



Female millennials wearing workout wear as daily wear in the U.S.

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Due to the rise of fitness-conscious consumers who consider athletics not only a hobby but also a lifestyle (Petro, 2015), athleisure wear has become a large lifestyle trend among female consumers. According to Marshal Cohen (2017) from the NPD Group, Inc., athleisure is now a comfortable lifestyle for consumers of all ages and entered into its second generation in 2017, focusing more on lifestyle than performance. As a result, it is common to see women in yoga pants and similar workout attire rather than skinny jeans. Although this tendency applies to teenagers to middle-age women in particular, it is extremely popular among millennials. Maris Cohen (2017) found that younger millennials (ages 18–24) tend to spend more time and money at beauty and specialty apparel retailers, but less on accessories. They are also sportier, eat healthier, cook less, and shop wholesale more often than older millennials (ages 25–34). Athleisure is an attractive clothing category becoming part of young female millennials' lifestyles; thus, the purpose of this study was to determine how and why more young female millennials in the U.S. wear workout wear as daily wear and what they most value by doing so.

The survey was distributed to fashion design and merchandising students enrolled in two fashion courses in a large public Midwestern university in the United States. In total, 235 participants completed the surveys, including 199 female students. For this study, only female students' data were analyzed. Most participants were 18–24 years old (97.5%; n=194) and White or Caucasian (75.9%; n=151). The participants were asked various questions related to wearing workout wear as daily wear, workout habits, their interest in health issues as well as the self-objectification questionnaire (SOQ) developed by Noll and Fredrickson (1998). SOQ measures the extent to which individuals consider five observable physical attributes (i.e., weight, sex appeal, physical attractiveness, firm/sculpted muscles, and measurements) to be more important than five nonobservable physical attributes (i.e., physical coordination, health, strength, energy level, and physical fitness level). Respondents ranked all 10 attributes in the order of their impact on the physical self-concept, from least impact (rank=0) to greatest impact (rank=9).

The top three reasons that respondents wear workout wear as daily wear were “because it is functional” (80.4%, n=160), “because I like designs of workout wear” (44.7%, n=89), and “because it is trendy” (42.2%, n=84). The top four occasions for wearing workout wear as daily wear were “when going to exercise” (93.5%, n=186), “when you are at home” (88.4%, n=176), “when going to school” (82.9%, n=165), and “when going to the grocery store” (82.4%, n=164).

All respondents (100%, n=199) had worked out before, and 68.3% (n=136) were currently working out. The majority of respondents wearing workout wear as daily wear (n=204) worked out either 5–10 times a year (35.9%, n=69) or 1–3 times a month (30.2%, n=58). Approximately 30% (n= 60) had been exercising for more than 10 years, and another 24.1% (n=48) had been exercising for 2–3 years. In terms of interest in health issues, 83% (n=176) of

respondents were either very much (27.1%; n=54) or somewhat (61.3%; n=122) interested. The top three health issues of interest were balanced diet (55.8%; n=111), nutrition, physical activity, and obesity (52.3%; n=104), and food safety (48.7%; n=97). The least concerning health issue was prescription drug overdose (7%; n=14). The most popular items worn by those who wear workout wear as daily wear were hoodies (78.8%; n=157), t-shirts (76.9%; n=153), and sports bras (74.9%; n=149), followed by jackets/outerwear (48.2%; n=96), pants/leggings (46.2%; n=92), and tanks (47.7%; n=95). The top favorite workout wear brands were Nike (83.9%; n=167), Adidas (82.9%; n=165), and Victoria's Secret (60.3%; n=120). The top reasons for choosing respondents' favorite workout wear brands were comfort/functionality (88.9%; n=177), followed by fabrics (66.8%; n=133), right fit (65.8%; n=131), and style/fashion trend (65.3%; n=44).

The SOQ scale score was calculated by finding the difference between the sum of the five ranks given to the nonobservable attributes and the sum of the five ranks given to the observable attributes. According to Noll and Fredrickson (1998), more positive scores indicate a greater emphasis on physical appearance (how the body looks) whereas more negative scores indicate a greater emphasis on physical competence (how the body feels or what it can do). The results of our study showed that the female participants who wear workout wear as their daily wear had a median SOQ score of -9 (43.2%; n=86), and 62.8% (n=128) of the respondents had negative scores ranging from -25 to -9. This result indicates that those female millennials who would like to wear workout wear as daily wear put more emphasis on how the body feels or what it can do rather than how the body looks.

This study explored the top reasons and occasions for wearing workout wear as daily wear, the relationship among workout habit, health, and nutrition interest, and the relationship between body consciousness and wearing workout wear as daily wear. The findings can help industry professionals in related fields gain a better understanding of younger female millennials' lifestyle to plan their strategical planning for athleisure wear to meet young female millennials' needs.

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