

WORLDWIDE SURVEY OF FITNESS TRENDS FOR 2019

by Walter R. Thompson, Ph.D., FACSM

Apply It!

From this article, the reader should understand the following concepts:

- Articulate the differences between a fad and a trend.
- Use the worldwide trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical (including medical fitness), and community health fitness industry to further promote physical activity.
- Study expert opinions about identified fitness trends for 2019.

Key words: Commercial, Clinical, Corporate, Community, Expert Opinions, Future Programs

INTRODUCTION

This annual survey of worldwide fitness trends is now in its 13th year. New to this year's survey was the inclusion of potential new trends such as virtual reality, community interventionist, and Access Pass (none of which made the top 20 trends). Other trends were more specifically defined in the 2019 survey. For example, large group training (used in previous surveys) was defined as group training (for more than five participants). Dance workouts was changed to dance-based workouts because many times dance is infused into a routine but is not the total workout. Wellness coaching was described as health/wellness coaching for 2019. Mobile phone exercise apps was changed in 2019 to mobile exercise apps because some exercise clients are using other electronic devices including phones. The worksite health promotion description was redefined as worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs to better define these comprehensive programs. Strength training was dropped from the survey because it was determined to be too generic. Employing certified fitness professionals was added as a potential trend for 2019 replacing educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals because it was too broad and lacked the necessary specificity to be included as a trend. The results of this annual survey may help the health and fitness industry make some very important investment decisions for future growth and development. These important business decisions will be based on emerging trends that have been identified by health fitness professionals and not the latest exercise innovation marketed during late-night infomercials on television or the next hottest celebrity endorsing a product.

Over the past 13 years, the editors of *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*[®] (*FIT*) have circulated this electronic survey to thousands of professionals around the world to determine health and fitness trends. The survey in this issue of *FIT* helps to guide health fitness programming efforts for 2019 and beyond. The first survey (1), conducted in 2006 (for predictions in 2007), introduced a systematic way to predict health and fitness trends, and surveys have been conducted annually since that time (2–12) using the same methodology. As this is a survey of trends, respondents were asked to first make the very important distinction between a “fad” and a “trend.”

Trend: “a general development or change in a situation or in the way that people are behaving” (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/>).

Fad: “a fashion that is taken up with great enthusiasm for a brief period” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/>).

These annual surveys of trends in the commercial (usually for-profit companies), clinical (including medical fitness facilities), community (not-for-profit), and corporate divisions of the industry continue to confirm previously identified trends but also recognize some new emerging trends. As in all previous years, the survey of fitness trends makes no attempt to evaluate products, services, equipment, gym apparatus, hardware, software, tools, or other exercise machines that may appear in clubs or recreation centers or show up during late-night television infomercials. The survey was designed to confirm or to introduce new trends (not fads) that have a perceived positive impact on the industry according to the international respondents. By using this survey construct, some of the trends identified in earlier surveys could predictably appear for several years. Likewise, fads may

appear but will not surprisingly drop off the list in subsequent years (some as short as 1 year). The potential market impact of new equipment, an exercise device, or program is not evaluated by this annual survey. The information provided in this survey is left entirely up to the readers to determine if it fits their own business model and how to best use the information for potential market expansion.

The benefits to commercial health clubs (those that are for-profit) are the establishment (or maybe the justification) of potential new markets, which could result in increased and more sustainable revenue. Community-based programs (typically not-for-profit) can use these results to justify an investment in their own markets by providing expanded programs serving families and children. Corporate wellness programs and medical fitness centers may find these results useful through an increased service to their members and to their patients. The health and fitness industry should carefully and thoughtfully apply this information to its own unique setting.

