

## **Affective Responses to Common Fitness Testing in College-Aged Women**

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### ABSTRACT

Fitness testing provides awareness of discrepancy from normative standards and is a major component in most health, medical, and wellness settings. This discrepancy may have an effect on an individual's desire to change or maintain particular health behaviors. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the present study was to examine the affective responses to discrepancies from normative data across six standard fitness tests. **METHODS:** Forty-eight college-aged women were presented with their discrepancy from a normative standard across standard fitness tests for body fat, body shape, aerobic fitness, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility. **RESULTS:** Findings support previous conceptualizations on perceived discrepancies and affective responses: greater negative discrepancies from a normative standard in common fitness tests are associated with greater changes in negative feeling states. However, feeling more negative about a discrepancy does not guarantee a specific change in frustration-anger, which is theorized to relate to increased effort to reduce a discrepancy. Only three tests related to such responses, body fat ( $r=.46, p<.01$ ), aerobic fitness ( $r=.41, p<.01$ ), and muscular endurance ( $r=.34, p<.05$ ), perhaps due to their perceived threat to one's global physical self-worth. **CONCLUSION:** Only discrepancies from body fat, aerobic fitness, and muscular endurance norms produced a change in feeling state which may in turn affect future behavior. Future research should examine how affective response could have positive or negative impacts on future behavior to reduce the perceived discrepancy, in addition to why particular discrepancies may be linked to physical self-worth, and not others.