

Mindfulness could promote positive body image

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Making people more aware of their own internal body signals, such as heartbeat or breathing rate, could promote positive body image, according to new research published in the journal *Body Image*.

Researchers from Anglia Ruskin University recruited a sample of 646 adults and found that there were statistically significant relationships between people's interoceptive awareness—the extent to which people are aware of internal signals given out by the body such as heartbeat or feelings of discomfort or hunger—and [body image](#).

While previous studies on the subject have tended to recruit small groups of young women, this study included both men and women, aged between 18 and 76.

The study found that people who can sustain attention towards their internal body signals tended to report higher levels of positive body image. It was also found that people who trust their internal body signals are more likely to hold a positive view of their own body, and be less preoccupied with being overweight.

Lead author Jenny Todd said: "Unfortunately, experiences of negative body image are extremely common, to the extent that some academics consider this a 'normal' experience for women in Western society.

"Our research finds associations between the awareness of internal body signals and measures of body image. This could have implications for promoting positive body image, for example modifying interoceptive awareness through mindfulness-based practices.

"However the research, which was conducted with exclusively British participants, also demonstrates that the relationship between interoceptive [awareness](#) and [body](#) image is complex and requires further investigation."

More information: Jennifer Todd et al, Multiple dimensions of interoceptive awareness are associated with facets of body image in British adults, *Body Image* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.02.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2019.02.003)

Provided by Anglia Ruskin University

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