

# Women are naturally more fit than men

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Women can process oxygen more quickly than men when they start to exercise, according to a new study from the University of Waterloo.

Quick oxygen uptake places less strain on the body's cells and is considered an important measure of [aerobic fitness](#).

"The findings are contrary to the popular assumption that men's bodies are more naturally athletic," said Thomas Beltrame, lead author on the study.

The study compared oxygen uptake and muscle oxygen extraction between 18 young men and women of similar age and weight during [treadmill exercise](#). Women consistently outperformed men with around 30 per cent faster oxygen handling throughout the body.

"We found that women's muscles extract oxygen from the blood faster, which, scientifically speaking, indicates a superior aerobic system," said Richard Hughson, a professor in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, and Schlegel Research Chair in Vascular Aging and Brain Health at Waterloo.

By processing oxygen faster, women are less likely to accumulate molecules linked with muscle fatigue, effort perception and poor athletic performance.

"While we don't know why [women](#) have faster [oxygen uptake](#), this study shakes up conventional wisdom," said Beltrame. "It could change the way we approach assessment and athletic training down the road."

The study is published in *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*.

Provided by University of Waterloo

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