

Amy Clark:

'You can't move properly and you have to roll off the toilet because you can't actually use your thighs, and you have to go down the stairs on your backside ... you can't describe that feeling': Exploring women's embodied experiences in fitness cultures.

Although female sporting bodies have been theorised through a range of 'feminist prisms' (e.g. Hall, 1996; Wearing, 1998) there is a paucity of empirical research that illuminates the sensuousness of the embodied realities that women experience in a range of fitness cultures (Allen-Collinson, 2011). Drawing upon ethnographic data obtained from an on-going research project, I here explore the 'embodiedness' of four female exercisers within a UK 'working-class' gym. Utilising a more 'sociologised' form of phenomenology (Allen-Collinson, 2009) I explore the phenomenal ground, the here-and-now of bodily existence and presence (Münch, 1994), whilst simultaneously acknowledging the impact of social-cultural forces and location upon individual lived body experiences (Allen-Collinson and Owton, 2014). I present the findings of four women between the ages of 24-52 who participate in spinning classes, bums, legs and tums classes, CrossFit and women who 'work-out' in the main gym, including an openly self-reflexive feminist approach to my own corporeality. Reflections are provided that suggest that attuning to the euphoric feelings experienced by the exercising body, holds a potential in transgressing mind/body dualisms and liberation from dominant discourses that can be imposed on female exercisers in a variety of gym spaces.

John Day:

‘Because my husband would have been bored to tears... if I’d have said “let’s go swimming”’ Physical Activity Careers and Oral Histories of Family Membership: A Synthesised Approach to Understanding Physical Activity and Well-being in Family Contexts across the Life Course

As it appears physical activity is not a widespread family practice (Day, *in press*), attempting to collect comprehensive life histories sensitive to connections between physical activity habits and family influences across the life course would be unnecessary. Reflecting upon data from my PhD study and the experience of collecting this data, it is argued that simultaneous investigation of physical activity careers and oral histories of family membership offers a more useful, meaningful and authentic approach. Furthermore, synthesis between career and oral history interviews highlight complex inter-relationships between physical activity experiences, family relationships and memories of well-being. More specifically, participant’s stories provide rich explanations that are supplementary and different to trends identified between family relationships and well-being in the ‘new science’ of happiness (see Layard, 2011) and assumptions made in the exercise sciences about the contribution of physical activity to well-being. Consequently, people’s accounts of well-being emerge as meaningful, intimate and delicate moments in time that are both memorable and crucial to their physical activity careers and family memberships across the life course. It is thus also suggested that although socialisation is a process, the ways in which interviewees recall, interpret, relive and reinterpret this process in reference to family and physical activity is nonlinear, unpredictable and highly personal. In closing it is tentatively proposed that the bespoke methodology outlined represents a more practical and human-centred way of understanding social influences upon physical activity and well-being than has traditionally been utilised in the exercise sciences.