THE SURVEY

Every attempt was made to replicate the survey delivery as in the past 12 years. For the 2019 survey, there were 39 possible trends. The top 25 trends from previous years were included in the survey, as were some potentially emerging trends identified by the editors of *FIT*. The editors represent the four sectors of the health fitness industry (corporate, clinical, community, commercial), as well as from academia. In the survey, potential trends were identified followed by a short explanation to offer the respondent a few details without inconveniencing them with too much reading, analysis, or interpretation. The survey was designed to be completed in 15 minutes or less. As an incentive to complete the survey, the editors made available nine fitness-related books published by Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins and Human Kinetics and a \$100 MasterCard® gift card. These incentives were designed to help increase participation in the survey.

As in the past, the survey was constructed using a Likert-type scale ranging from a low score of 1 (least likely to be a trend) to a high score of 10 (most likely to be a trend). After each scoring opportunity, space was allowed for additional comments. At the conclusion of the survey, space was left for the respondent to include comments or potential fitness trends left off the list to be considered for future surveys as well as some demographic information. The next step was to send the survey electronically to a defined list of health and fitness professionals. Using SurveyMonkey® (www.surveymonkey.com), the online survey was sent to 37,075 health fitness professionals (including 1,383 emails that bounced back and 1,610 who opted out). This list included current ACSM certified professionals, attendees of the 2018 ACSM's International Health & Fitness Summit, Certification email opt-in list, ACSM Alliance members, ACSM professional members who add a *FIT* subscription, nonmember *FIT* subscribers, *FIT* Associate Editors, and *FIT* Editorial Board members. A link also was shared on the *FIT* web site and on

various social media sites including the *FIT* Twitter page, the ACSM Journals' Facebook page, and the ACSM's Instagram page.

After 6 weeks and 4 additional notices, 2,038 responses were received, which represents a good return rate of 6%. Responses were received from just about every continent and included the countries of United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Japan, India, Italy, Russia, Singapore, Taiwan, and the United States. Demographics of the survey respondents included 65% females across a wide variability in ages (Figure 1), 60% having more than 10 years of experience in the industry (Figure 2) and 33% with more than 20 years of experience. Almost 45% of the survey respondents earned an annual salary of more than \$50,000, which included 9% who earned more than \$100,000 a year (Figure 3). Respondents were asked to identify their occupations (Table 1), with 18% indicating that they were full-time or part-time personal trainers. When asked if they worked full-time or part-time, 69% indicated full-time and 25% part-time (less than 20 hours per week). Figure 4 reveals where respondents work. Survey respondents were asked about their career choices with 34% indicating they were in their first job and 33% indicating they were in their second career. Figure 5 shows the broad range of certifications held by the survey respondents.

SURVEY RESULTS

The first step in the survey analysis was to collate the responses and then to rank-order them from highest (most popular trend) to lowest (least popular trend). Only the top 20 for 2019 are described in this report. After rank-ordering the responses, four internationally recognized experts commented on the findings. Their analysis and commentary are included at the end of this report. For a comparison of the top 10 trends from the past 13 years' surveys (1–12), please see the comprehensive comparison table available online (Table, Supplemental Digital Content 1, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A102>).

The 2019 survey results (Table 2), as in previous years, reveal trends and not fads as defined in the survey. It is not unusual for a potential trend to drop out of the top 20 and be labeled as a fad. New to the top 20 trends identified for 2019 were employing certified fitness professionals (#6 and new to the survey), #15

Figure 1. Age (in years) of survey respondents.



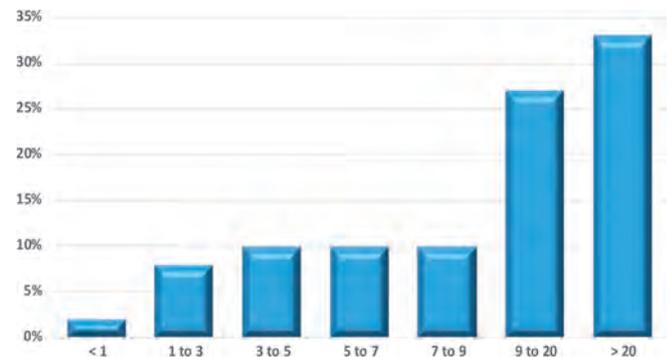
WORLDWIDE SURVEY OF FITNESS TRENDS FOR 2019



worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs (#23 in 2018), #16 outcome measurements (#21 in 2018), and #20 postrehabilitation programs (#27 in 2018). Out of the top 20 trends for 2019 are circuit weight training (#17 in 2018), sport-specific training (#20 in 2018), and core training (#19 in 2018).

