



Lifestyle Mind and Body

Could Tweeting About Your Weight Loss Lead to An Eating Disorder?

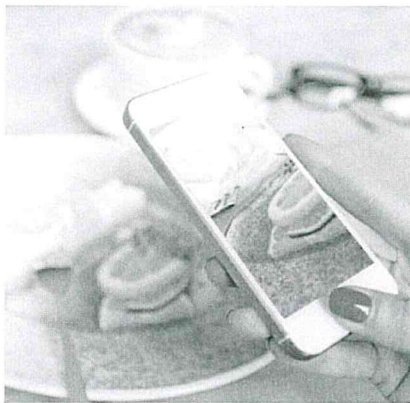
Researchers are looking more closely at the relationship between your social media habits and your eating habits



By Macaela Mackenzie | May 24, 2016

Topics: healthy tech, eating disorders

53 SHARES



When you post a gym selfie or tweet about crushing a new fitness goal, you probably don't think much about the negative effects it could have on your body image—or that of your followers. You're posting to celebrate your bod and the heard earned results of those sweat sessions, right? Good for you!

But according to researchers from Georgia College & State University and Chapman University, it might not be that simple. The relationship between what we share on social media an body image is a bit more complicated. (Make sure you know The Right (and Wrong) Ways to Use Social Media for Weight Loss.)

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The Ultimate Strength Training Guide



In their paper, "Mobile Exercising and Tweeting the Pounds Away," the researchers explored how checking out before and after photos on your fave fitness stars' Twitter account or coming clean about your own weekend pizza binge ([#sorrynotsorry](#)) affects your tendency toward eating disorders and compulsive exercise.

The researchers had 262 participants complete an online questionnaire that included prompts about their exercise and eating habits as well as how often they used traditional blogs and microblogs (like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram). They also asked how often they used these sites on their mobile devices.

What they found was that rather than serving as an inspirational way to share or check progress on our fitness goals, the more we check out content related to nutrition and exercise on our feeds, the more likely we are to develop disordered eating and compulsive behaviors. Yikes. The correlation was particularly strong for mobile use in particular. Considering the insanely Photoshopped or seemingly-impossible-to-achieve fitness content clogging up our newsfeeds, this isn't all that surprising. ([This is Why Fitness Stock Photos Are Failing Us All](#).)

What was surprising was that these same negative effects on body image weren't found with traditional blogs about eating and exercise. The bottom line? Take those [#fitspo](#) selfies with a (major) grain of salt. If you're looking for fitness and nutrition content, choose verified sources over social media feeds. (*Psst...* Check out [The Healthy Girl's Guide to Reading Food Blogs](#).)



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All those healthy eating tweets and Facebook posts may be exacerbating eating disorders

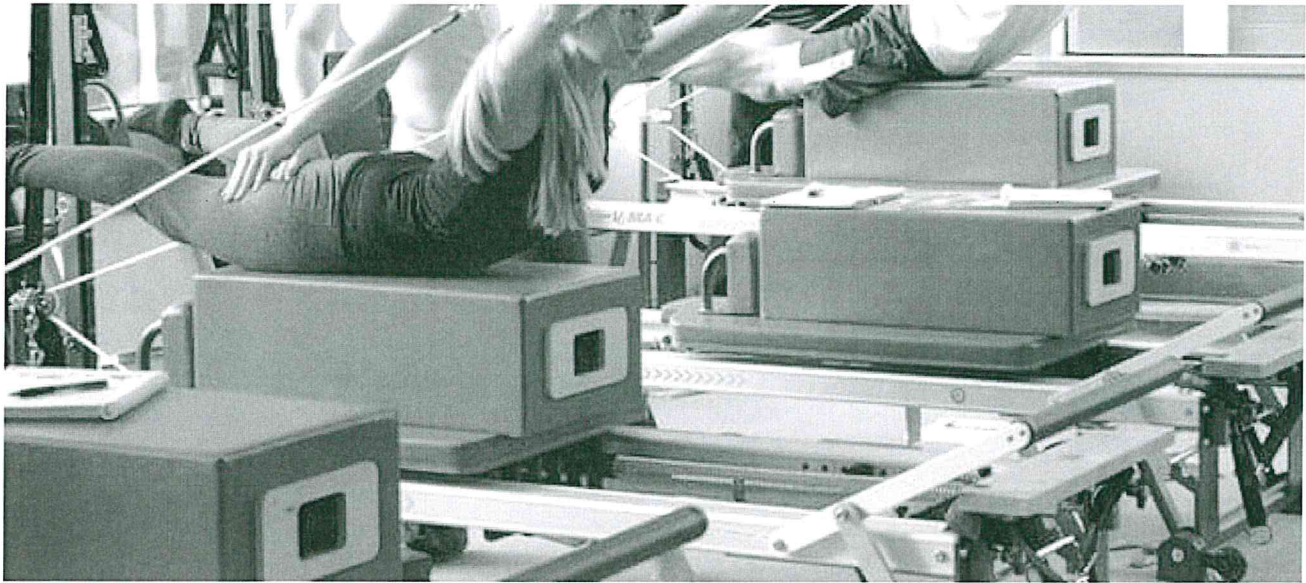
Angie Chui Published 27 May 2016

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Social media can be a wealth of inspiration for those aspiring to live healthier, achieve their ideal body and enjoy life through improved wellness. However, the constant stream of such posts could actually have the opposite effect, a study indicates.

