

Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2023

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

Apply It!

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

- Explain the differences between a fitness fad and a fitness trend
- Use the worldwide fitness trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical (including medical fitness), and community health and fitness industry to further promote physical activity
- Study expert opinions about identified fitness trends for 2023

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

INTRODUCTION

The results of this year's survey could very well be titled “postpandemic recovery impacts the fitness industry” or “what happened to online training and home gyms”? During the COVID-19 era of quarantine, face coverings, social distancing, and health club closures, fitness professionals turned in an impressive way to an online delivery of fitness programming. In fact, the 2021 survey placed online training as the #1 trend. It fell to #9 for 2022 and now is out of the top 20 at the #21 position. Online personal training went from #17 for 2022 to #26 for 2023. Home exercise gyms was #2 for 2022 dropping to #13 for 2023. The health and fitness industry is returning to the basics, with strength training with free weights the #2 trend, body weight training as the #3 trend, and functional fitness training as the #5 trend for 2023. Fitness programs for older adults was the #4 trend for 2023. As it has for the past 17 years, the results outcome of this annual survey helps health and fitness professionals make critical business decisions for future growth and development. These investments can be based on emerging trends that have been identified by health and fitness professionals all over the world instead of basing these decisions on the latest exercise infomercials found on television, social media, or the next hottest celebrity endorsing a product.

For the last 17 years, the editors of this *Journal* (HFJ) have developed and circulated an electronic survey sent to thousands of professionals around the world to predict trends in the health and fitness industry for the following year. The author is grateful to all those who have contributed to the success of these surveys through the years (see sidebar).

This survey guides health and fitness programming efforts for 2023 and beyond. The first survey (1), conducted in 2006 (for predictions in 2007), introduced a systematic way to forecast trends. These surveys have been conducted annually since that time (2–16) using the same methodology. Because this is a survey of trends (and not fads), respondents were asked to first make an especially 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” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/trend>).

Fad: “a style, activity, or interest that is very popular for a short period of time” (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/fad>).



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Sidebar: Special Thanks

The author wishes to recognize and thank those who have participated in the creation and maintenance of ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends through the years, especially the following:

Past Editors-in-Chief Ed Howley, Ph.D., FACSM, and Steven Keteyian, Ph.D., FACSM, for considering this project important enough to include in this *Journal* more than a decade ago, and to current Editor-in-Chief Brad Roy, Ph.D., FACSM, for continuing the tradition.

This *Journal's* editorial team, especially those who contributed to the original survey in 2006: Paul Couzelis, Ph.D.; John Jakicic, Ph.D., FACSM; Nico Pronk, Ph.D., FACSM; Mike Spezzano, M.S.; Neal Pire, M.A., FACSM; Jim Peterson, Ph.D., FACSM; Melinda Manore, Ph.D., R.D., FACSM; Cary Wing, Ed.D.; Reed Humphrey, Ph.D., PT., FACSM; and Steve Tharrett, M.S.

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These annual ACSM Worldwide Surveys of Fitness Trends are used extensively in the commercial (usually for-profit companies), clinical (including medical fitness centers), community (typically not for profits), and corporate divisions of the health and fitness industry. They not only continue to confirm previously recognized

trends but also identify new, emerging trends, along with COVID-19–related developments that appeared for the first time in 2021, continued for 2022, and seem to be resolving (or at least changing) for 2023. The fitness trends survey purposefully does not attempt to evaluate products, services, equipment, gym apparatus, hardware, software, tools, or other exercise devices that may appear in clubs or recreation centers or show up in television infomercials or on social media. The potential market impact of new equipment, an exercise device, or program is not evaluated by this survey.

The survey is designed to confirm or to introduce the latest trends that will have a perceived impact according to the international respondents. Higher ranked trends identified in earlier surveys would predictably appear for several years whereas fads may emerge but will expectedly drop off the list in subsequent years. 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 health and fitness industry should carefully consider and thoughtfully apply this information to its own unique setting. Commercial health clubs (the largest sector of the industry) can use these results for the establishment (or the justification) of potential new markets, which may result in increased and more sustainable revenue drivers. Corporate wellness programs and medical fitness centers will find these results useful through potential increases in service to their members and to their patients. Community-based programs can use these results to justify investments in their markets by providing expanded programs typically serving families and children.

THE SURVEY

Every attempt was made to replicate the survey delivery as in the past 17 years. For the 2023 survey, there were 42 possible trends. Top-rated trends from previous years were included in the survey, as were potentially emerging trends identified by the editors of this *Journal*. The editors represent practitioners from all four sectors of the health and fitness industry (corporate, clinical,