1. *Wearable Technology.* Wearable technology includes fitness trackers, smart watches, heart rate monitors, and GPS tracking devices. Examples include fitness and activity trackers like those made by Misfit®, Garmin®, and Apple®. These devices can track heart rate, calories, sitting time, and much more. Wearable technology first appeared as a fitness trend in 2016. It was the #1 trend in 2016 and 2017 before dropping to #3 for 2018.
2. *Group Training.* Group exercise instructors teach, lead, and motivate individuals through intentionally designed, larger, in-person group movement classes (more than five participants, or it would be group personal training). Group classes are designed to be effective, motivational sessions for different fitness levels with instructors having leadership techniques that help individuals in their class achieve fitness goals. There are many types of classes and equipment, from cardio-based classes and indoor cycling to dance-based classes to step classes. For the 2019 survey, the description of this trend was changed from large group training to group training. Group exercise training programs have been around for a long time and have appeared as a potential worldwide trend since this survey was originally constructed. However, it was only in 2017 that group exercise training made the top 20, appearing at #6, and #2 in the 2018 survey.
3. *High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT).* These exercise programs typically involve short bursts of high-intensity bouts of exercise followed by a short period of rest. Although there are several commercial examples of HIIT, all emphasize higher intensities (above 90%) of maximum during the higher intensity segments followed by periods of rest and recovery. Although offered as a possible

Figure 2. Years of experience reported by the survey respondents.



trend in previous surveys, but not making the top 20, HIIT was #1 in the survey for 2014 and 2018 and has been in the top five every year since 2014. Despite the warnings by some fitness professionals of potentially increased injury rates using HIIT, this form of exercise has been popular in gyms all over the world.

4. *Fitness Programs for Older Adults.* This is a trend that emphasizes and caters to the fitness needs of the Baby Boom and older generations. These individuals in general have more discretionary money than their younger counterparts, and fitness clubs may capitalize on this growing market. People are living longer, working longer, and remaining healthy and active much longer. This trend is making a strong return after being in the top 10 since 2007 (when it was the #2 trend) before dropping

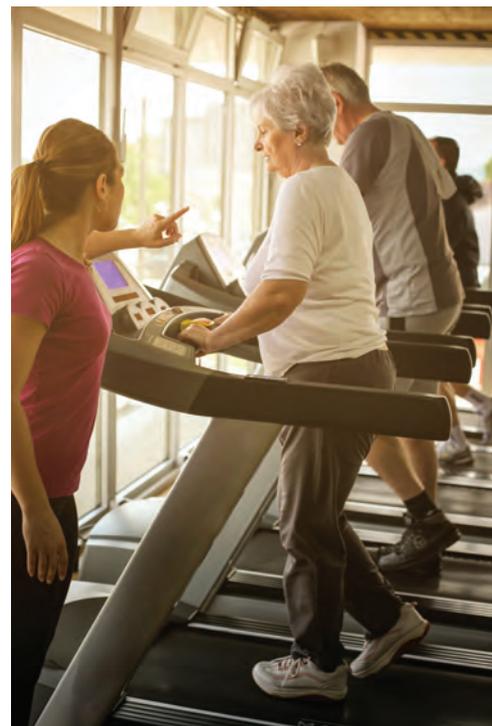


Figure 3. Annual salary of survey respondents.



