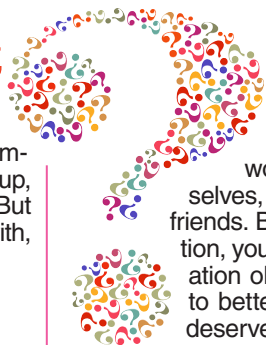
Women spend too much time tearing themselves down instead of pumping themselves up, says psychologist Daniela Schreier, Ph.D. But self-confidence isn't something you're born with, it's *acquired*, so you *can* get more of it!

● Flip your own script—with a rubber band!

A startling study finds that the average woman has 36 negative thoughts about herself a day—that's one every 26 minutes! Among them: "I can't wear that; I'm not thin enough," and "She's a better mom than I am." The surefire way to stop thoughts like this? "Be aware of them," says Schreier, by keeping a rubber band on your wrist and, each time you find yourself thinking you're not good enough, gently snapping the band. This snap is like a "reset button," she explains, and serves as a wake-up call that restarts your thinking process. Then, each time you snap, remind yourself of one thing you *are* good at. Over a few weeks, you'll start to have fewer and fewer negative thoughts!

● Try the psychological trick that makes confidence soar!

Need a shot of self-confidence? Sit up straight, shoulders back, and jot down three positive things about yourself. Like magic, you'll absorb and believe all three! That's the surprising new finding from Ohio State University researchers, who discovered that good posture makes you more likely to have confidence in your own thoughts. Scientists aren't sure why, but speculate that since the mind and body are intricately connected, a confident, powerful posture may cause changes in the brain.



● Get an instant self-esteem boost with one question!

"Would I say this or do this to my best friend?" Most women are very hard on ourselves, but we're much nicer to our friends. By asking yourself this question, you're forced to look at the situation objectively, which allows you to better judge whether you really deserve that self-criticism.

● Expect success!

Surveys show many women automatically expect rejection when they're put in a new situation, says Schreier. (Like: "She's such an interesting person; she won't want to be friends with me.") Instead, tell yourself ahead of time that you will be met with acceptance, not rejection. "This is a 'fake-it-'til-you-make-it approach' that actually works," she says.

2 Lifestyle secrets of confident women!

What they do naturally, you can learn to do, say confidence expert Judith Briles and psychotherapist Mary Jo Rapini.



● Go out with the girls!

In a recent survey, 85% of women said that having a strong network of female friends gave them more self-confidence than knowing that they looked attractive. Why? The more you



Did you know?
What do men consistently rate as their number-one turn-on in a woman? Self-confidence!

surround yourself with people who love you for who are, the less you worry about variables like your looks or your income!

● Take the power out of self-criticism!

Try out Rapini's "nevertheless" technique for an instant self-image boost! When you realize you're criticizing something about yourself, tack on a compliment: "I wish my stomach were flatter; nevertheless, I have a nice bustline." "The positive will counteract the negative and make you more confident," she explains.

● Move just a little!

A new study proves that just engaging in some form of exercise—even walking your dog—boosts self-confidence! Why? Exercise releases endorphins and makes us feel like we're improving ourselves, so it builds confidence.



—Whitney Joiner

Our expert panel



Daniela Schreier, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of psychology at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology and a licensed clinical psychologist. She is also the author of *The Colors of the Rainbow: About Life and the Beauty of Living*.



Judith Briles, D.B.A., is a workplace coach and the author of *The Confidence Factor* and *Stop Stabbing Yourself in the Back*. She has been a guest on CNN, *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and *Good Morning America*.



Mary Jo Rapini, L.P.C., is a Houston psychotherapist specializing in family therapy. She has appeared on *Today*, the *CBS Evening News* and *TLC's Big Medicine*.