Instead of uplifting the morale of social media users, these 'fitspiration' posts may actually compel some to engage in unhealthy behaviour, including eating disorders and compulsive exercise, in order to achieve a goal, reported Alpha Galileo.

This is according to research detailed in a new report called 'Mobile Exercising and Tweeting the Pounds Away', published by Cogent Social Sciences Journal.

Authors of the report say they found a relationship between the consumption of various social media posts, and eating habits and exercise patterns.

"Plenty of previous work has documented the ways in which young people can be particularly vulnerable to the effects of media use in this area of body image 'But it seems from our study that "fitspiration" content is specifically related to risky behaviors like compulsive exercise and eating disorder symptoms, especially among those young people who use mobile apps on a frequent basis," said study author Veronica Hefner of the Georgia College & State University.

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The study sampled 262 participants who were asked to fill out an online questionnaire which determined their exercise and eating habits as well as the frequency of their consumption of social media, including traditional blogs, microblogs, and mobile apps that specialise in nutrition and wellness.

According to the results of the study, while traditional blogs did not seem to have any impact on the users, it was a different story for those who regularly follow mobile phone applications and microblogs like Twitter and Instagram, which the researchers linked with compulsive exercise

behaviours.

"The results of our study indicate that the use of mobile applications, such as Eating Thin, Lose It!, or Fasting Secret, is linked with reports of disordered eating and compulsive exercise. In other words, those young people who use these digital applications on their mobile devices are more likely than other individuals to engage in anorexia- or bulimia-related behaviors, as well as to reveal that they have to exercise in order to feel good about themselves," the research's public interest statement read.

It suggested that parents, teachers and influencers be more proactive in educating young people about the use of social media and their perceptions of beauty.

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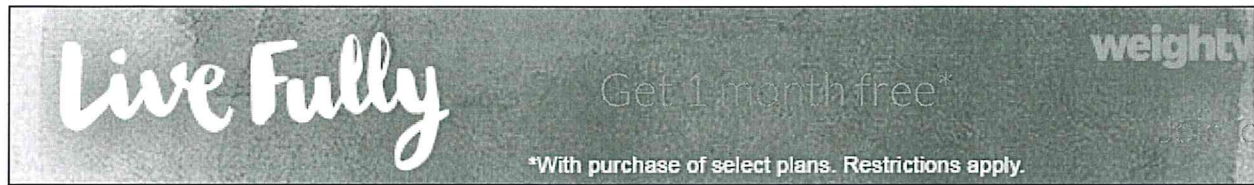
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Link between social media, eating disorders, and compulsive exercise: Chapman University Study

May 25, 2016 By Namita Nayyar (WF Team)

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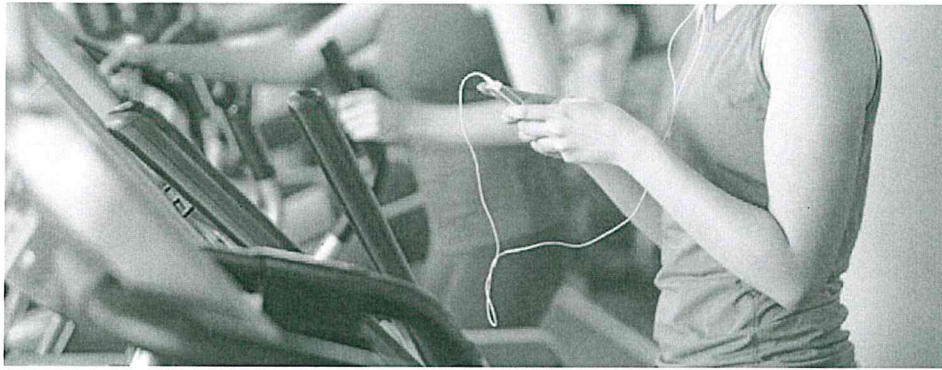
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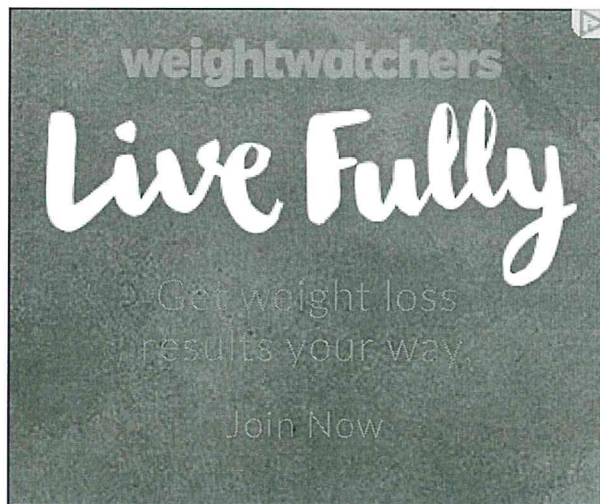
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In a new open access article for Cogent Social Sciences; Mobile Exercising and Tweeting the Pounds Away: The Use of Digital Applications and Microblogging and their Association with Disordered Eating and Compulsive Exercise, researchers from Georgia College & State University, and Chapman University explore the relationship between social media, eating disorders, and compulsive exercise.