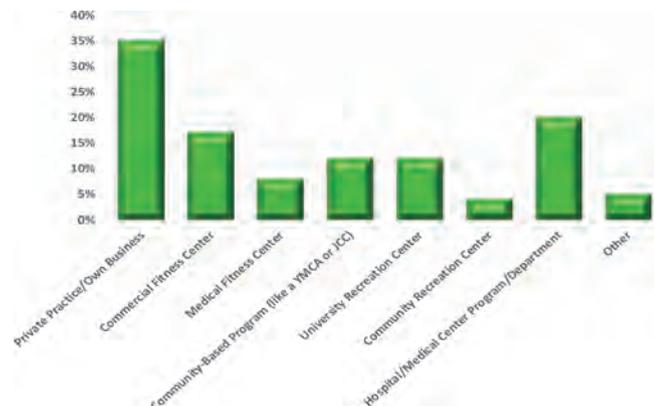
to #11 for 2017. Last year, fitness programs for older adults was the #9 trend.

5. *Bodyweight Training*. A combination of variable resistance bodyweight training and neuromotor movements using multiple planes of movement, this program is all about using bodyweight as the training modality. Bodyweight training often uses minimal equipment, which makes it an inexpensive functional way to exercise effectively. Bodyweight training appeared for the first time in the trends survey in 2013 (at #3) and was in the #2

TABLE 1: Survey Respondents' Occupation

Respondent Occupation	Total Respondents
Personal trainer (part-time)	10%
Personal trainer (full-time)	8%
Group exercise leader	3%
Health fitness specialist (or equivalent)	7%
Clinical exercise specialist (or equivalent)	3%
Clinical exercise physiologist	10%
Program manager	5%
Health/fitness director	10%
Owner/operator	4%
Health/wellness coach	3%
Undergraduate student	1%
Graduate student	3%
Teacher	3%
Professor	9%
Medical professional (MD/DO, RN, physical or occupational therapist)	6%
Registered dietician (RD, RDN, LD)	1%
Other	14%

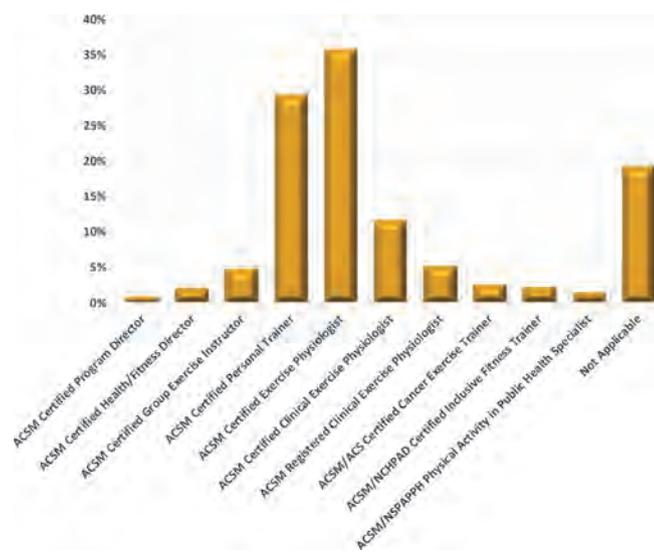
Figure 4. Where do you work?



position for 2017 and #4 for 2018. Bodyweight training did not appear as a survey trend option before 2013 because it only became popular (as a defined trend) in gyms around the world over the past few years.

6. *Employing Certified Fitness Professionals*. The importance of hiring certified health/fitness professionals through educational programs and certification programs that are fully accredited for health/fitness professionals is more important than ever. More certification programs have become accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies and thus allow employers easy access to certification validation. Employing certified fitness professionals was a new survey item for 2019 replacing “educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals,” which was determined to be too broadly defined as a survey item.

Figure 5. Which certifications do survey respondents hold?



