



Durham
University

Department of Sport
and Exercise Sciences

Inspiring the extraordinary

Creating Space for the Affective Dimensions of Physical Activity in Older Age.

Professor Cassandra Phoenix



My Background



Sport & Exercise Sciences
(University of Exeter)

European Centre for Environment and
Human Health
(University of Exeter Medical School)

Department for Health
(University of Bath)

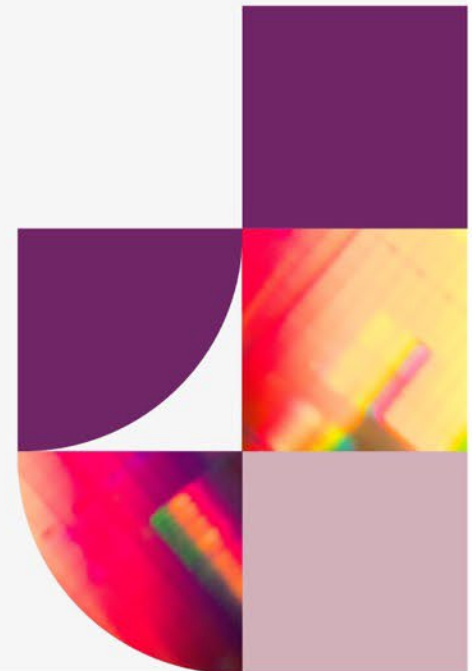
Dept. Sport & Exercise Sciences
& Institute of Medical Humanities
(Moving Bodies Lab)
Durham University



Regular Physical Activity has Health Benefits

Reduces chance of:

- ✓ Type II diabetes
- ✓ Cardiovascular disease
- ✓ Falls
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Joint and back pain
- ✓ Cancers (colon and breast)
- ✓ Benefits health
- ✓ Improves sleep
- ✓ Maintains healthy weight
- ✓ Manages stress
- ✓ Improves quality of life



Physical activity for adults and older adults

Benefits health	Reduces your chance of	Type II Diabetes -40%
Improves sleep		Cardiovascular disease -35%
Maintains healthy weight		Falls, depression etc. -30%
Manages stress		Joint and back pain -25%
Improves quality of life		Cancers (colon and breast) -20%

Some is good, more is better	Make a start today: it's never too late	Every minute counts
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Be active

at least

150

minutes
moderate intensity
per week

increased breathing
able to talk

OR

or a combination of both

at least

75

minutes
vigorous intensity
per week

breathing fast
difficulty talking

to keep muscles, bones and joints strong

Build strength

on at least **2** days a week

Minimise sedentary time

Break up periods of inactivity

Improve balance

For older adults, to reduce the chance of frailty and falls

2 days a week



Sport England Active Lives Survey (Nov 21-22)



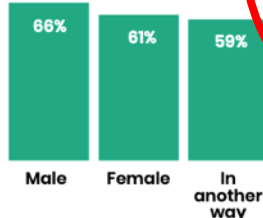
Levels of activity

Summary of demographic differences

Our data shows there are significant inequalities:

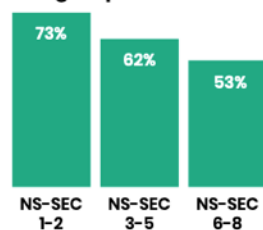
1 Gender

Men (66% or 14.7m) are more likely to be active than women (61% or 14.2m) and those who describe themselves in another way (59% or 0.2m).



2 Socio-economic groups

Those from lower social groups (NS-SEC 6-8*) are the least likely to be active (53%).

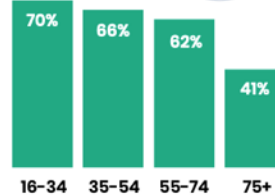


[Link to data tables](#)

*See our definitions page for the full definition of each demographic group.

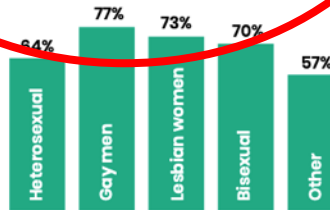
3 Age

Activity levels generally decrease with age, with the sharpest decrease coming at age 75+ (to 41%).



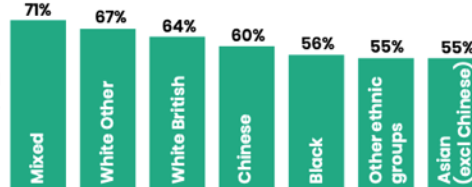
4 Sexual orientation

Gay men, lesbian women and bisexual adults are all more likely to be active than heterosexual adults.



