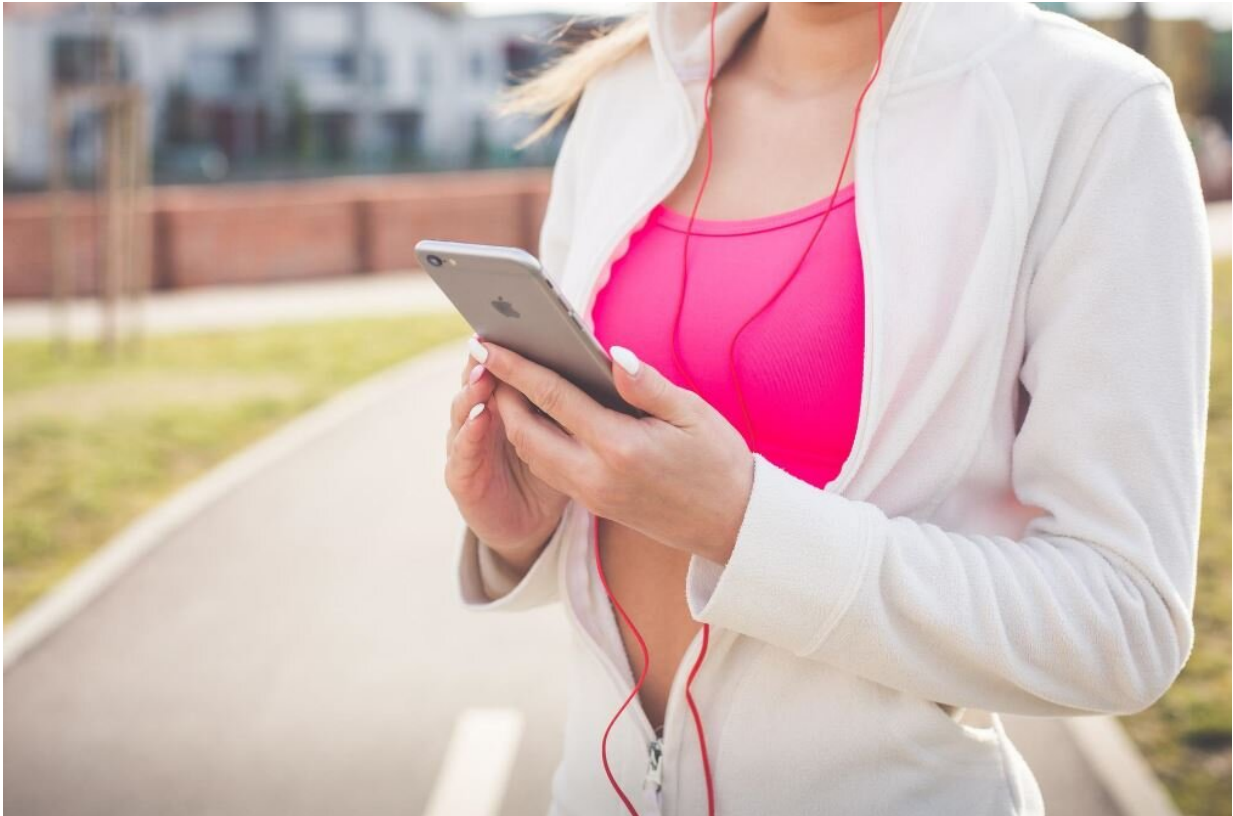


Instagram pressure rising

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Credit: Pixabay

Flinders University body image experts are urging all Instagram users to apply a more conscious 'filter' to monitor their health and fitness posts.

The researchers say people who follow in the footsteps of high-profile social media influencers and upload regular #fitspo and #cleaneating

Instagram posts may be placing increased pressure on girls and women, as the posts may exacerbate [bad feelings](#) about themselves and their bodies.

A new study in *Body Image* journal found that people posting regular 'fitspiration' and healthy eating posts on Instagram have fewer [negative feelings](#) about their bodies than their followers—although they may start altering the [images](#) to keep up appearances.

The experts are calling for all Instagram users to be aware of the risk of being fixated on posting—and for viewers to be more sceptical about whether the images are digitally manipulated.

"Women who post Instagram imagery should be aware of the potential negative impact they may have on others and be encouraged to post diverse images that are more realistic for the [general population](#)," says senior author Associate Professor Ivanka Prichard, from the Flinders University SHAPE Research Centre.

"They should also be encouraged to reflect on their own motivations and whether this makes them feel better or worse about themselves, particularly as previous research has shown that posting is linked to disordered eating and compulsive exercise."

Responses from 269 [young women](#) (aged 18 to 30 years) to an online questionnaire found regular Instagram posts portraying only thin, athletic body images appeared to create more pressures on viewers and followers of these Instagram posts.

Viewers could feel more prone to negative perceptions about themselves and could be more likely to consider unhealthy eating weight control measures, or binge eating, or compulsive exercise.

Lead author and Ph.D. candidate Phoebe Wu, from the Caring Futures Institute at Flinders, says the [general public](#) needs to be aware of the effort required to attain the 'fit body' typically presented in fitspiration images.

"Women may also not be aware of whether the images are digitally manipulated, or the number of photos taken to obtain the idealised image posted on Instagram, that may not reflect the actual body of the influencer in real life," she says.

"We need future research to explore the effectiveness of disclaimers and the amount of effort required to achieve the body shown in these ideal fitness images.

"It's important that we highlight the real-world effort required to achieve images being presented to women on a daily basis, to help create a positive environment around their fitness and perception of online imagery."

Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration updated its advertising code this year, to restrict the way influencers can post about products administered by the regulator, including skincare for acne, medicine and [medical devices](#), supplements, protein powders, vitamins and sunscreens.

"'Eat clean, train mean, get lean': Body image and health behaviours of [women](#) who engage with fitspiration and clean eating imagery on Instagram" (2022) has been published in *Body Image*.

More information: Yu Wu et al, "Eat clean, train mean, get lean": Body image and health behaviours of women who engage with fitspiration and clean eating imagery on Instagram, *Body Image* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.05.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.05.003)

Provided by Flinders University

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