WORLDWIDE SURVEY OF FITNESS TRENDS FOR 2019

TABLE 2: Top 20 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2019

Rank	Top 20 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2019
1	Wearable technology
2	Group training
3	High-intensity interval training (HIIT)
4	Fitness programs for older adults
5	Bodyweight training
6	Employing certified fitness professionals
7	Yoga
8	Personal training
9	Functional fitness training
10	Exercise is Medicine
11	Health/wellness coaching
12	Exercise for weight loss
13	Mobile exercise apps
14	Mobility/myofascial devices
15	Worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs
16	Outcome measurements
17	Outdoor activities
18	Licensure for fitness professionals
19	Small group personal training
20	Postrehabilitation classes

7. *Yoga*. Yoga has taken on a variety of forms within the past year (including Power Yoga, Yogilates, yoga in hot environments, and others). Instructional tapes and books also are plentiful, as are certifications in the many yoga formats. Yoga first appeared in the top 10 in this survey in 2008, fell out of the top 20 in 2009, but made a great comeback in the 2010 (#14) and 2011 (#11) surveys. In 2012, Yoga was #11 on the list, falling to #14 in 2013, and up to #7 in 2015. In 2017, it ranked #8 after occupying the #7 spot in 2015 and #10 in 2016. Yoga was ranked #7 in last year's survey.
8. *Personal Training*. This trend continues as the profession of personal training becomes more accessible online, in health clubs, in the home, and in worksites that have fitness facilities. Personal training includes fitness testing and goal setting with the trainer working one on one with a client to prescribe workouts specific to each client's individual needs and goals. Since this survey was first published in 2006 (1), personal training has been a top 10 trend.
9. *Functional Fitness Training*. This is a trend toward using strength training and other activities/movements to

improve balance, coordination, strength, and endurance to improve activities of daily living. Replicating actual physical activities someone might do as a function of their daily routine, functional fitness first appeared on the survey in the #4 position in 2007 but fell to #8 in 2008 and #11 in 2009. It reappeared in the top 10 for 2010 at #7 and in 2011 at #9. In 2012, functional fitness was #10 and in 2013 and 2014 it was #8, #9 for 2015, #7 in 2016, #12 in 2017, and #10 for 2018. Some of the survey respondents said they typically pair functional fitness with fitness programs for older adults (see trend #4) depending on the needs of the client. Functional fitness also is used in clinical programs to replicate activities done around the home.

10. *Exercise is Medicine*. Exercise is Medicine (EIM) is a global health initiative that is focused on encouraging primary care physicians and other health care providers to include physical activity assessment and associated treatment recommendations as part of every patient visit, and referring their patients to exercise professionals. In addition, EIM recognizes fitness professionals as part of the health care team in their local communities. EIM was the #7 trend in 2017 and #12 for 2018.
11. *Health/Wellness Coaching*. This is a trend to incorporate behavioral science into health promotion and lifestyle medicine programs for individuals. Health/wellness coaching uses a one-on-one (and at times small-group) approach with the coach providing support, goal-setting, guidance, and encouragement. The health/wellness coach focuses on the client's values, needs, vision, and short- and long-term goals using behavior change intervention strategies. Previous surveys included wellness coaching but for the 2019 survey, the term "health" was added to better describe the trend. Wellness coaching has been in the top 20 since 2010. Wellness coaching was listed at #17 in 2014, #13 in 2015, #13 for 2016, #15 in 2017, and #18 for 2018.
12. *Exercise for Weight Loss*. This is a trend toward incorporating all weight loss programs with a sensible exercise program. Most sensationalized diet programs incorporate some kind of exercise program into the daily routine. However, in 2019, the coupling of diets, diet pills, and cooking classes with exercise will become more important. Exercise in weight loss programs has been a top 20 trend since the survey began. In 2009, exercise and weight loss was ranked #18, moving to #12 in 2010, #7 in 2011, and #4 in 2012, and in 2013 the #5 spot. In 2014, this trend was ranked #6 and remained at #6 for 2015. Exercise and weight loss was #9 in the 2016 survey and #10 in the 2017 survey. In 2018, exercise for weight loss was the #11 trend.
13. *Mobile Exercise Apps*. Now available for mobile devices such as the iPhone®, iPad®, and Android, apps like Nike Run Club® and MapMyRun or Ride include both audio