5 Ethnicity

There are differences in activity levels based on ethnic background.

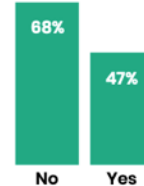


Additional demographic breakdowns for faith, working status and education stage can be found in the data tables.



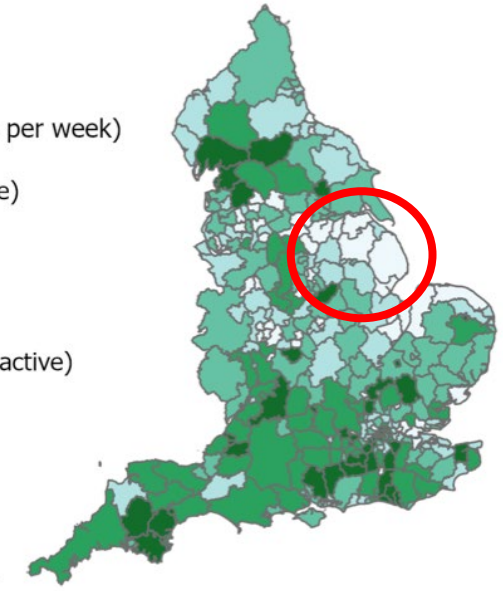
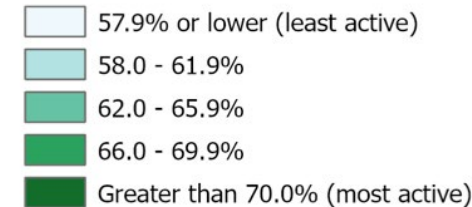
6 Disability and long term health conditions

Activity is less common for adults with a disability or long-term health condition* (47%) than those without (68%).



Activity across England

Active (an average of at least 150 mins per week)



Inactivity in older age: Common barriers

- Poor body image
 - Lack of confidence
 - Uncomfortable in gym environments
 - Fear (falling, injury, crime)
- Lack of time
 - Weather
 - Pollution (noise, air)
 - Non-inclusive design
 - Not knowing people
 - Poor health

Body-related emotions are linked to physical activity behaviour.

(Sabiston et al., 2020)



Body-Related Emotions

Anxiety

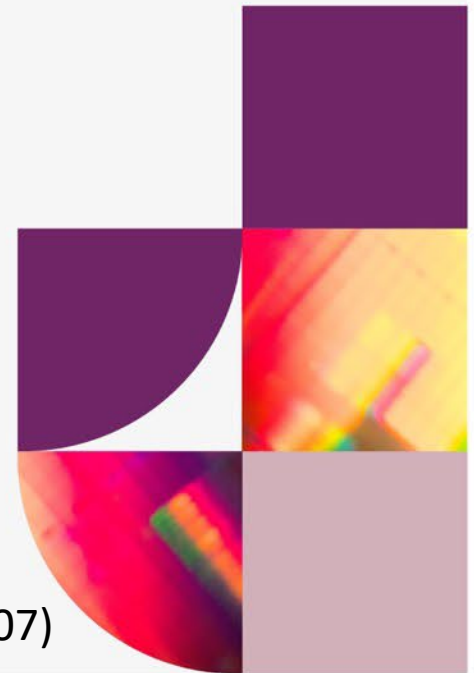
Shame

Envy

Guilt



(Tracy, Robins & Tagney, 2007)



Ageism is a Public Health Issue

(Chang et al., 2020; Officer & Fuente-Nunez, 2018)

Ageism is a global challenge: UN

Ageism leads to poorer health, social isolation, earlier deaths and cost economies billions: report calls for swift action to implement effective anti-ageism strategies

18 March 2021 | News release | Geneva, Switzerland | Reading time: 6 min (1549 words)



Ageism is a Threat to Active Ageing

Social Issues and Policy Review



Original Article | Full Access

The Risks of Ageism Model: How Ageism and Negative Attitudes toward Age Can Be a Barrier to Active Aging

Hannah J. Swift , Dominic Abrams, Ruth A. Lamont, Lisbeth Drury

First published: 13 January 2017 | <https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12031> | Citations: 38

Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure, 2019
Vol. 42, No. 1, 24–42, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07053436.2019.1582903>



Perceptions of aging and experiences of ageism as constraining factors of moderate to vigorous leisure-time physical activity in later life

Ariane S. Massie and Brad A. Meisner*

Journal of Aging and Physical Activity, 2021, 29, 99-115

<https://doi.org/10.1123/japa.2019-0230>

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Human Kinetics
ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Ageism in the Fitness and Health Industry: A Review of the Literature

