

Fitness Doping

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Fitness Doping

Trajectories, Gender, Bodies
and Health

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Preface

Both in research and in the public discourse, the use of illicit performance- and image-enhancing substances (PIED) has largely been connected to the context of formally governed and competitive sport. For instance, tremendous attention has been paid to cyclists, weightlifters, sprinters, and others, and scholars have discussed the different means (e.g., anabolic androgenic steroids, human growth hormones, and blood doping) elite sport athletes have used to boost their competitive edge. In the shadow of this discussion, the use of doping in the context of gym and fitness culture has largely (in comparison) proceeded unnoticed. *Fitness Doping* has been written with the intent to rectify this imbalance and take a closer look at recent developments in drug use practices in the context of gym and fitness culture.

Fitness Doping is the result of our long collaboration and our interest in the global development and growth of gym and fitness culture. We have previously published *The Global Gym. Gender, Health and Pedagogies* (2014), with Palgrave Macmillan, in which the franchising and cultural commercialization of fitness are discussed. Later, we published a second book, *Extreme Sports, Extreme Bodies. Gender, Identities and Bodies in Motion* (2019). In this second book, we took a more

carnalizing and phenomenological approach to the sports of bodybuilding, ironman triathlon, and mixed martial arts. In the volume at hand, which is to be understood as the third and final part of the puzzle, we have aimed to synthesize the outcomes of our previous writings and to contribute to an ongoing debate on fitness doping, health, and gender.

In the book, we will discuss how the global development of gym and fitness culture has impacted the general fitness doping demography in recent decades, as well as the trajectories leading to doping and the bodily understandings/negotiations connected to the use of illicit drugs. Clearly, it is not only bodybuilders and dedicated weightlifters who use doping in these contexts. Initiating our work, we saw the need for a more problematized and theoretically informed discussion on fitness doping trajectories and the gendering of fitness doping. We are sincerely grateful that Sharla Plant and Poppy Hull at Palgrave Macmillan, as well as the anonymous reviewers, found our proposal interesting and relevant, making it possible for us to write and publish the book at hand.

This book builds on data that have mainly been gathered in a Swedish context and using an ethnographic approach. In Sweden, not only is doping prohibited in terms of trafficking, but the presence of such substances in the body is also illegal. We have met and talked to people operating within the context of gym and fitness culture who—in different ways and to different extents—use doping. By generously sharing their experiences, understandings, and perspectives on things, these people have engaged in discussions that could have legal repercussions. We are sincerely grateful for their generosity and would like to thank all of the women and men who took the time to talk with us and included us in their everyday lives. We would also like to express our appreciation to some colleagues and friends for their efforts and support. For their role in a larger project, we would like to thank our project collaborators Ellen Sverkesson, Ph.D. student at Linnaeus University, and Johan Öhman, at the anti-doping network PRODIS (prevention of doping in Sweden). We would also like to express our gratitude to the *Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare* (FORTE) for financial support. Thank you also to Andreas Björke and Marie Lann.

Further, we would like to thank some scholars for their input and generous contribution in the form of reading, commenting on and

offering their insights on our work. Thank you Ask Vest Christiansen, Aarhus University, and April Henning, University of Stirling. April contributed greatly as a co-author on one of the chapters (Chapter 3). We also wish to thank Karen Williams for proof reading and editing the text. Karen, your ways with words always bring clarity to our thoughts.

Some chapters in the book build on articles previously published by the authors in academic journals, including *Sport in Society*, *Performance Enhancement and Health*, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* and *Social Sciences*.

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