and visual prompts to begin and end exercise and cues to move on. Other apps include Endomondo Pro® and Yoga with Janet Stone® among many others. Some of these apps can track progress over time as well as hundreds of other functionalities. Previous surveys restricted this trend to mobile phone apps. Smartphone apps was ranked #26 for 2018.

14. *Mobility/Myofascial Devices*. These devices include the deep tissue roller, myofascial release, and trigger point relief and are designed to massage, relieve muscle tightness and muscle spasms, increase circulation, ease muscular discomfort, and assist in the return to normal activity. Rollers have been designed for the low back, the hips, and larger muscle groups, such as the hamstrings and the gluteals. Some rollers are made of foam, whereas others are hard rubber, to achieve the desired effect. Flexibility rollers were the #16 trend in 2016, #20 in 2017, and #15 for 2018.
15. *Worksite Health Promotion and Workplace Well-being Programs*. This is a trend toward a range of programs and services provided by employers to improve the health and wellness of workers and is integrated with systems to support the evaluation of and reporting on the impact on health, costs, and productivity. Programs are generally on-site or programmed with a local gym. Previous surveys restricted this trend to worksite health promotion. For the 2019 survey, workplace well-being programs was added to the description. Worksite health promotion was the #16 trend in 2017 before dropping out of the top 20 for 2018.
16. *Outcome Measurements*. This is a trend toward accountability. There will be efforts to define, track, and report outcomes. Measurements are necessary to determine the benefits of health and fitness programs in disease management and to document success in changing negative lifestyle habits. The proliferation of technology will aid in data collection to support these efforts. Outcome measurements was the #21 trend for 2018.
17. *Outdoor Activities*. This is a trend for health and fitness professionals to offer more outdoor activities such as group walks, group rides, or organized hiking groups. They can be short events, daylong events, or planned week hiking excursions. Participants may meet in a local park, hiking area, or on a bike trail with a leader. The trend for health and fitness professionals to offer outdoor activities for their clients began in 2010. In that year, outdoor activities was #25 in the annual survey and in 2011 it ranked #27. In 2012, outdoor activities was #14, and in 2013, outdoor activities were ranked #13, in 2014 it was #14, in 2015 it was #12, in 2016 it was ranked #14 and #13 in 2017. In 2018, outdoor activities was ranked #14.
18. *Licensure for Fitness Professionals*. Some professions in the United States and around the world are regulated by



licensure. For example, someone cannot call themselves a medical doctor or nurse, and in most states, a physical therapist or dietitian, without holding a license. This is a trend in the fitness industry for more regulations of fitness professionals such as personal trainers. Licensure for fitness professionals first appeared as a fitness trend in 2018 when it was ranked #16.

19. *Small Group Personal Training*. This trend expands the personal trainer's role from strictly one-on-one training to small group training. The personal trainer works with two or more people (but in a small group of less than five) and offers discounts for the group. In 2007, group personal training was #19 on the list but in 2008 it rose to #15 but dropped again in 2009 to #19 and improved to #10 in 2010. In 2011, group personal training was #14 on the survey, #8 in 2012, #10 in 2013, #9 in 2014, #10 in 2015, #11 in 2016, #14 in 2017, and #13 for 2018.
20. *Postrehabilitation Classes*. These are exercise programs specifically designed for patients with chronic health conditions such as cancer, cardiovascular disease, Parkinson's disease, and stroke recovery, which are generally outside of a medical referral; also could include posttraumatic disorders seen in soldiers coming back from military combat. Postrehabilitation classes was ranked #27 for 2018.

WHAT'S OUT FOR 2019?