Bora Jin and Idethia Shevon Harvey



Guest Editorial

Efforts to Promote Physical Activity Must Battle Ageist Stereotypes



Ageism is a Threat to Active Ageing

MOVING STORIES:

Understanding the Impact of Physical Activity on Experiences and Perceptions of (self) Ageing

Cassandra Phoenix and Noreen Orr

Key Findings



PERCEPTIONS OF AGEING

In research literature elsewhere, it has been argued that being physically active is fast becoming a moral obligation that each 'good citizen' should engage with as they age. In some instances, this way of thinking can be problematic because it can ignore structural barriers (e.g. finance, accessibility, opportunity, etc.) that might prevent an individual's ability to be active should s/he wish. That aside, all of our participants believed that being physically active was a 'good way' to age healthily. This was also reinforced in the series of focus groups that we held with people from different age groups to find out about other people's perceptions of physically active older adults.

Many of our participants were aware that as they were growing older there were expectations about how they should behave. They reported feelings of being "put in a box" once people learned of their age and that because they were considered "old", it was assumed that they would not

be interested in certain things. For example, some of our participants sensed that other people felt they were no longer interested in learning new things and were only interested in the health benefits of physical activity having little or no concern for the other dimensions it can bring to one's life such as a sense of excitement, pleasure, competition, achievement and so on.

Recommendation: Promoters of sport and physical activity should consider increasing the visibility of a diverse group of older adults being active in order to challenge limited stereotypes concerning what it means to grow older. Highlighting a range of activities that can be undertaken at a range of intensities, along with the diverse experiences that being physically active might bring to people's lives over time is likely to connect with a wider audience while also depicting the lives of physically active older adults more accurately.



There is no reason to assume, just because you have reached a certain age, that you can't do something.

Richard, Cycling, Age 60

I don't want to be pigeon holed because I'm 61... I don't want people to tell me to grow old gracefully... I don't go and do things deliberately to try and maintain my youth but I like to do what I enjoy.

Anthony, Rowing, Age 61

There is no reason why anybody should think, 'I've got to the age of 60, I'm going to sit back and I'm going to do knitting'.

Jan, Fitness Classes, Age 74

Inactivity in older age: Common barriers

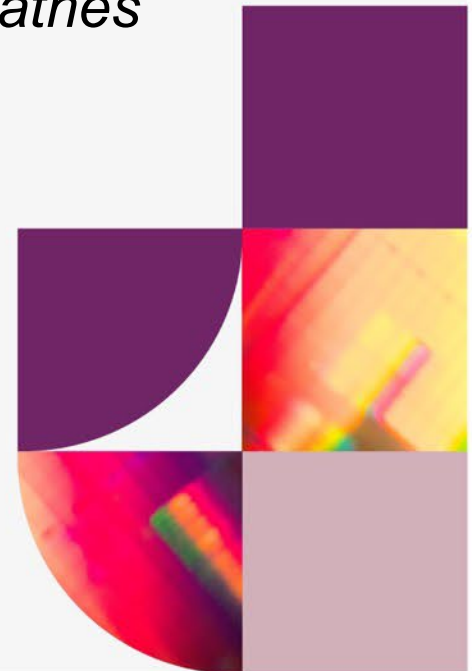
- Poor body image
- Lack of confidence
- Uncomfortable in gym environments
- Fear (falling, injury, crime)
- Lack of time
- Weather
- Pollution (noise, air)
- Non-inclusive design
- Not knowing people
- Poor health



No such thing as bad weather?



*“If it's windy, I actually quite like the wind. I don't like the damage it does on things, and I wouldn't go out when you have to really walk, you know, into it, but **I feel sometimes invigorated with the wind.** I stand I stand there open me arms and get the wind in me.... I feel as if it invigorates me, I feel, I feel like, oh, this is like, (smiles and breathes in) lovely the wind.”*





Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health

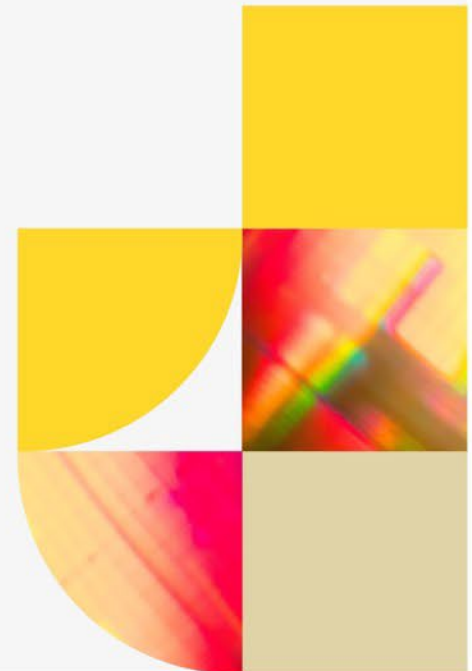
Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

ISSN: 2159-676X (Print) 2159-6778 (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rqrs21>

'Weather work': embodiment and weather learning in a national outdoor exercise programme

Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson

“Love it, I love the rain. I’m not afraid of the rain... It’s just rain”



Walking in a winter wonderland...



