Fitness Discourse on Instagram:
A Corpus Linguistic Analysis

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Abstract
Fitness relates to several life aspects, such as health and exercise. Because of its vast popularity, it is often referred to as a ‘fitness trend’ where the body has a central role. Due to technological advances, fitness has found its way into mobile applications and Social Network Sites (SNSs), prompting the linguistic analysis of these environments. This study investigates how female fitness is discussed by female personal trainers (PTs) online. A mixed approach of quantitative methodology (Corpus Linguistics) and qualitative textual analysis (Discourse Analysis) was adopted. Following Baker’s corpus-driven approach (2006), a specialised corpus was compiled with a total of 440 posts (51,779 tokens) from the Instagram accounts of three female professional PTs. Various patterns were presented under four themes: mind and body, physical strength, empowerment, and the FITNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor. The most salient patterns discussed were health, aesthetics, weight-loss, and body-representation. There was strong evidence of other trends (‘fitspiration’, ‘HAES’, and ‘body positivity’) which promote a positive body image and strength (physical and mental) as a health indicator. In sum, the findings provide a female PT’s perspective on fitness and show how female fitness is promoted by encouraging positive narratives around fitness, the body and ourselves.

Keywords: corpus linguistics, corpus-driven, discourse analysis, fitness discourse, female perspective, SNS, Social Media, Instagram
Fitness Discourse on Instagram: 
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1. Introduction
Closely related to health, fitness has permeated several facets of our lives, and this is reflected online. Advances in Internet technologies and the social media have facilitated the rise of fitness in the digital world, e.g., in Social Network Sites (SNSs) such as Instagram, or mobile applications (apps). Countless fitness-related online accounts have been created by personal trainers, nutritionists, fitness enthusiasts, etc., to express their ideas around fitness. Moreover, different types of fitness apps are available online. Often, professional personal trainers who are creators of workout apps use their social media accounts to interact with their followers and share their views. The aim of this study is to investigate how fitness is discussed online from a personal trainer’s perspective. As women’s and men’s fitness differs in many ways, this study focuses on discourses around female fitness from a female viewpoint.

Language and discourse are two interrelated yet distinct terms. Language refers to a ‘more abstract set of patterns and rules’ whereas discourse is the realisation of those patterns in ‘real contexts of use’ (Simpson et al., 2019). In other words, language constructs discourses, and, thus, patterns in language lead to discourses (2006). According to Baker (2006), discourse can be defined as language topics (e.g., politics) or as a way of producing meaning and constructing reality (Foucault, 1972). This study employs the former as a starting point, and the latter as the main definition.

1.1 Aim
The aim of this study is to investigate which discourses around female fitness are promoted by female personal trainers on Instagram. Additionally, due to the body’s fundamental role in fitness, this study looks more closely at the linguistic representation of the body. This is a synchronic linguistic approach, as the aim is to observe discourses on Instagram at a specific time (year 2019). Note also that this study approaches fitness from the female gender perspective and, thus, both the participants and their audience are female. Consequently, all discourses involved are (re)produced from a female perspective and all discourses refer to female fitness and the female body.
The study aims to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What are the dominant discourses around female fitness promoted by professional personal trainers on Instagram?

RQ2. What are the discourse patterns around body?

RQ1 provides a general look of the discourses, while RQ2 focuses on one of these discourses.

2. Background

This section describes fitness as a trend. Furthermore, it presents the theoretical and methodological framework: corpus linguistics and discourse analysis, Halliday’s transitivity model (1985), and Lakoff and Johnson’s conceptual metaphor (1980). Lastly, an overview of the most relevant previous works is given.

2.1 Fitness

Over the last decade fitness has increased in popularity and is often referred to as a ‘fitness trend’. As a result, the fitness industry has exploded globally and affected many aspects. Fitness is not just about exercise and its different forms (strength, yoga, pilates, martial arts etc.), but also about nutrition, health, gym subscriptions, sports clothes and accessories, and personal trainers. The growth of the internet has also given way to a new trend: fitness apps that are commercially available everywhere. One sub-category of these apps offers workout programs by professional personal trainers, thus replacing the concept of hiring a personal trainer at your local gym.

All these aspects have naturally found their way into SNSs. Van Dijck states that SNSs ‘are popular stages for self-expression, communication, and self-promotion’ (2013). It is, thus, common to find several individuals online that want to either express their love for fitness (e.g., fitness enthusiasts) or even promote their product (e.g., a workout app). Lately, it is common practice on Instagram (a photo-sharing SNS) for personal trainers to promote their fitness apps via a professional and a personal account. In the latter case, the trainers have usually more freedom in terms of discourse, as they can post more details about fitness and their personal life.
2.2 **Social Media: Instagram**

Instagram is a social media platform founded in October 2010 and is available in web browsers and as a mobile application. Users can create an account and upload photos or videos through the app. An Instagram post consists of a photo or video and a caption (text giving information about the visual part). Using the hashtag, i.e. inserting the hash (#) character before a word or an unspaced phrase, is extremely common on SNSs (Benedek & Veszelszki, 2016). Hashtags are a type of metalanguage (put simply, using language to talk about language) that make online searching easier.

A linguist that has contributed profusely to the linguistic analysis of SNS discourse is Michelle Zappavigna. She explains that hashtags can “act as a topic-marker” but also have other functions (2015). The ‘topic-marker’ function is a common way of classifying a post in social media. A ‘topic-marker’ tag signifying ‘aboutness’ is displayed below:

```
might have had a dream I was a drug lord last night #breakingbad
```

(Zappavigna, 2015)

Nothing in the main content of the post refers directly to the series ‘Breaking Bad’. It is the #breakingbad hashtag that indicates what the post is about. Without it the content would be ‘relatively opaque or bizarre’ (Zappavigna, 2015).

In addition, hashtags are used interpersonally to add evaluative meaning or express attitudes and are, thus, more conversational in nature. The twitter post below contains two hashtags expressing the writer’s emotional response:

```
Hard to believe summer is almost done. And school is right around the corner. #sad#toofast
```

(Zappavigna, 2015)

Another Instagram convention is ‘referencing other users with the @ character’. This technique adds an intertextuality element as it is mainly used to address or refer to another user or account (Zappavigna, 2018).

A theory regularly employed by Zappavigna is Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), which explains ‘how meanings function within the particular contexts in which they are made’ (2011). The transitivity model is part of this theory and is explained next.
2.3 Textual analysis

For the analysis of key terms, such as body, Halliday’s transitivity model was employed. Another concept applied was the conceptual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

2.3.1 Transitivity model

In a broad sense, transitivity refers to the verb’s relationship to other clausal elements. For instance, a verb can be transitive (i.e., have a direct object as in ‘Michael read the book’) or intransitive (i.e., no direct object as in ‘Michael worked out’). Transitivity revolves around the idea of ‘who/what does what to whom/what’. Halliday’s functional grammar deviates from the traditional view of transitivity and explains that grammar is pivotal in producing meaning (2005). Moreover, transitivity analysis is not only about analysing what is there, but what is absent from the text as well.