Postpublication commentary on these results is always interesting with one group or another arguing that their interest is a popular trend (Pilates, water workouts, and boutique fitness centers come to mind right away). Readers of this survey must understand that regional popularity does not always translate as an international trend. Dropping out of the top 20 from 2018 were circuit weight training, sport-specific training, and core training. Sport-specific training (#20 in 2018) fell from #17 in 2012 and from its relative popularity in 2010 (#8) and then rebounded a bit in 2014, 2015, and again for 2016 before dropping out of the top 20 in 2017. It remains out of the top 20. From 2007 to 2010, core training was in the top five of the fitness trends. Since

WORLDWIDE SURVEY OF FITNESS TRENDS FOR 2019

2010, it has been dropping to the 19th spot in 2016 and out of the top 20 in 2017. It was #19 for 2018 and #22 for 2019. Circuit weight training was ranked #21 for 2019. Other proposed trends for 2019 not making the top 20 included boot-camp style training, virtual/online training, clinical integration/medical fitness, worker incentive programs, children and exercise, low-cost and budget gyms, boutique fitness studios, walking/running/jogging clubs, Pilates, Access Pass, dance-based workouts, barbell training, community interventionist, boxing, kickboxing, and mixed martial arts, water workouts, and virtual reality.

SUMMARY

Wearable technology took over the #1 spot for 2019 after dropping to #3 in 2018, which may be the result of manufacturers correcting some monitoring inaccuracies of the past. HIIT, the #1 trend in 2014 and 2018, fell to #3 for 2019. Group training made a significant return in 2017 as the #6 trend and has been the #2 trend for the past 2 years (2018 and 2019). Fitness programming aimed at older adults has regained some popularity after falling out of the top 10 trends in 2017, appearing at #9 in 2018 and now #4 for 2019. Bodyweight training first appeared as a fitness trend at #3 in 2013 and has been a top five fitness trend since that time, realizing a peak as the #1 fitness trend in 2015. In 2019, bodyweight training is the #5 fitness trend. A new trend to watch will be the employment of certified fitness professionals, a new potential trend for 2019 (#6) replacing educated, certified, and experienced fitness professionals, which was determined to be too broadly defined for this survey. Other trends to watch are mobile exercise apps, worksite health promotion and workplace well-being programs, outcome measurements, and postrehabilitation classes.

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Internationally Recognized Experts Comment on 2019 Trends



Blaine Wilson, M.S., is the senior director of Wellcoaches Corporation, Lubbock, Texas. "Four distinct themes stand out from the trends for 2019, groups, technology, professional credentialing, and outcome measurements. Group programming has the ability to build community by creating a sense of belonging and acceptance sustaining emotional and physical well-being in ways that advance aspirations and satisfy needs. Cutting edge programming improves participants' self-efficacy, as well as prompting action for health behavior change. Wearable technology has the ability to track changes and prompt action. Data can be collected and analyzed individually or within a population. When artificial intelligence is truly integrated with algorithms to replicate authentic human traits (connection, communication, and navigation of emotions), wearables will become more common and powerful to facilitate positive behavior change. Credentialed professionals

are the backbone of our field with health and wellness coaching as an example of an emerging field. The International Consortium for Health & Wellness Coaching has set standards and launched a National Board Certification for Health & Wellness Coaches in 2017. The national certification is accelerating the professionalization of coaching. Measuring outcomes continues to be important for reporting success. However, it is vital to move beyond the standard biometric and participation measures. Our clients have emotions and personal values. We have come to regard emotions as assets rather than data. We focus on managing them which means to exploit, diffuse, or sanitize them far more than staying with them long enough to discern their meaning. Treating emotions as data enables us to interpret and reveal something about our clients. It very well might be the difference maker.”