Social media is saturated with messages encouraging people to eat healthily and take plenty of exercise, but these messages exacerbate the effects of an eating disorder. The study set out to examine different types of online communities and activities, including blogging, microblogging and using mobile apps to monitor diet and exercise.

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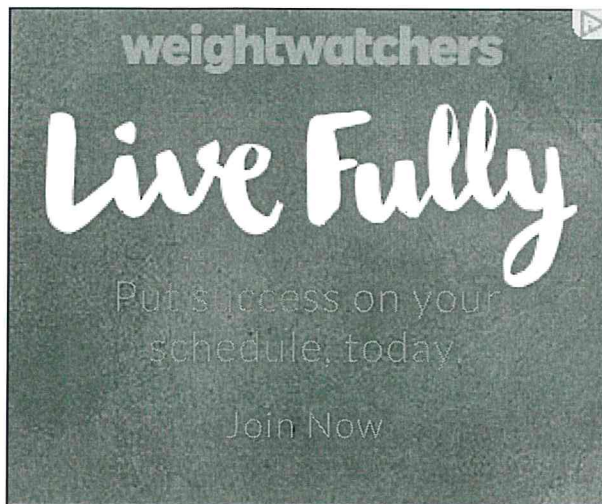
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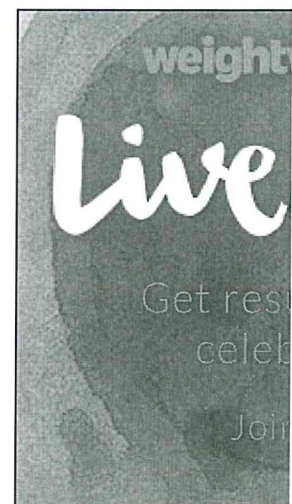
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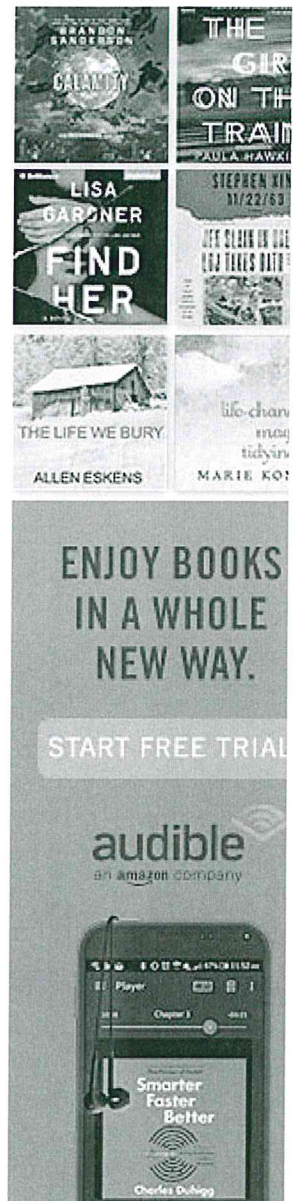


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Tweeting Your Weight Loss? Is There A Link Between Microblogging, Eating Disorders?

Last updated June 13, 2016



Average Rating: 5.0 stars

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The above post is reprinted from materials provided by **Taylor & Francis**. *Note: Materials may be edited for content and length.*

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Primary Resource:

Hefner, V., Dorros, S. M., Jourdain, N., Liu, C., Tortomasi, A., Greene, M. P., ... & Bowles, N. (2016). Mobile exercising and tweeting the pounds away: The use of digital applications and microblogging and their association with disordered eating and compulsive exercise. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 2(1), 1.

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Taylor & Francis, ScienceDaily , 2016

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Penn State, ScienceDaily , 2012

Data mining social media opinions

Inderscience, ScienceDaily , 2013

Media Harming People's Body Image Say Psychiatrists

Catharine Paddock PhD, Medical News Today , 2010

Social Media and Mobile App Guide for Ob/Gyns

Jennifer Gunter, MD, FRCS(C), FACOG, DABPMContributor Information et al., Medscape , 2013

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Researchers explore link between social media, eating disorders, and compulsive exercise

Published on May 23, 2016 at 10:04 AM

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Source:
Taylor & Francis