Halliday’s transitivity model consists of three parts: participants, processes, and circumstances. Processes describe the action that is happening and are represented by a verb or verb phrase. Participants are usually realised by nouns or noun phrases and refer to who/what is involved in the action. Lastly, circumstances provide extra information about the event described (e.g., how, when or where something happened) and are realised by prepositional or adverbial phrases. Figure 1 below shows the tripartite interpretation of process, participants, and circumstance.

![Figure 1. Process, participants & circumstances (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 176)](image)
Halliday mentions six different process types used to construe meaning: material, behavioural, mental, verbal, relational, and existential. The processes relevant to the results presented are material, behavioural, and mental.

Material processes are about action, i.e. doing something, and mental ones are about sensing. The vital difference is that material processes are about ‘something that goes on in the external world’ while mental processes are about what ‘goes on in the […] the mind’ (Thompson, 2004). Behavioural processes are ‘semantically ‘in between’ material and mental processes’ (Simpson et al., 2019). Table 1 presents some examples, where the foregrounded participants of actor, senser, and behaver are ascribed agency (i.e. the capacity to act).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The fire</td>
<td>had destroyed</td>
<td>everything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>hated</td>
<td>the thought of leaving him alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senser</td>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She</td>
<td>gave</td>
<td>a faint sigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaver</td>
<td>Behavioural</td>
<td>Behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lastly, in processes that consist of more than one verb (verbal groups), Halliday regards the last verb as ‘the relevant one for process type’ (Martin et al., 1996). For example, in ‘I tried to help’ the verbal group is ‘tried to help’, of which help is the relevant one.

2.3.2 Conceptual metaphor

Metaphors are used to structure everyday concepts, which is reflected in language. Lakoff and Johnson state that ‘[t]he essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing or experience in terms of another’ (1980). According to their research, our conceptual system is ‘fundamentally metaphorical in nature’ and works mostly on a subconscious level. There are two types of conceptual domains used in metaphors: the source and the target domain. We use terms from the source domain to explain the target domain. For example, Figure 2 presents the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor. We use terms from the ‘journey’ domain to describe the ‘love’ domain.
LOVE IS A JOURNEY
Look how far we’ve come. We’re at a crossroads. We can’t turn back now. I don’t think this relationship is going anywhere. This relationship is a dead-end street. Our marriage is on the rocks. We’ve gotten off the track. Where are we? We’re stuck. It’s been a long, bumpy road.

**Figure 2.** LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 470)

Two additional common English metaphors are LIFE IS A JOURNEY and THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS. Figure 3 displays the latter.

**THEORIES (AND ARGUMENTS) ARE BUILDINGS**
Is that the foundation for your theory? The theory needs more support. The argument is shaky. We need some more facts or the arguments will fall apart. We need to construct a strong argument for that. I haven’t figured out yet what the form of the argument will be. We need some more facts to shore up the theory. We need to buttress the theory with solid arguments. The theory will stand or fall on the strength of that argument. The argument collapsed. They exploded his latest theory. We will

**Figure 3.** THEORIES ARE BUILDINGS metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 469)

Metaphors can have ‘entailment relationships’ to each other. A metaphor A entails another metaphor B when the truth of A has as a logical consequence the truth of B. For example, the main metaphor TIME IS MONEY entails the metaphor TIME IS A LIMITED RESOURCE, which entails the metaphor TIME IS A VALUABLE COMMODITY. This entailment depends on how society perceives the source domain. Money, for example, is considered a limited resource, and limited resources are valuable commodities. This creates a three-level system with ‘money’ as the main concept, and ‘limited resources’ and ‘valuable commodities’ as secondary ones. When people use the metaphorical concept of ‘money’ to discuss ‘time’, they may use terms from any level: money (e.g., ‘spend time’), limited resources (‘use up time’), or valuable commodities (‘have enough time’). Figure 4 displays this ‘entailment relationship’ between the metaphors.

**Figure 4.** Metaphorical Entailment (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 457)
2.4 Corpus linguistics & discourse analysis

Corpus Linguistics (CL) is ‘the study of language based on examples of real-life language use’ (Mc Enery & Wilson, 1996 as cited in Baker, 2006). It is a quantitative methodology that allows linguists to investigate large amounts of data (corpora) which is compiled from electronically encoded text. There are often two types of investigations in CL: corpus-driven and corpus-based. In the latter a corpus is used to retrieve examples that might confirm the researcher’s intuition, whereas a corpus-driven approach treats the corpus as the main or only source of data to find general patterns in language. A common corpora type for corpus-driven analyses is a specialised corpus, a data set that conforms to specialised criteria (Baker, 2006). For this study, I employed a corpus-driven approach and created a specialised corpus.

Baker argues that a lot can be ‘gained from using corpora to analyse discourse’ as CL tools can be used to process corpora to successfully detect language patterns (2006). CL can be combined with discourse analysis (DA), i.e. the qualitative analysis of language in relation to social context, to help analysts ‘uncover how language is employed’ in a more efficient manner (Baker, 2006). CL quantitative techniques allows researchers to detect patterns and switch to the qualitative analysis of these patterns using CL tools. This leads to a faster discovery of hegemonic (i.e. dominant, common) and resistant discourses (i.e. going against a dominant discourse).

As a quantitative method, CL has its limitations and is often criticised. Frequent patterns in language do not always reveal discourses and, thus, it is vital that irregularities or lack of certain language items are also investigated. Discourses can also be ‘difficult to pin down’ as they are ‘constantly changing’ and ‘interacting with each other’ (Baker, 2006). This dynamic state of discourses in combination with the fact that interpretation of data depends on the researcher may complicate matters.

2.5 Previous works

Fitness is often connected to weight loss, body image and nutrition. Although trainers play a vital role in the fitness industry, research from the personal trainer’s perspective has often been neglected. Donaghue and Allen (2015) acknowledge the trainers’ ‘important position as intermediaries between aesthetic and health-based discourses’ and investigate this by interviewing personal trainers. Their qualitative study of the trainers’ views on fitness-related issues gives a useful insight of dominant discourses around fitness. One such is the ‘Health at
Every Size approach’ (HAES): weight is not always a reliable health indicator and weight loss not the ‘most suitable goal for training’ (p. 18).