*And standing on this side of the dean. You can see the castle from the other side, you can see like the castle wall, and **we can't see any of that in the summer.** No, no. So, I think it opens up. **It makes the woodland field bigger in the winter,** it's kind of it just feels like a completely different place. Whereas in the summer, when we put the leaves on the trees, it could be anywhere because you can't really see very far. It's quite disorientating.*

(Margaret)



The Pleasure(s) of Physical Activity in Older Age

Sensual pleasure
Pleasure of immersion
Documented pleasure
Pleasure of habitual action

> [Soc Sci Med](#). 2014 Aug;115:94-102. doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.06.013. Epub 2014 Jun 11.

Pleasure: a forgotten dimension of physical activity in older age

Cassandra Phoenix ¹, Noreen Orr ²

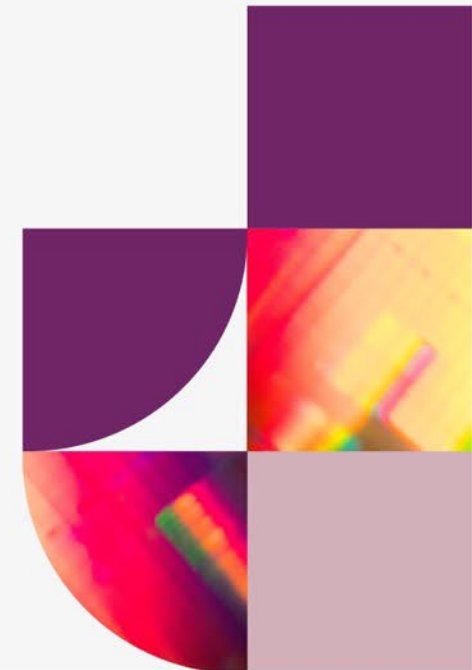
ANNALS OF LEISURE RESEARCH, 2017
VOL. 20, NO. 1, 75-95
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2016.1218290>

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group

'Hope I never stop': older men and their two-wheeled love affairs

Karla Minello and Deborah Nixon

 **Durham**
University
Department of Sport
and Exercise Sciences



Feeling the Rhythm of PA

*Every day I plan to go. The **exception** would be if the **weather is so diabolical** that we couldn't leave clothes dry and safe, because they would blow away or something, and if it was pouring with rain, because you can't put wet underclothes on. Or, **if I have my little grandson**, if he'd been ill and I needed to look after him in the morning. At the moment, he goes to a playgroup in the mornings and I pick him up at 12 o'clock and bring him home for the afternoon while my daughter works, so I can manage my swim still. Once or twice he's had croup or something and I have had him for the whole day so of course I couldn't take him down to the water.*



“The hardest thing when my wife died was the **motivation to do anything, go anywhere, to move really.** I didn't realise the stress I'd been under, to be honest. We didn't talk about the possibility of her death. I didn't mention it because she was so positive and I didn't want her head to drop. She, I think, didn't mention it because she didn't want to worry me. But, when it was all over, funeral and all the rest I don't think I did anything for three weeks except sleep, you know. And then I couldn't ... it seemed to be too much trouble to get out of the chair.”

Social Science & Medicine 231 (2019) 47–54

Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

 **Social Science & Medicine**

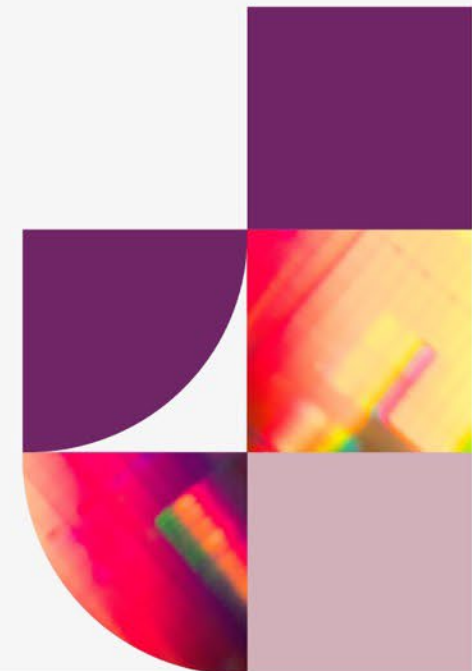
journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/socscimed



