

# Tone it down or tune it out?

## Research findings from study investigating group exercise and body image in older adults.

- Participants were recruited for a study examining “group exercise and mood in older adults”.
- Participation involved completing two sessions at the Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-being.
- Session one: participants completed assessments of body image and height and weight.
- Session two: participants were randomly assigned to complete an exercise class in which the cues used by the instructor focused on either appearance, or functional and health benefits of exercise.
- Participants completed measures of body image before and after completing the exercise class to examine differences between the two groups.

Appearance-focused



Burn calories!

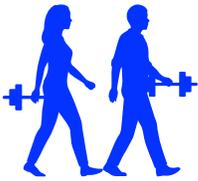
Get strong!

Functionality-focused

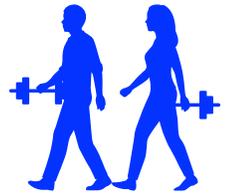


Research Question:

Does the focus of the cues (appearance versus functionality) used by the instructor make a difference on body image and enjoyment outcomes during a single group exercise class?



- 132 men and women signed up for, and completed session one
- 109 participants returned for session two
- After data entry and screening, data were analyzed for 107 participants
- Final sample of 26 men and 81 women aged 59-91



Completing a single group exercise class may improve body image.

- Based on trends, group exercise may improve body image in men and women aged 59-91, as all body image scores improved from baseline following the exercise class, regardless of the exercise class they completed.



What the instructor says during the class may influence how people feel about their bodies.

- Appearance-focused cues led participants to report significantly smaller increases in body satisfaction compared those who completed the functionality-focused class.

Aging may lead to positive outcomes during an exercise class.

- In comparison to similar studies conducted in samples of university women, most measures of body image and enjoyment in the present study were not affected by the cues used by the instructor.
- Age may be a protective factor against negative body image experiences during an exercise class and appearance-focused commentary.

The research team would like to extend a sincere thank-you to all members of the Brock-Niagara Centre for Health and Well-being for their ongoing encouragement and support throughout this research project, and would also like to acknowledge the Centre for Lifespan Development Research, and all members of the Senior Advisory Council for their help in the recruitment process for the present study. This study received clearance from Brock University's Research Ethics Board (Reb 18-290). Contact Sarah Galway [sg13vl@brocku.ca](mailto:sg13vl@brocku.ca) with any questions.