In a more recent study, ‘Strong is the new skinny’, Tiggermann and Zaccardo do a content analysis of images of women tagged with #fitspiration and investigate the trend of ‘fitspiration’, ‘an online trend designed to inspire viewers towards a healthier lifestyle by promoting exercise and healthy food’ (2018). They focus on three aspects: female body shape, activities displayed, and quotations. Although they recognise the positive influence of ‘fitspiration’, a strong concern is a potential emphasis on appearance. Their analysis showed that a ‘very limited range of [female] body types’ was featured and that one certain body type (thin and toned) was ‘overwhelmingly represented’. This may suggest that to be fit and healthy, one needs to look a certain way and possibly discourage people who lack the ‘ideal’ figure from training.

A movement that resists this idea of an ‘ideal’ body type and is related to the HAES approach is ‘body positivity’. One of the first people to investigate body positivity online is Sastre (2016), who analysed websites claiming to promote body positivity. This qualitative study deals with several vital fitness-related concepts. Dominant interrelated themes in body positivity are ‘responsibilisation’, self-love, and empowerment. ‘Responsibilisation’ is about investing in oneself and focusing on personal change and improvement. A vital point in ‘responsibilisation’ is that modification is needed in the relationship with the ‘interior self’ and not in the ‘bodily self’. Directly connected to ‘responsibilisation’ is the self-love category which revolves around maintaining ‘a loving relationship between the self and the body’. Empowerment refers to cultivating inner strength that will reinforce self-love by battling a ‘negative self-image’. Another interesting finding was that ‘the relationship to one’s body’ is often described as a process or a journey in a metaphorical way. Any obstacles, i.e. negative emotions, are part of it as they act as ‘catharsis’ that leads to ‘a newfound positive relationship to one’s body’ (Sastre, 2016).

3. Design
This section presents the research methodology employed and provides information about the participants and the data.
3.1 Data

A specialised corpus was built (hereafter FITNESS corpus) following Sinclair’s design principles (as cited in Page et al., 2014). A researcher should consider representativeness and balance: a corpus should be representative of the language in question and consistent in terms of genres, text, or other linguistic features. Other corpus design factors are mode (written, spoken etc.), text type, domain, location, and date. Consequently, several restrictions were applied in the data selection process.

3.1.1 Participants

To ensure that professional trainers are involved in the process, all participants are personal trainers who are creators or co-creators of a paid fitness app. Moreover, all participants are female and target a female audience, thus ensuring consistency in the gender perspective. Figure 5 displays the descriptions on the apps’ website that state the audience gender (please see Appendix III for website links).

Figure 5. Female audience

The hashtag and @ tag use played a decisive role in the selection of the Instagram accounts as not all female personal trainers on Instagram use tags. All three participants use both tags in similar ways, to categorise their fitness posts or refer to their fitness apps, ensuring that the data relates to fitness. Furthermore, the trainers have similar training styles and post regularly on Instagram (1-2 posts per day).

Table 2 presents a summary.
3.1.2 Data collection

Data collected from the trainers’ Instagram accounts resulted in a corpus of 440 posts and 51759 tokens. Instagram posts consist of a picture and a caption (text including emoticons, hashtags and/or @ tags). This study focuses solely on the textual representation of the fitness discourse and, thus, visual traces or semiotics were not analysed. Exceptions were made when a picture displayed a quote which was commented in the caption. To make the caption text more comprehensible these quotes were included in the txt file of the corpus.

Since fitness discourse is the focal point, the data set included posts that were tagged with fitness-related tags. There was no common tag that all three trainers used. Both the common hashtag (#) and the @ tag were utilised as their functions relate to this study’s fitness-related focus. The hashtag, for example, was often used to categorize a post and/or to add meaning. Furthermore, there were several posts that were tagged with the brand name (e.g. @toneandsculptapp), which redirected the reader to the app’s Instagram account. This promotional technique was also used by the participants to mark fitness-related posts. Thus, the inclusion criteria were set to select posts which contained (a) hashtags that contain fitness words (e.g. workout, fit, etc.), (b) hashtags that refer to the trainer’s fitness app or training program, and/or (c) brand name tags.

The above-mentioned criteria ensured that the investigation was restricted to fitness discourse and exclude any posts relating solely to the trainers’ personal lives. It should also be mentioned that all apps have a nutrition section and that all trainers post regularly about their food choices. Nutrition is admittedly connected to fitness but, as it is not this study’s focus, food-related posts were not included. Moreover, location was not considered a factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trainer</th>
<th>Training Style</th>
<th>Fitness App/Program</th>
<th>@brand name</th>
<th>Hashtag Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelsey Wells</td>
<td>Weight training, Cardio, HIIT</td>
<td>Sweat/ Pwr</td>
<td>@sweat</td>
<td>#pwr, #pwrprogram, #sweat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Victoria</td>
<td>HIIT, Strength training</td>
<td>Fit Body app</td>
<td>@figbodyapp</td>
<td>#fbggirls, #fbgcommunity, #fitbodyapp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krissy Cela</td>
<td>Weight &amp; Strength training, Cardio</td>
<td>Tone &amp; Sculpt App</td>
<td>@toneandsculptapp</td>
<td>#toneandsculpt, #workout, #shoulderworkout</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
as all apps can be purchased from anywhere in the world. Regarding time, posts from the first two weeks of every month during 2019 were gathered to ensure the representativeness of the corpus and get a manageable amount of data.

Instagram posts vary in terms of size and length. Victoria and Cela post daily (1 post per day) and write long captions, while Wells posts more frequently (2-3 posts per day) but usually writes shorter captions. Consequently, a relatively equal amount of data was gathered from each participant. Table 3 below presents a summary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Trainer</th>
<th>Instagram Account</th>
<th>Posts</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kelsey Wells</td>
<td>@kelseywells</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>19,119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Victoria</td>
<td>@annavictoria</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>18,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krissy Cela</td>
<td>@krissycela</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>14,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>440</strong></td>
<td><strong>51,779</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**3.2 Method**

This study uses a quantitative methodology combined with qualitative analysis as a mixed approach is ‘more productive than simply relying on quantitative methods alone’ (Baker, 2006). Following Baker’s approach, this is a corpus-driven analysis as the FITNESS corpus itself is the main source of data used to note patterns and regularities (or their absence) in language.

AntConc, a ‘freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis’, was used (Anthony, 2019). The main tools applied were wordlist, frequency, concordance, KWIC, collocates and clusters.

