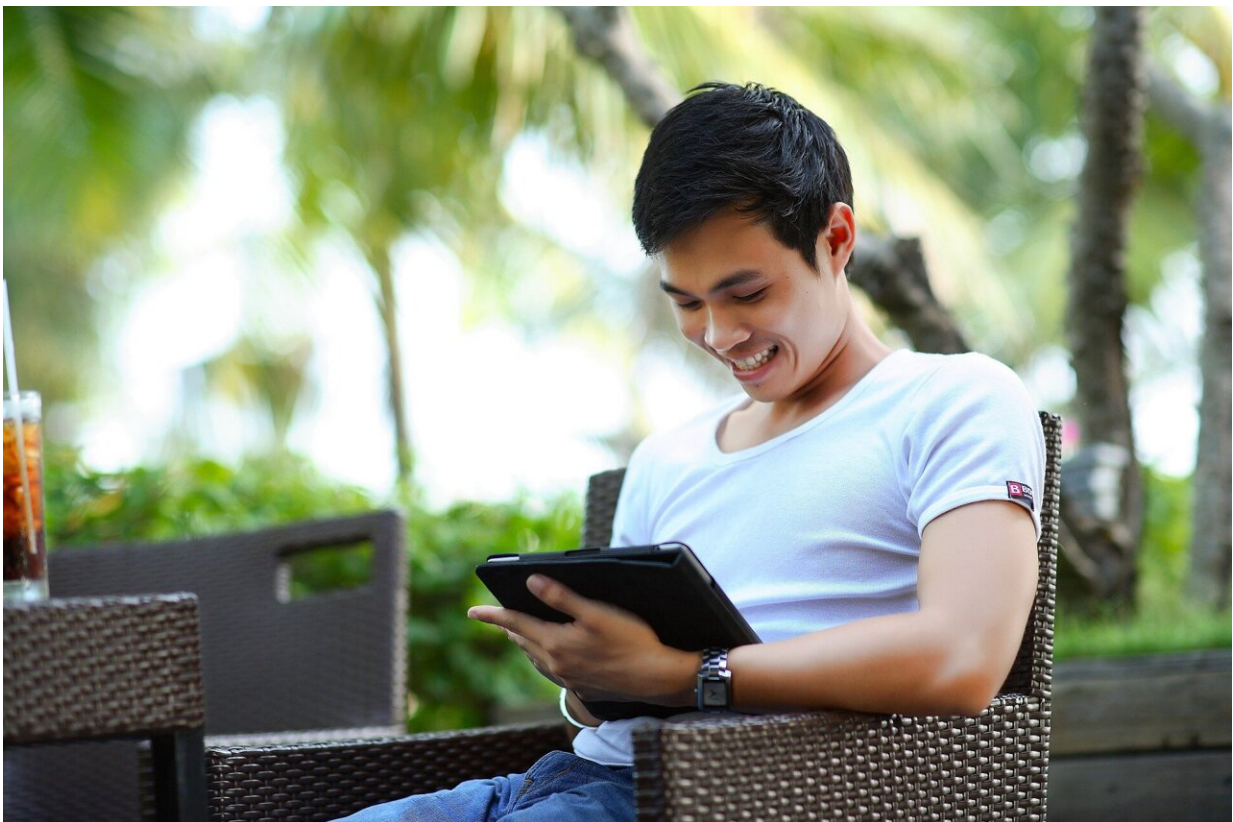


# Body positive images on social media improve how men view their bodies, study reveals

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Exposure to body positive imagery on social media increases body satisfaction and reduces weight concerns in both men and women, a new

study from the University of Surrey reports.

During this unique study, researchers examined body positive and idealized body images appearing on the Instagram app and the impact they have on both men and women. Previous research in this area has explored the impact such images have on women. However, little is known about the effect on men.

This study was published in the journal [\*Acta Psychologica\*](#).

Dr. Fabio Fasoli, Senior Lecturer in Social Psychology at the University of Surrey, said, "Body image concerns are considered a public health problem. The rise of [social media](#), in particular Instagram, means that [young women](#) and men are more exposed to images of the 'perfect body' making them highly critical of themselves.

"The body positivity movement aims to challenge unrealistic body portrayals and promote a diverse and inclusive body representation. The movement has become very popular but often seen as focusing on women only. A significant number of men use Instagram, but little is known about the impact the images they see in their feed have on them."

To investigate, 207 young men and women were recruited and measurements of positive and negative moods, body satisfaction, drive for thinness and drive for masculinity were firstly assessed.

Participants were then exposed to idealized body (thin, fit women wearing a bikini or shirtless men flexing abs), body-positive (women/men of varying [body shape](#), size, and features) or control imagery (landscapes and animals) and initial measurements again repeated.

Researchers found that exposure to idealized body imagery decreased

positive mood and body satisfaction in both men and women. In contrast, body-positive imagery increased [body satisfaction](#) and decreased the drive for thinness in both men and women. Interestingly body-positive [imagery](#) did not decrease men's concerns about their muscularity. Researchers suggest that body positivity is perceived as being about plus-size bodies more than any other body characteristics.

Dr. Fasoli added, "Exposure to body positive images on Instagram can be beneficial for both men and women. Such images are important in reminding people that all our bodies are different and not to compare themselves to unrealistic images posted on social media platforms."

**More information:** Fabio Fasoli et al, Does body positivity work for men as it does for women? The impact of idealized body and body positive imagery on body satisfaction, drive for thinness, and drive for muscularity, *Acta Psychologica* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.actpsy.2024.104126](#)

Provided by University of Surrey

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