

Opinion: Sportswear brands should use athletes

By Sasha DiGiulian, Outside

I recently read an article on Racked titled “Want to Sell Me Sportswear? Show Me an Athlete,” and it resonated with me as a professional athlete who’s never been in a major sportswear ad. It made me ask: Why do big athletic companies, like Nike, Adidas, and Reebok, often choose high-fashion models to pose as female athletes, rather than draw from the ranks of the numerous professional athletes they sponsor?

Here are just a few recent examples of this happening: Bella Hadid is the face of a new Nike campaign for the Cortez sneakers, originally designed for runners in 1972; Karlie Kloss models Adidas’ fashionable performance line, Stella McCartney; and Gigi Hadid plays a boxer for Reebok’s “Perfect Never” campaign. These images of female “athletes” suggest that it is more important that women look stereotypically feminine and lean than be able to perform at an elite level. This doesn’t happen nearly as often with men: sports brands seldom use male models as the faces of their fitness lines, instead opting for professional male athletes.

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