# Olly Murs' body transformation sparks debate over dad bod appeal



Olly Murs has recently sparked an interesting debate online about body image and attractiveness after unveiling his 12-week body transformation. The 38-year-old singer, who is expecting his second child with wife Amelia, had worked intensely with coach and nutritionist Greg Marriott to achieve a leaner, more muscular physique in preparation for his upcoming tour. However, reactions from fans, especially women, suggested that his previous 'dad bod' resonated more with their preferences.

The discussion gained momentum over the weekend when Olly’s transformation photos were shared on X (formerly Twitter) by PhD student William Costello, who asked users to choose which version of Olly they found more attractive. The poll revealed a significant gender divide: nearly 43% of men preferred Olly’s post-transformation look, whereas more than 26% of women favoured his ‘before’ picture, with only 7% choosing the shredded physique.

This online debate reflects a broader cultural phenomenon regarding male body ideals known as the ‘dad bod’ – a term that describes a softer, bulkier, yet still fit physique. The dad bod seems to appeal to many women, often being described as more ‘realistic’ and ‘relatable’ than the ultra-lean and highly defined muscular build, which some find less approachable or even intimidating.

Views shared on X by women included remarks such as: “The left looks like he should lose a few pounds, but the right looks too harsh. I couldn't imagine having a cuddle with the guy on the right, and he'd be a pain to live with being obsessed about what food he could eat.” Another user commented, “Women don't need ripped guys... Dad bods are perfectly fine. We like that. Muscles are good but dad bod guys have muscles too. Can you lift a full cooler? That's swoon-worthy.”

This preference for the dad bod is not unique to Olly Murs. Chris Pratt, known for his transformation from a rounder look in Parks and Recreation to a chiseled hero in Guardians of the Galaxy, was praised by fans when he returned to a softer physique several years later. The ‘dad bod Chris Pratt’ became a term of affection among fans who preferred his more relaxed frame.

Similarly, David Harbour, known for his role in Netflix’s Stranger Things, openly supported the appreciation of the dad bod during earlier seasons, before shedding 75 pounds for a more intense role in the fourth series. Harbour had said to CNET Magazine in 2019, “I do think that in a certain way, I've become a bit of a sex symbol for our time... But I'm also a little big and a little chubby. I love the idea of real bodies on television. And I love the idea of making real people beautiful and loved.”

Closer to home, Love Island’s Nathan Massey also underwent a fitness programme to lose weight, moving away from his dad bod after becoming a father, highlighting a trend among public figures balancing parenthood and fitness.

Scientific research supports these observations. A 2000 Harvard Medical School study revealed that men typically desire much more muscular bodies than women actually prefer. Women tend to favour bodies with less muscle and some level of padding, finding them stronger and more attractive. Harrison Pope, professor of psychiatry and head of the study, explained, “The bodies that men already had were closer to what women actually want than what men think they want.” Another study from the University of California in 2004 found that men overestimated the muscularity women liked, while women overestimated the thinness men preferred.

Additionally, a 2021 survey from Dating.com involving 2,000 participants showed 75% preferred softer, rounder 'dad bods' over toned physiques, indicating a sustained preference for a more natural and less sculpted male physique.

The ongoing online discussions around Olly Murs’ transformation thus highlight more than just one celebrity’s fitness journey; they reflect evolving societal and cultural perceptions about male bodies, attractiveness, and personal comfort. These debates elucidate marked differences between male and female preferences and challenge the conventional ideals of male beauty emphasised in popular media.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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