



My Life at the Gym: Feminist Perspectives on Community through the Body

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Personal accounts celebrating the place of exercise in women's lives—and as the site of women's community.

“Very often, my workouts are the best part of my day,” notes feminist writer Jo Malin. *My Life at the Gym* celebrates women's experiences of exercise and the found spaces for this activity as places of community with other women. Neither elite athletes nor dancers, the contributors to this volume are well aware of the negative cultural messages about women's bodies that may influence body work. Yet, like many women, they have found comfortable and healthful spaces that allow them to enjoy exercise and take care of the physical needs of their bodies. Through diverse essays, personal accounts, and poems, contributors portray everyday lives in which meaning comes from movement and from the companions they move with in a variety of activities from running, walking, swimming, and skiing to boxing, Morris dancing, and yoga, among others. A unique, positive, and largely unremarked view of exercise and its place in women's lives, this book will resonate with and inspire many readers.

“*My Life at the Gym* brings together essays, poems, and personal narratives of women's experiences in gyms, dance studios, and outdoors. This diverse collection points to an important part of women's everyday experience—exercise and fitness—often ignored by feminists within a number of disciplines. These narratives, thus, will serve as an inspiration for further feminist interdisciplinary insights into women's physical activity.” — Pirkko Markula, editor of *Feminist Sport Studies: Sharing Experiences of Joy and Pain*

Jo Malin is a Project Director and Grants Specialist in the School of Education and Adjunct Assistant Professor of English at Binghamton University, State University of New York. She is the author of *The Voice of the Mother: Embedded Maternal Narratives in Twentieth-Century Women's Autobiographies* and the coeditor (with Victoria Boynton) of *Encyclopedia of Women's Autobiography* and *Herspace: Women, Writing, and Solitude*.

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