Wayne L. Westcott, Ph.D., is a professor of Exercise Science at Quincy College in Quincy, Massachusetts, where he directs the Exercise Science Program. “As readers of *ACSM’s Health & Fitness Journal*[®], we are privileged to receive this important information on a yearly basis. A primary objective for exercise professionals is to engage as

many people as possible in purposeful physical activity that promotes better health and fitness. This is an exceptionally challenging task, as evidenced by a landmark study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*[®] (2008;4:181-88) revealing that approximately 8% of adolescents, 4% of adults, and 2% of older adults meet the minimum ACSM physical activity recommendations. Therefore, the following trends identified in this year’s survey are encouraging. The 4th rated trend of fitness programs for older adults is essential for this rapidly growing population in need of age-specific physical activity. Helping older adults become fit is personally beneficial to them, as well as to everyone who shares in health care costs, which is closely associated with the 10th rated trend of Exercise is Medicine. Our most prevalent health problem is overweight/obesity, with more than 70% of Americans in this category. The 12th rated trend of exercise for weight loss should be given serious attention, and hopefully regain a higher rating in next year’s survey. I am pleased to see worksite health promotion and well-being programs as the 15th rated trend, as engaging people in exercise at work has greater potential than essentially any of the alternatives.”



Florentina Hettinga, Ph.D., SFHEA, FECSS, FACSM, is reader, postgraduate director, head of the Sport Performance and Fatigue Research Unit, at the University of Essex School of Sport, Rehabilitation, and Exercise Science, United Kingdom. “2019 will be another interesting year for fitness trends. Number 1 this year is wearable technology. This is a powerful one as wearable technology can really assist in chang-

ing people’s physical activity behavior, and increase training adherence. For promoting and stimulating an active lifestyle, wearable technology provides multiple opportunities. I expect to see more advancements both in design and in use of wearable technology

to change physical activity behavior. Nice examples can be seen everywhere, such as one of my colleagues jumping while having a beer in the pub after work, just to make sure he would reach his daily step count target. For trend #2 we find group training, and this is my favorite one. In my own research, I have explored the benefits of competition and racing against other people, which in 80% of the cases resulted in better performance. In group training sessions, the positive benefits of competition can be used, and this can stimulate exercisers to perform and engage. Also, elements of social facilitation that occur in groups are important, and positive encouragement has been found to lead to better training adherence and training effects. I am not surprised to find wearable technology and group training amongst the top trends this upcoming year.”



Yuri Feito, Ph.D., MPH, FACSM, is an associate professor of Exercise Science in the Department of Exercise Science & Sport Management in the Wellstar College of Health & Human Services at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. “For more than a decade we have been able to “look into the future” with the publication of ACSM’s Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends. This year, similar to previous

years, some trends remain in the top 20, while others have lost their appeal. The last five years have seen a revolution of the fitness industry with high-intensity interval training (HIIT), bodyweight training, and wearable technology leading the way. Although hard to say with certainty, this might suggest that consumers are seeking less traditional environments to engage in their physical activity and exercise pursuits. This, of course, is in line with current efforts to promote physical activity in the built environment and repeated reports of the benefits of HIIT in the media. In addition, it is not surprising that wearable technology continues to be important, considering how connected we all are. Nonetheless, if the use of technology encourages people to be active, I think it is a win-win for all (#BeActive). More importantly, what I take from this survey is the continued need for qualified and experienced professionals. In an industry that employs millions, we must find a way to standardize a minimum level of aptitude and skill to keep people safe in the pursuit of an active lifestyle.”

BRIDGING THE GAP

The 2019 worldwide survey of fitness trends is now in its 13th consecutive year. It is designed to help the health and fitness industry make its critical programming and business decisions. The results are relevant to all four sectors of the health and fitness industry (commercial for-profit clubs, clinical programs and medical fitness facilities, corporate wellness programs, and community-based not-for-profit fitness programs).

Although no one can accurately predict the future of any industry, this survey helps to track trends that can assist owners, operators, program directors, and health fitness professionals with making important business decisions.