As the name itself suggests, a wordlist is a list of all the words in a corpus. A frequency list displays information related to how often a word occurs. A high frequency word is one that occurs frequently in a corpus, while a low frequency one does not. While a frequency list can help in ‘identifying the main focus of a text’, the context around a word is also vital to any linguistic analysis (Baker, 2010). Therefore, other techniques are necessary to confirm initial observations or avoid false presuppositions. These techniques involve concordance analysis, collocates and/or clusters.
A concordance is a list of all the occurrences of a word in a corpus. For example, a search for the word *workout* in the FITNESS corpus will produce a list of lines where that word has occurred in and the surrounding context. This allows us to combine quantitative elements (frequency) with qualitative analysis (investigating the context) resulting in a more thorough research. A useful tool in concordance analysis is KWIC (Key Word in Context) by which the text can be sorted in different ways.

Collocates and clusters are also essential CL tools because to ‘understand the meaning of words, we have to compare them in relation to other words’ (Baker, 2006). That can be done by investigating the collocates and clusters of a chosen search word. Collocates are a set of words that appear near the search term in a statistically significant way, i.e. more often than usual for it to be considered a coincidence. Clusters are different to collocates because they are a group of words occurring closely together and not just near each other. The clusters tool allows us ‘to find common expressions in a corpus’ (Antony, 2019).

These AntConc tools and the conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) were used in both RQ1 and RQ2. Additional information regarding the method of answering the RQs is provided in the subsections below.

**RQ1: Dominant discourses around fitness**

An analysis of the frequency list was the first step in discovering the main aspects of the FITNESS corpus as frequent words or phrases can ‘be indicative of discourses’ (Baker, 2010). Moreover, lexical words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) reveal the ‘aboutness’ of a text and are often more interesting to analyse. For this reason, the lexical words in the frequency list were divided into different semantic groups followed by a concordance analysis. This confirmed initial findings and revealed the dominant discourses and attitudes around fitness. Note that even low frequency words were investigated, as they can enhance the meaning of others (Baker, 2006).

When investigating frequency, lemmas and lexemes were also considered. A lemma is ‘the canonical form of the word’, while lexemes are the different forms of that word (Baker, 2006). For instance, the frequency of the verb lemma TRAIN consists of the frequencies of its lexemes *train, trained, training* and *trains*.

Please see Appendix I for a more complete list of the semantic groups and Appendix II for the frequency list. Due to corpus size (51,779 tokens) it was not beneficial to present a full frequency list and, thus, a sample containing all lexical words with a frequency rate larger than 50 is available (full list can be made available upon request).
RQ2: Additional patterns around body
In addition to the various CL tools, Halliday’s transitivity model was used as the main linguistic theory to investigate how the female body is discussed. Several terms were investigated, but due to space constraints only those with the most relevant results were presented.

4. Results & discussion
This section presents and discusses the results.

Section 4.1 deals with RQ1 and provides a general picture of the dominant discourses around female fitness promoted by the participants. Promote means ‘to advance or actively support’ a cause, process etc (“promote,” n.d.). Therefore, the most relevant dominant discourses are discussed. Regarding RQ2, additional patterns around the female body are presented in 4.2. Statistics, visual representations of AntConc, and concordance lines as the most illustrative examples of discourse patterns are also provided.

4.1 Discourses around fitness
Concordance analysis of the semantic groups derived from the frequency list revealed numerous discourse patterns around female fitness. These patterns are discussed under four main themes: mind and body connection, physical strength, empowerment, and the FITNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Under each theme, various interrelated patterns are also presented. Table 4 displays the statistics for the words that contributed the most in each theme.

Table 4. Examples of main themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MIND &amp; BODY</th>
<th>PHYSICAL STRENGTH</th>
<th>EMPOWERMENT</th>
<th>FITNESS IS A JOURNEY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Word</td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221</td>
<td>body</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>WORKOUT (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>health</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>challenge (s)/ challenging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>healthy</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>mental</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>mind</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>emotional</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>physically</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>muscle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>mentally</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>build</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1 Mind & body connection
A well-defined theme is the connection between mind and body, also illustrated in (1).
(1) *Mind-body* connection is SO real.

The constant use of the words *physical*, *mental*, and *emotional* reinforce this theme. For instance, in (2) Victoria refers to all three aspects: *physical* relates to the body, while *mental* and *emotional* are often paired together and refer to the mind.

(2) *Physical* health, *mental* and *emotional* health. It takes time and figuring out what works best for you, but I strongly believe the best road to get there is focusing on what your body can DO instead of what your body looks like.

A recurring pattern closely connected to this theme is health. As already mentioned in (2), all aspects of health, either relating to the body or mind, can be strengthened through exercise. Moreover, health is often presented as an integral part of female fitness. In (3), for instance, Wells states that fitness ‘should’ revolve around health:

(3) THAT is what fitness can and *SHOULD* be about — taking care of our HEALTH (mental, emotional, physical).

Furthermore, although the physical aspect is often discussed by the female participants, stronger emphasis is placed on the mental part, as seen in (4). This relates to the theme of ‘responsibilisation’ in body positivity where the ‘interior self’ has a more central role than the ‘bodily’ self (Sastre, 2016).

(4) This journey is way *more mental* than it is physical.

4.1.2 **Physical strength**

Building physical strength is described as a main reason for women to work out. Moreover, the trainers encourage their female audience to add weights in their training, often stressing that it is important to ‘challenge yourself’. In (5) physical strength is presented as something ‘worth having’ even though the way there (i.e. via exercising) is not easy.

(5) Just like every other muscle in your body it *takes time to build strength* so be patient and *work hard* because to be honest nothing *worth having* is easy!

In their attempt to stress the importance of physical strength, the trainers often dismiss a previously hegemonic discourse around female fitness by stating that it is about strong and ‘not skinny’ anymore. This relates to the fitspiration trend which ‘promotes health and
fitness, rather than thinness and weight loss’ (Tiggemann & Zaccardo, 2016). In (6), for instance, Victoria states that ‘getting stronger’ was her focus and rejects thinness by adding quotation marks:

(6)  Instead of focusing on myself ‘getting skinnier’ I focused on getting stronger, and all the rest fell into place with that.

An interesting pattern that interacts regularly with the physical strength theme is training intensity. According to the trainers, physical strength is important, and women can build this strength though exercising. While discussing physical strength and exercise, the trainers often mention training intensity which reveals attitudes towards exercise from the female viewpoint. For example, a term that is used to describe an intense workout is killer:

(7)  I had a killer workout today and I’m feeling re-energized

There are also killer ‘circuits’, ‘exercises’, or ‘moves’. The ‘killer’, however, can also be us, as the verb lemmas KILL and SLAY reveal. In both (8) and (9), ‘it’ refers to exercise:

(8)  Workout done and I KILLED IT - NEXT!
(9)  WE ARE SLAYING THIS TOGETHER!

