



WATCHING AN "AVATAR", or a computer-generated image, that performs weight-loss actions in a virtual community might help women shed weight in the real world, says a new US study.

"This pilot study showed that you don't have to be a gamer to use virtual reality to learn some important skills for weight loss," Xinhua quoted Melissa Napolitano, associate professor at the George Washington University, as saying.

She said the findings, published in the *Journal of Diabetes Science and Technology*, suggest that "virtual reality could be a promising new tool for building healthier habits".

Previous research had shown that using virtual reality to reinforce behaviour could be effective, so the university experts wanted to establish whether it could be used to help people lose weight.

To find out, the team first conducted a survey among 128 overweight women.



Game on

Virtual reality may encourage women to lose weight

Most of the women had tried to lose weight during the last year and the majority had never used a virtual reality game.

Despite the fact that most of these women had no experience with the concept, the researchers found that 88 per cent said they were willing to try it.

Eight of the 128 women were then chosen for the study and allowed to pick "avatars" that they thought resembled their own skin colour and shape.

The participants came to

the university researchers' clinic once a week and watched a 15-minute video featuring an "avatar" demonstrating healthy weight loss behaviour.

In one lesson, the women watched the "avatar" sitting down for dinner and learned about portion sizes.

In another lesson, they watched an "avatar" walk with moderate intensity on a treadmill and learned the walking pace needed to help with weight loss goals.

After four weeks of

treatment, the women in the pilot study had lost an average of 1.6 kg, a fairly typical amount for traditional diet plans, Napolitano said.

"This is just the first step to show that women, even those who are not gamers, are interested in an avatar-based technology to help them with a weight-loss plan," she added.

"We are excited by the potential of this technology as a scalable tool to help people learn the skills to be successful at weight loss over the long run." IANS

MOTHERS ARE THE major style influence for millions of women, who take on board hints, tips and habits passed on to them over the years, reveals a research.

Among the most common pieces of advice women take on board from their mothers are blending in make-up around the jawline and always carrying a spare pair of tights, says the research conducted by cosmetic brand Lancôme, reports femalefirst.co.uk.

"It's heartening mothers and daughters share a similar style. Most women have a genuine interest in fashion and beauty and it's nice grown women are still chatting to their mum about what products they're using and what suits them," said the



According to mum

Mothers have the greatest influence on daughters' beauty regime

spokesperson for Lancôme.

"We inherit so much from our mothers they are always going to be the most trustworthy person to turn to, and on the whole women tend to have a similar skin tone, body shape and colouring as their mother, so who better to speak to."

"Many women look to their mums as a gauge to see how they are going to age which is very interesting as our scientists have devoted years to the study of genes and their role in youth and beauty," the spokesperson added.

The study also found women trust their mother's opinion more than a celebrity style expert, and a third of the 2,000 females polled even admitted they totally rely on their mothers for advice. IANS

ALIGN YOUR LIFE

FENG SHUI FOR SPAS

OVER THE LAST few years, the wellness industry has suddenly come into the limelight. As everyday life is getting hectic and fast-paced, people are embracing wellbeing activities to combat stress. The majority of us experience aches and pains in our bodies due to long working hours and tedious commutes. Enjoying a relaxing massage or a pedicure is on many people's weekend activity list. The spa industry has seen a surge in clientele due to increased awareness about the benefits of holistic therapies.

A spa is a place where you can go to relax, rejuvenate and recharge your batteries. A bit of me-time will leave you refreshed, energised and ready to achieve your goals. A spa can also be a place that offers week, month or year-long retreats, in addition to offering variety of relaxing treatments.

Under the circumstances it is very crucial for the spa industry to have a relaxing and inviting atmosphere for their clientele, to make their experience unique and unforgettable. In a bid to attract more clients and enhance incoming business, more and more spas are implementing Feng Shui in their design.

It is very important that the door of the spa looks attractive and inviting for clients. Outside the spa entrance a water fountain or fishpond can be created to enhance incoming energy flow. The reception area can have large mirrors that reflect natural light and attract good energy. Display a water fountain and scented candles in reception to activate positive energy and invite good business. Shades of red and orange can be used on the walls of the reception to create active energy to support good business.

Having green plants, comfortable couches and soft lighting will enhance the relaxing atmosphere further. Ensure that the furniture has no sharp edges and all curves are smooth. The overall colour scheme for the spa should be shades of blue, green, white and violet. These are high frequency colours and are often used in colour healing to bring about calming effect. Light coloured walls will reflect natural light, and create a sense of peace within the spa. Individual treatment rooms can have bowls of beautiful stones to bring about stability and create a sense of grounding for the clients.

Treatment beds can be placed away from the door so that the client is not disturbed. Display long bamboos in water at regular intervals within the spa to create a continuous smooth energy flow. Avoid harsh and bright lighting. Display images of green scenery or moving water to create a peaceful feeling within the spa.

Just remember, if the atmosphere in the spa is calm and relaxing, your client is likely to feel the same.

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