

Publication

Acute Exercise and Emotion Recognition in Young Adolescents

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While there is evidence that acute bouts of aerobic and coordinative exercise positively affect attention and executive functions, no study has focused on the impact of acute exercise on facial-emotion processing. A total of 106 adolescents (mean age 13.0 years) were randomly assigned to a group performing either an aerobic exercise session (AER), an aerobic exercise session with coordinative demands (AER+C), or stretching. Before and after the 35-min experimental session, participants completed computerized facial-emotion labeling and emotion-matching tasks. Facial-emotion labeling, but not emotion matching, increased over time, but more so in AER and AER+C conditions. When aerobic exercise is combined with coordinative demands, greater benefits seem to be elicited for some aspects of facial-emotion recognition. Results suggest a new direction for the influence of exercising on dimensions of psychological functioning, namely on emotion processing and social cognition.

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