These examples imply that exercise is not only difficult, but it can be threatening as well. Women need to ‘kill’ or ‘slay’ a workout, or the opposite will happen. Thus, it can be suggested that exercise is metaphorically seen as a menacing living entity. However, the word re-energized in (7) has positive connotations that weaken this ‘threatening’ perspective of exercise. A pattern that also contradicts and invalidates this ‘threatening’ aspect, is the ‘exercise is a positive experience’ pattern. Exercise is often portrayed as a positive activity (e.g. ‘good’, ‘fun’) which motivates women to keep on challenging themselves. In (10) this positive perspective is combined with the ‘getting stronger’ focus:

(10)  We train because it feels good and we know that our bodies are capable of becoming stronger than every before.

The combination of the patterns ‘exercise is a menacing living entity’ and ‘exercise is a positive experience’ expresses the trainers’ message: women may sometimes regard exercise as menacing, and it is difficult but can also be enjoyable and worthwhile if you ‘push yourself’. This is also strengthened by two noun phrases found in the clusters of body: ‘body
burner’ and ‘body blaster’. *Blast* and *burner* are also found among the top ten collocates of *body*. In (11) the term *burner* is combined with *killer*:

(11) These classic PWR moves combined make for a *killer* upper-body *burner* when you’re short on time, space, or equipment.

The ‘blaster’ or the ‘burner’ is exercise. In both cases the exercise is the ‘doer’, and the body is the one being affected. Agency is implicitly assigned to exercise as it can cause things to happen to the body, though not necessarily harmful (as implied by the verb lemmas *KILL* and *SLAY* earlier). A *blaster* is ‘one who blows or emits blasts’ and a *burner* ‘prepares/ produces by burning’ (“blaster”, “burner”, n.d.). It can, then, be suggested that exercise is worthwhile as it assists women in ‘producing’ a stronger body similar to how a glass blower shapes glassware or a potter crafts a ceramic vase with fire.

In sum, the discourse context around physical strength and exercise aims to promote female fitness by inspiring women to realise the significance of physical strength and see exercise as a positive activity. According to the trainers, fitness and exercise is difficult, *seemingly* intimidating, but it is rewarding as it leads to physical strength.

### 4.1.3 Empowerment

A concept that often interacts with physical strength is ‘inner strength’. In (12) Wells explains that exercise also ‘uncovers’ inner strength:

(12) My PWR Programs are designed to help you gain *physical strength*, but *UNCOVER inner strength* as well.

A closer look at terms that relate to ‘inner strength’ (such as *empowerment, powerful*, the verb lemma *EMPOWER*, etc.) reveals that empowerment is a prominent theme in the *FITNESS* corpus. Empowerment is about ‘acquiring more control over one's life or circumstances through increased civil rights, independence, self-esteem, etc.’ (“empowerment,” n.d.). The trainers remind their female audience of the concepts of self-esteem and mental strength regularly, as also seen in (13):

(13) You are *beautiful, Loved, Confident, Strong, Worthy*. And *so much more*. Your body and society’s expectations of it does not define that. YOU do.
Moreover, in contrast to physical strength that relates to the body, empowerment is more mental and can also be cultivated via exercise, as clearly stated in (14) and (15):

(14) Exercise can and SHOULD be used as a powerful tool for cultivating self-love and self-EMPOWERMENT.

(15) Many women I have trained are often in awe at how much MENTAL clarity and emotional peace they find when they implement consistent exercise into their lives.

It should be stated that mental/ emotional health and empowerment are interrelated. For women, mental/ emotional health starts by changing ‘a toxic mindset’ regarding fitness, as illustrated in (16). Female mental health improves when women start re-evaluating their relationship to exercise and resisting previously hegemonic discourses (e.g., importance of weight loss). Empowerment, as used in the FITNESS corpus, is about taking this mental progress one step further by building inner strength, cultivating self-love, and ‘shifting’ to a new mentality.

(16) If you are currently living with a toxic mindset as I used to, I know it is so hard. [...] Shifting to a self-appreciating mentality takes time and WORK, but no work is more important than the work of loving ourselves.

Other patterns in the FITNESS corpus that strengthen the empowerment theme are high occurrences of phrases such as 'take care of yourself'. Figure 6 displays a concordance sample that builds up this self-focus pattern.
According to the trainers, fitness eventually leads their female audience to empowerment, to a better relationship to the self, where women perceive themselves as something important, valuable, and worth taking care of. This connects strongly to body positivity and the aspect of ‘responsible’ self-value, where self-focus and investing in personal improvement are vital concepts.

4.1.4 Fitness is a journey

One of the strongest themes reproduced by the trainers is the FITNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Journey is a high frequency term. Out of 107 concordance hits, 104 relate to this metaphor. Figure 7 shows a concordance sample for ‘fitness journey’.

Female fitness is repeatedly discussed as an ongoing process or journey:

(17) It is an ongoing personal journey for each of us.

As in every journey, there are roads and a destination. As already stated in section 4.1.1, female fitness is all about health and exercise is ‘the best road to get there’. Health is, then, the destination and its various aspects (physical, mental, emotional) are the goals. Physical goals include appearance, while mental and emotional goals are about empowerment, positive mindset, self-acceptance, self-love, gratitude etc.

Regarding physical goals, aesthetics is discussed somewhat negatively as a goal and is often seen as insubstantial or disregarded in favour of health. For instance, in examples (18) and (19) the female audience is often reminded that fitness is about health and not aesthetics, and that mental strength overpowers physical change.
(18) Fitness is not about aesthetics, it is about caring for your mental, emotional, and physical HEALTH.

(19) Physically change is great but nothing beats mental strength and ability.

This is also relevant to the HAES approach, that health is not always defined by appearance. Although the term HAES is not explicitly used by the trainers, they often emphasize several HAES values: health looks different for everyone and women should prioritise health over aesthetics. These standards are clearly supported by Wells in (20):

(20) Every BODY is beautiful and HEALTHY looks different on every body.

Despite the negative connotations around aesthetics as a physical goal, there is an acknowledgement from the trainers that women do start their fitness journey with physical goals in mind:

(21) There is nothing wrong with having physical goals and the truth that I’ve come to realize is, the large majority of people start a fitness journey purely for physical goals.

Nevertheless, the trainers encourage women to move on from physical goals. Victoria, for example, clearly states on one occasion that there ‘IS something wrong with *only* having physical goals’. Even these ‘wrong’ goals, however, may eventually lead to the right path. Somewhere down the line, these goals change and women ‘end up’ discovering another meaning to their ‘journey’. Mental and emotional goals, such as self-love, eventually take a more central role than physical ones, as also implied in (22). This connects again to the body positivity concept and its main themes: ‘responsibilisation’, self-love, and empowerment.