Beyond “Move More”: Feeling the *Rhythms* of physical activity in mid and later-life

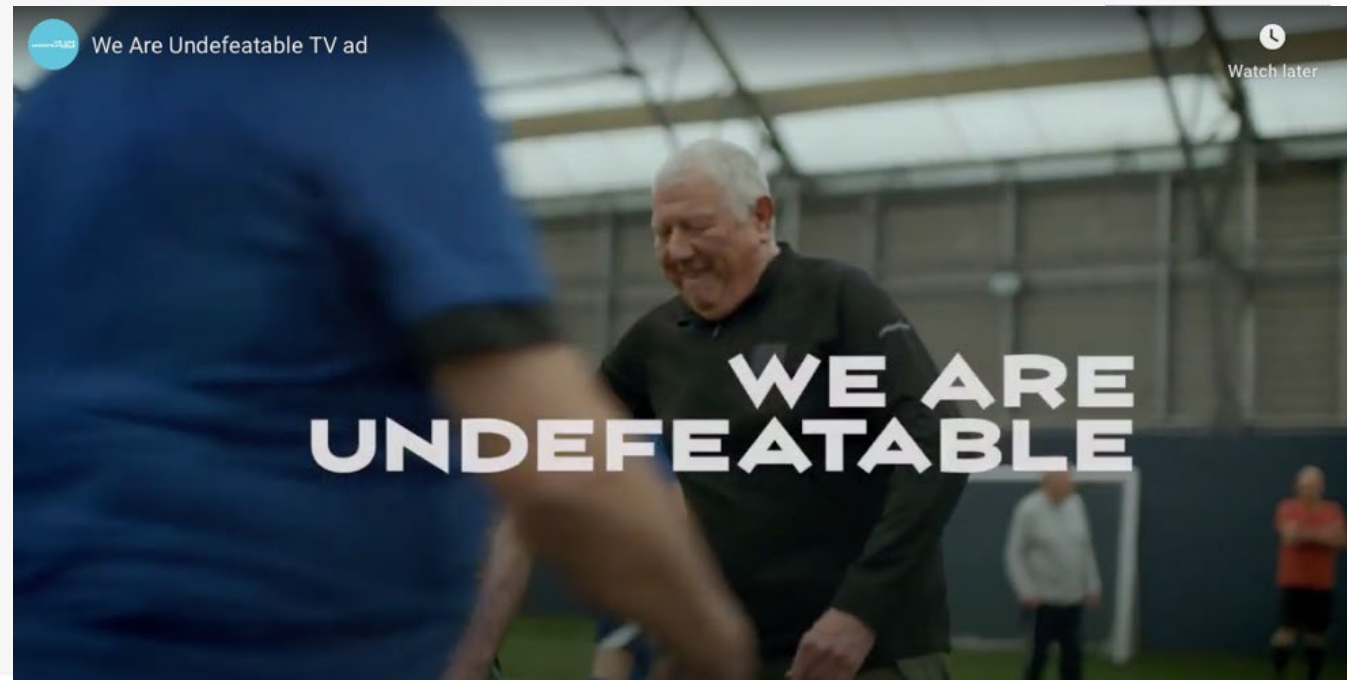
Cassandra Phoenix^{a,*}, Sarah L. Bell^b





What does this mean for positively influencing physical activity in older age?

1. From PA interventions to anti-ageism interventions.



2. From “move more”, to moving with pleasure ... and in (spite of) polyrhythms.



3. From self-discipline to self-compassion.

- Open to suffering
 - Caring and kindness.
 - Non-judgemental of failures.
 - Connect with common human experience.
 - Bodily gratitude.
- ✓ Self compassionate people have higher levels of subjective wellbeing



(Neff, 2012; Allen et al., 2011)

Making Space for Affective Dimensions of PA in Older Age



Anti-ageism

Beyond "move more"

Compassion

Acknowledgements

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World Health Organisation

Wellcome

County Durham Sport

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Meridith Griffin, Erical Bennett, Sarah Bell,
Noreen Orr, Miles Lawson, Ben Wheeler.
The Moving Bodies Lab (IMH).



PhD Scholarship Competition



Doctoral Training in the Social Sciences
North East of England and Northern Ireland

NINE DTP Studentship Competition

The Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences is delighted to invite high quality applications to be considered for entry into the prestigious NINE DTP scholarship competition.

 [Student news](#)



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