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Do T.V. and Music Affect Your Workout? A Winthrop Graduate Assistant Says...

Winthrop University

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Do T.V. and Music Affect Your Workout? A Winthrop Graduate Assistant Says...

Quick Facts

- Nicole Swank is a graduate assistant from Dallas, Texas.
- She is pursuing a master's in sport and fitness administration.



Nicole Swank

ROCK HILL, SOUTH CAROLINA — According to several new studies, the type of television program you watch during a workout can affect the overall benefits of that workout, [The Huffington Post reported](#).

Winthrop University's **Nicole Swank** wants to put that to the test.

For her thesis, Swank, [a sport and fitness administration master's candidate](#), will examine "**The Effect of Music and T.V. Viewing During Aerobic Exercise.**" She recently finished gathering data from 30 test subjects and will now interpret the data.

Swank has had a front-row seat to all kinds of exercise and workouts. As a graduate assistant in the [West Center](#), Swank has personally trained patrons and taught group fitness classes, all of which sparked her interest in the topic.

"These days, everyone always seems to be watching something or listening to music in the gym," she said. "No one really stops to 'smell the roses.'"

Determining that there wasn't much insight into how music and television (including YouTube videos and Netflix) affected an overall workout, it seemed like a perfect fit. Thanks to prior research, Swank learned that external stimuli typically block pain receptors and provide a distraction, which would allow exercisers to feel like they're working out harder than they actually are. She also hypothesized that when reflecting on their workout, people would indicate that they most enjoyed one accompanied with music first, then television.

To collect her data, Swank observed her test subjects for three workouts on either the elliptical machine or treadmill. Subjects had to stick with the same cardio machine for all three workouts and start at the same speed each time. For 30 minutes, Swank monitored her subjects' RPE (rate of perceived exertion), MET (metabolic equivalents), WATT (power) and heart rate. Several points throughout the workout, she also asked them to rate how hard they felt they were working out according to the Borg scale, with 6 being no exertion and 20 being max exertion.

As she pores over her data, Swank hopes her eventual results will be published in physical education outlets and used by exercisers to improve their workout.

"It can be used by a lot of people, especially when they can understand it and apply it to themselves," she said. "I see a very real-world application here."

Swank came to Winthrop two years ago after earning a bachelor's degree in psychology from the

University of Arkansas. However, the Dallas native found her niche in campus recreation. When she saw an advertisement for a graduate assistant job at Winthrop, she jumped at the chance, moving 16 hours away from her hometown.

After graduation, she plans to pursue a doctorate.

Want to talk with Swank about her new research? Contact Nicole Chisari, communications coordinator, [via email](#) or 803/323-2236.

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