(22) BUT…they end up finding [the fitness journey is] about SO MUCH MORE than the physical. It’s also about your mental and emotional health and the confidence and empowerment you get with improving your strength and endurance and seeing just how badass and capable you really are!!

Cultivating gratitude and a positive mindset is another mental/ emotional goal that is added along the way. Figure 8 shows the concordance lines of gratitude. Blue markings show additional words and phrases that strengthen this pattern.
An entailment of this metaphor is the ‘every journey has its setbacks’ pattern. It is often mentioned that this journey is not easy and that difficulties or ‘setbacks’ are expected. For instance, example (23) suggests that this fitness journey is not straightforward or effortless for women:

(23) Just know that this journey is not linear. Your goals will shift, your priorities will change, there will be ups and downs […].

There are, however, some positive connotations in this pattern as setbacks can also be a way to learn and grow. This is similar to Sastre’s view of the journey’s obstacles as ‘catharsis’ that leads to a better relationship to the body (2016). In (24), Cela explains that something must be challenging in order to lead to mental and physical progress:

(24) It’s not supposed to be easy! If something doesn’t change you, doesn’t make you better mentally or physically it means it’s too easy. You have to work for it and truly believe in yourself to actually DO IT!

Lastly, in a usual journey, the destination is eventually reached. The female fitness journey, however, is transformed to a never-ending one. It turns into a lifestyle, an ongoing process where self-love and growth are more important than simply achieving a fitness goal. According to the trainers, female fitness ultimately revolves around life or ‘a continuous journey of living’, and ‘growing IN to your truer self’, as also illustrated in (25).
It’s moments like these that I get a big reminder that the fitness journey is way more than just physical aspect of it. Such a large part of it is the mental journey. Of learning not only to take care of your body physically, but learning to love and nurture your body emotionally as well. And not only when you’ve hit a goal! But ALWAYS.

4.2 Body representation

This section presents how body is discussed in terms of appearance by focusing on the collocates weight and change. Furthermore, additional patterns relating to body are presented. As mentioned earlier, this study focuses on the female gender perspective, and, thus, this section refers to how female trainers discuss the female body.

4.2.1 Appearance as a physical goal

Appearance as a physical goal has already been analysed and recognised as a common ‘wrong’ starting goal that can eventually lead right. Weight loss is a common appearance-related goal for women. Several collocates of body are suggestive of a discourse around weight management. Table 5 presents the collocates relating to body modification. Following that, weight and change/changes are discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>STAT</th>
<th>TOKEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.02474</td>
<td>blast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>6.28777</td>
<td>burner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.13577</td>
<td>shred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.55081</td>
<td>changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
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<td>5.20031</td>
<td>change</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.99826</td>
<td>weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.24047</td>
<td>sculpt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collocate weight

Weight is often used to refer to a certain type of training, i.e. ‘weight training’, where weights such as dumbbells or barbells, are involved. In (26), Wells instructs her female audience to add weights as the workout progresses:

(26) Complete 4 sets of each (12, 10, 8, 6 reps) INCREASING your weight as you decrease your reps, if possible!
In addition to collocation, *weight* is also found in the cluster ‘body weight’, which usually refers to exercise. In a ‘body-weight exercise’ one utilises their own weight to work out without additional weights, such as dumbbells. In (27) Cela explains how women can use their body weight to do a step up before progressing to weight addition. A step-up is an exercise involving stepping onto and off a higher surface, e.g. a stool.

(27) Step Up: Start with just your *body weight*, focus on balance and then progress to weights! Its not a race remember: 10 Reps 3 Sets Each Leg.

To sum up, both in clusters and in collocation, *weight* usually refers to exercise and there are not any frequent references to weight loss. This relates to the fitspiration trend and the HAES approach, both of which promote health rather than weight loss. Moreover, HAES revolves around accepting fat instead of criticising it, thus opposing any body-shaming attempts (i.e. negatively commenting on others’ physical appearance) and relating to the body positive movement. However, to successfully connect this lack of focus on weight loss to these concepts, a look at discourses around weight loss/gain is needed.

The most explicitly related term is *weight*. Its frequency in the corpus is 88. Of these, only 17 times refer to weight loss/gain, a compilation of which is presented in Figure 9. When investigating a word, it is useful to check ‘where it occurs within individual texts and within the corpus as a whole’ (Baker, 2006). Several of the lines in Figure 9 (see hits 9,10, 30, and 34) belong to the same Instagram post decreasing the previously mentioned frequency to 10. In other words, the discourse around weight loss/gain is not that strong based on the frequency of *weight*.

![Figure 9. Weight loss/gain](image-url)
Context is crucial to any linguistic analysis. A concordance analysis reveals that a ‘weight loss/gain’ discussion is often accompanied by motivational elements aiming to lessen the importance of weight loss as a female fitness goal. For example, the file shown in Figure 10 has strong elements of body positivity and self-love (Sastre, 2016). Consequently, weight loss is not generally promoted as a female fitness goal and is often related to body acceptance issues when discussed.

Nevertheless, there are words that carry negative or other connotations that enhance the significance of the weight loss goal. For instance, phrases such as ‘work off any bloat or weight’, ‘weight loss prayers’, or ‘goal weight’ suggest that weight loss is a desirable result. In some of these cases, weight loss is clearly stated as a goal as, for instance, a struggle equally important to other life struggles. In (28) weight loss is presented as something desirable for special occasions (wedding):

(28) I’ve always been so cardio focused and after losing some weight for my wedding I really wanted to gain some strength and muscle back!

At other times, that proposition is disarmed by the context, as the last sentence in (29) shows:

(29) MIRACLE FOODS You’ve heard about them. […] These things get so popular because people look for a quick fix. They want to be told that THIS pill or THIS drink or THIS food is going to be the answer to all your weight loss prayers. Truth bomb time…. It’s all a lie.
What the trainer is also trying to do in (29) is to counter a hegemonic discourse. Such attempts, called resistant discourses, ‘often have the effect of reproducing the hegemonic discourse’ because they must state what they are against (Baker, 2006). However, by trying to counter a previously dominant discourse (i.e. that consuming certain foods leads to weight loss), the trainer reproduces it and acknowledges that ‘weight loss’ is something that women ‘pray’ about.

An additional pattern is the two aspects of physical goals, as already implied in example (28). Female physical goals can be about losing fat and/or gaining muscle. An analysis of the term fat shows that it is mostly used as a noun to refer to the fat tissue in the female body. In other words, ‘fat’ is not something that women are, but something that women have. These two aspects relating to physical goals (lose or burn fat and build muscle) are often combined, as shown in example (30).

