

Editing selfies is counter productive: study

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Girls and young women shouldn't spend a lot of time editing selfies for social media because it negatively influences their thoughts about their looks, according to a new Flinders University publication.

In a study published in *Body Image*, Flinders University psychology

researchers asked 130 [women](#) aged 18 to 30 to view Instagram snaps of thin and average sized women, before analysing their selfie habits.

They found that the longer the women took to edit and post selfies, the worse their mood and [dissatisfaction](#) about their facial appearance.

The women in the study spent about 4½ minutes editing up to five selfies, to smooth and change skin tone, remove dark eye circles, shape their faces and remove flaws.

Flinders University Professor Marika Tiggemann says investing time and effort into taking, selecting, and editing selfies are not harmless activities because they have detrimental effects on women motivated to present the best possible version of themselves.

"We found an increase in dissatisfaction following the selfie task was a based on the extent of editing being undertaken. This demonstrates that the editing of selfies is not a benign process but has [negative consequences](#), even though participants reported being much happier with their edited selfie than their original photo."

"Many women and girls spend considerable time and effort in taking and selecting their selfies, for example, finding the best lighting and most flattering angle, which can then be further enhanced by filters or digital editing to maximise their appearance and appeal."

Prof Tiggemann says teenagers and [young women](#) should also be dissuaded from using software to edit selfies.

"Women appear to be motivated by the wish to present the best possible version of themselves and are correspondingly substantially happier with their edited selfie than the original photo. Yet, at the same time, these activities have detrimental effects in terms of poorer mood and facial

dissatisfaction."

The results also indicate extensive [selfie](#) editing leads to feeling disingenuous online.

"These suggestions are respectively consistent with the two unique predictors of increased facial dissatisfaction, such as thinking about how others will judge you, and thinking about making yourself look better than you do in real life," says Professor Tiggemann.

"Our findings illustrate the difficulties women encounter in negotiating the contemporary [social media](#) world."

'Uploading your best self: Selfie editing and body dissatisfaction' (2020) by M Tiggemann, I Anderberg and Z Brown has been published in *Body Image*.

More information: Marika Tiggemann et al, Uploading your best self: Selfie editing and body dissatisfaction, *Body Image* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.03.002](#)

Provided by Flinders University

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