(30) There’s nothing wrong with wanting to achieve physical goals […] I’m definitely still going after mine! My goals have just shifted from building muscle and losing body fat to simply keeping my body moving and enjoying the mental and emotional benefits of exercise.

This combination implies that fat will eventually become muscle. Women are not actually losing anything, but simply transforming into a stronger version of themselves. So, while weight loss is not generally promoted as a physical goal for women, the combination of losing fat and gaining muscle is regarded as a positive one. As discussed earlier, the trainers communicate that focusing solely on physical goals (in this case, weight loss) is wrong but can lead to the right direction: fat will become muscle, adding to physical strength, which will in turn lead us to the right path of inner strength and mental/emotional health parts of the female fitness journey.

**Collocate change**

Physical goals, especially when referring to weight loss, are not generally promoted and may carry negative connotations. The opposite is true, however, for physical changes as proven by a concordance analysis of the collocates change and changes. Physical change is usually discussed positively as, according to the trainers, it can be ‘empowering’:
There’s *nothing wrong with wanting to achieve physical goals* and I *encourage* you to go after yours because there *IS* something incredibly *empowering* by using your physical body to make change happen, to set goals and achieve them.

The female audience is constantly reminded that physical change – and even the desire to change – is ‘empowering’. This is also evident in (32), where Victoria stresses that change is not only empowering, but natural as well:

(32) Our bodies are *SUPPOSED to change* […] Seeing *physical progress is empowering* because it’s the physical manifestation of all of your hard work.

Moreover, change is presented as something to be proud of as it does not negate self-love. This reminder that the desire for physical change and self-love can co-exist, evident in example (33), could be interpreted as a resistant discourse to the hegemonic discourse that physical goals are considered superficial. The existence of the latter discourse is implied by the constant reminder of what is ‘completely okay’ or what fitness goals do ‘NOT mean’, as also seen in (33).

(33) Having fitness goals does *NOT mean* you don’t love yourself. *You can love yourself* and *want to make changes to your body*. That’s *completely okay*. It’s YOUR body!

*Body or physical change* does not necessarily refer to ‘weight loss’ as it can also relate to ‘physical strength’. This is based on the trainers’ viewpoint that female physical goals can be about losing weight and/or gaining muscle. Furthermore, it connects back to the trainers’ acknowledgment that physical goals are only the beginning of the journey and can lead to the right path: starting from aesthetic goals (weight loss), moving to physical strength (muscle building), empowerment, and finally reaching self-love and acceptance while still having body change as a goal.

Lastly, there are instances where *change* does not refer to fitness. The natural ‘fluctuations of body composition’ due to age, bloating, and other elements (cellulite etc.) are discussed in the context of self-love and acceptance of the ‘body through ALL of its changes and phases’.

### 4.2.2 Contrasting discourse prosodies

Analysis of the term *body* revealed several discourse prosodies, i.e. ‘patterns in discourse […] between a word, phrase or lemma and a set of related words that suggest a discourse’ (Baker,
2006, p. 87). When juxtaposed, however, some of these patterns contrast each other in the way the female body is discussed.

The ‘take care of yourself’ pattern was mentioned earlier under empowerment. Figure 11 displays another concordance sample regarding this ‘care’ pattern relating to body. An additional pattern that emerges is ‘body movement’. The way women take care of their bodies is by moving them, as also illustrated by the blue markings in Figure 11.

Figure 11. Concordance of care relating to body

Body movement is about moving and about learning how to move. Trainers often give instructions about how to perform exercises, further strengthening this ‘body movement’ pattern. Figure 12 shows the main words from which this pattern was derived.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search Word</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mov*</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>exercis*</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train*</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUM</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: using the asterisk to search a word in AntConc includes all possible forms of the lemma in the results.*

Figure 12. Words denoting movement
Additional noun phrases denoting body movement are found using the clusters CL tool. Table 6 displays the frequency of these phrases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a/a</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>CLUSTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>body workout(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>body blast/ blaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>body burn/ burner/ burning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>body shred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>body moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>body challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUM</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equally important for women is to learn ‘how to fuel your body the way it deserves’. In this ‘fuel’ pattern the body is metaphorically presented as a machine that needs the right fuel to function properly. This BODY IS A MACHINE metaphor uses terms (e.g., fuel) from the source domain (i.e. machine) to explain the target domain (i.e. body). The body needs proper fuel (food) or else it will need repairs (e.g., sleep). Example (34) illustrates this metaphor:

(34) Above all, You need to understand that food is fuel, and learn to fuel your body so you FEEL best in any given season of your life’

Two additional metaphors found in the FITNESS corpus is the metaphor BODY IS A SCULPTURE (e.g. ‘full-body sculpting’, ‘sculpt’ etc.) and the BODY IS A BUILDING metaphor (e.g. ‘build your core’). When compared to the previously analysed patterns, contrasting discourse prosodies around the body are revealed. The BODY IS A BUILDING metaphor and the ‘body movement’ pattern contrast the sedentary perspective of sculpting. In order to sculpt something, that artefact needs to remain still and is usually something lifeless (e.g., a statue). In contrast, the female body is alive and needs exercise (movement) to be sculptured.

4.2.3 The ‘real’ self
As it has already been mentioned, body and mind are often combined. The transitivity analysis of body, however, adds a new angle to this relationship. In mental, material, and
behavioural processes, the roles of senser, actor, and behaver ascribe some agency to the participant body. It is no longer something acted upon, but it has volition, feels, or behaves in a certain way, as illustrated in Table 7.

**Table 7. Processes relating to body**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no.</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Participant Role</th>
<th>Process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(35)</td>
<td>If you cultivate a kind [mindset] your body will love you right back.</td>
<td>Senser</td>
<td>Mental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(36)</td>
<td>Truth is, my body never visually started training until I begun training my back.</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>Material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(37)</td>
<td>I am blown away by how my body seemed to have been screaming for this change.</td>
<td>Behaver</td>
<td>Behavioural</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The female body, then, can love, scream, train etc. It moves rather than being moved. In short, it is the one doing the action instead of simply being assigned attributes. Even in other participant roles or circumstances, agency is implicitly ascribed to the body. For instance, in (38) the body can engage in conversation and reply, or even carry us in (39).

(38) and I said to my body. softly. 'i want to be your friend. 'it took a long breath and replied, 'i have been waiting my whole life for this.'

(39) [C]elebrate and show gratitude for all that your body has been through to carry you this far, and to give yourself the best possible future.

Elsewhere, the female body can become ‘aware’ of the fact that ‘it’s about to be trained’. Moreover, we can teach, train and nurture it as we would do for a child or a pet. Once again, the body is something that has volition, can learn and understand. It can be suggested, then, that the ‘body’ is presented as something separate from ourselves. This point is enhanced by the BODY IS A MACHINE metaphor as the ‘body’ is portrayed as something that we can operate.

To conclude, the body is connected to the mind but is also distinct from it. In other words, the female body is presented by the trainers as something alive but separate from our true self. The body is something that women own and should be grateful for, while their true self lies in the mind. This interpretation of the body and mind distinction would explain the
strong focus on the emotional and mental health. If our ‘real’ self is in our mind, it is only logical that we would take better care of it by focusing more on mental/ emotional goals.

4.3 Concluding discussion
This study researched discourses around fitness to find the ones promoted by the three trainers. It also investigated the discourses around the female body from a female gender perspective. Several interrelated discourses were found with strong elements of the body positivity movement, the HAES approach and the fitspiration trend.

Dominant themes in body positivity also found in this research are ‘responsibilisation’, empowerment, and self-love. The use of the ‘journey’ metaphor was also a dominant pattern with the difference that it did not simply describe ‘the relationship to one’s body’, but the whole fitness process (Sastre, 2016).

Regarding HAES, the central principle that ‘weight is a poor indicator of health’ (Donaghue & Allen, 2015) was recurring in the FITNESS corpus. Nevertheless, female physical goals relating to appearance and weight loss were acknowledged as desirable. Generally, however, the trainers promote health and fitness over thinness and weight loss, thus connecting to fitspiration.

5. Conclusion
This study examined the female fitness discourse on Instagram from a female personal trainer’s perspective.

In RQ1, several discourses reproduced by the three personal trainers were investigated. The results were presented under four major themes: mind and body connection, physical strength, empowerment, and the FITNESS IS A JOURNEY metaphor. Various patterns were discussed, of which health (physical, mental, and emotional), exercise and aesthetics were the most prominent ones. There was a general emphasis on the mental part and strong evidence of the body positivity and fitspiration trends, as well as the HAES approach.

RQ2 looked more closely at the patterns around the female body, further linking the results to fitspiration and HAES. Appearance was analysed, revealing the two sides of physical goals for women: weight loss and building strength. Gaining mental and physical strength is strongly promoted by the trainers, while weight loss is not. Moreover, several other patterns revealed contrasting ways in which the trainers talk about the female body.
Lastly, the pattern that the true self lies in the mind provided a possible explanation to the general emphasis on the mental aspect.

This study is subject to limitations, such as small participant sample and corpus size. Previously mentioned CL limitations include the risks of only focusing on textual elements and the interpretative nature of CL analyses. In other words, this study is an interpretation attempt based on textual analysis of certain terms. Investigation of different terms could yield different results. Moreover, based on research focus, only relevant results were presented. Several discourses were not included as they were not as relevant or strongly promoted. For instance, identity construction (group-identity, and self-presentation) strongly interacted with advertising discourses for promotional reasons.

Future research could change perspective (e.g., analyse advertising discourse) or further investigate the visual representation of body by adopting a multimodal approach. Tiggemann and Zaccardo focused on female body images and found that ‘the overrepresentation of particular body types serves to inaccurately conflate fitness with thinness (or muscularity)’ (2018, emphasis added). Given that physical strength is one of the dominant discourses around female fitness with strong fitspiration traces, it would be interesting to explore if there is an overrepresentation of muscular bodies in the personal trainers’ Instagram accounts.
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Appendix I: Semantic groups

Table 8 presents the semantic groups based on the frequency list of the FITNESS corpus. Lemmas are marked in capital letters. Please also note the following:

1. The word lists under each group are not exhaustive. The words included serve merely as examples and were chosen as most clear representatives of each group based on their meaning.

2. The division into groups was based in the more explicit definition of the term *discourse* as ‘topic’ (Baker, 2006). Therefore, these groups represent all the discourses (re)produced by the participants, even those that do not relate to fitness. Only the fitness-related groups were investigated in depth and presented in the study.

3. A concordance analysis of each word was conducted to ensure that they belong to the right semantic group. Because of the categorising and conversational functions of the hashtag, list items such as #fbgcommunity were taken into consideration when investigating discourses around fitness.

4. Kelsey Wells’ program is called ‘pwr’ which stands for ‘power’. Wells often uses this abbreviation in her posts and writes, for instance, ‘pwrful’ instead of ‘powerful’.

Table 8. Semantic groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A/A</th>
<th>Semantic Group</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>workout, fitness, weight, reps, training, gym, push-up, cardio, strength, muscle</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Physical Strength</td>
<td>strength, strong, muscle gain/loss, ability, physical, physically</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>EMPOWER, empowering, self-empowerment, power/pwr, powerful/pwrful</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>health, care, healthy, mental, emotional, physical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Body</td>
<td>BODY, weight, move, arm, chest, leg, physical, core, head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>food, nutrition, EAT, meal, diet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>A/A</td>
<td>Semantic Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 7 | 7   | Technology: Internet & app-related terms | *link in bio, www.[X].com, tag, caption, post, swipe,*  
*download, stories, #fitbodyapp, like button* |
| 8 | 8   | Community                           | *join, community, support, #fbgcommunity, #fbggirls, team,*  
*sharing, (never/not) alone* |
| 9 | 9   | Terms of Naming/Reference           | *girl/ girls, you guys, babel/ babes, ladies, mamas/ mamas, my*  
*beautiful friends, woman, queens* |
| 10| 10  | Time                                | *DAY, time, WEEK, today, seconds, later, phase, Monday,*  
*tomorrow, soon* |
| 11| 11  | Quantification/Amount of something | *section, amount, small, total, entire, massive, huge, few, part,*  
*whole, complete, thousands, additional, extra* |
Appendix II: Frequency list

Due to corpus size (51,779 tokens) it would not be beneficial to present a full frequency list. Therefore, a sample of the FITNESS corpus frequency list is displayed in Table 9, containing all lexical words with a frequency rate larger than 50. A full list is available upon request.

Table 9. Frequency list sample

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<th>FREQUENCY</th>
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<td>reps</td>
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<td>www</td>
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<td>app</td>
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<td>fitbodyapp</td>
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<td>body</td>
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<td>proud</td>
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<td>189</td>
<td>kelseywellspwr</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>seconds</td>
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<td>day</td>
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<td>session</td>
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<td>pwrprogram</td>
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<td>things</td>
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<td>time</td>
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<td>toneandsculpt</td>
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<td>fbggirls</td>
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<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>training</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix III: Links to websites

Kelsey Wells, Sweat app https://www.sweat.com/
Anna Victoria, Fitbody app https://fitbodyapp.com/
Krissy Cella, Tone & Sculpt app https://toneandsculpt.app/