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

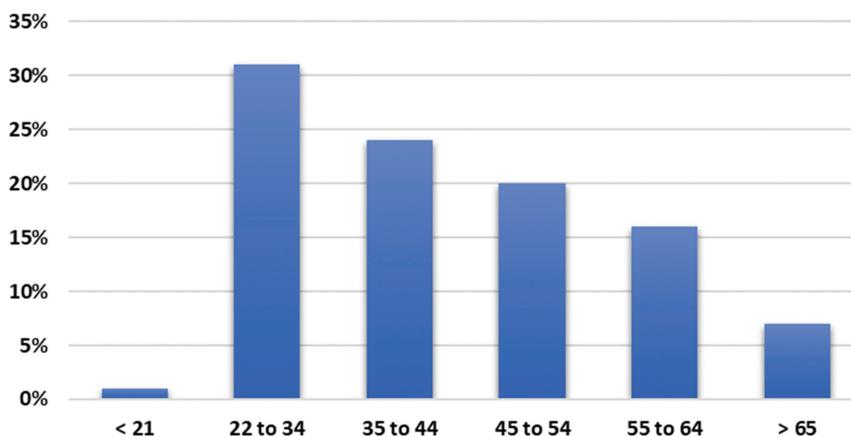
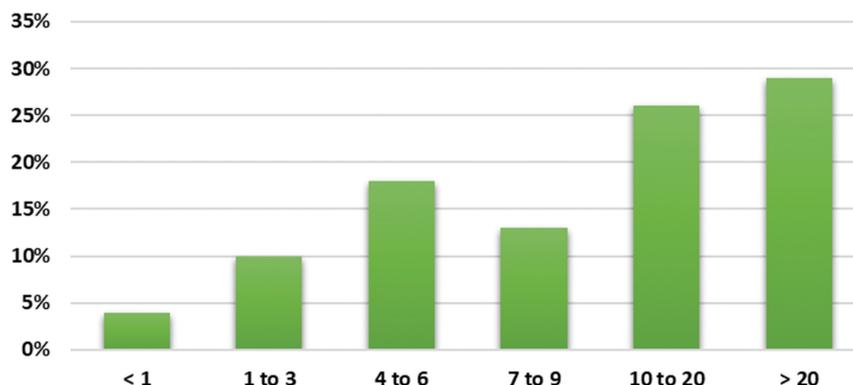


Figure 2. Years of experience reported by the survey respondents.



community, commercial), as well as from academia. In the survey, potential trends were identified followed by a brief explanation to offer the respondents a few details without inconveniencing them with too much reading, analysis, or interpretation. The survey was designed to be completed in approximately 15 minutes. As an incentive to participate in the survey, the editors made available to 10 randomly selected winners, fitness-related books published by *Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins* and *Human Kinetics* and a \$100 MasterCard gift card.

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, additional space was provided for comments. At the survey conclusion, a place for the respondent to include comments or to list potential fitness trends left off the list to be considered for future surveys, as well as some anonymous demographic information, was included. Using SurveyMonkey (www.surveymonkey.com), the online survey was sent to 125,940 people including more than 32,000 ACSM certified professionals, those who registered to attend the 2022 ACSM's International Health & Fitness Summit, the Certification email opt-in list, ACSM Alliance members, ACSM professional members who have added an HFJ subscription, nonmember HFJ subscribers, HFJ associate editors, and HFJ Editorial Board members. A link also was provided on the HFJ web site and on various social media sites including the HFJ Twitter page, the ACSM Journal's Facebook page, and ACSM's Instagram page. The survey response total was 3,735. The response rate was 3%, which is comparable with previous years.

Responses were received from almost every continent, including the countries of Australia, Brazil, Barbados, Canada, China, Columbia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Jordan, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom, Vietnam, and the United States, among many others. Demographics of the survey respondents included 58% females (41% males) across a wide variability in ages

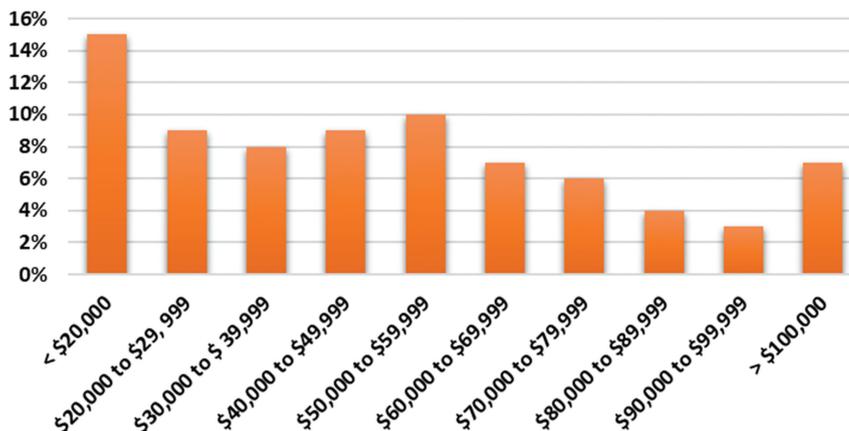
(Figure 1), with 55% of all respondents having more than 10 years of industry experience (Figure 2) and 29% with more than 20 years of experience. More than 37% of the survey respondents earned an annual salary of more than \$50,000, which included more than 7% who earned at least \$100,000 a year (Figure 3). Respondents

TABLE 1:
Survey Respondents' Occupation (What Is Your Primary Profession?)

Respondent Occupation	Total Respondents (%)
Registered dietitian (RD, RDN, LD)	1
Strength coach	1
Athletic trainer	1
Undergraduate student	2
Corporate health and wellness	2
Program manager	3
Owner/operator	3
Group exercise leader	4
Exercise physiologist	4
Teacher	4
Health/wellness coach	4
Clinical exercise physiologist	5
Health/fitness director	5
Graduate student	5
Professor	7
Personal trainer (part-time)	10
Personal trainer (full-time)	10
Medical professional (MD/DO, RN, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist)	10
Other	18

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Figure 3. Annual salary of survey respondents.



identified their occupations (Table 1), with 20% indicating that they were full-time or part-time personal trainers. Figure 4 shows where respondents work, with 33% indicating they were in private practice, or they owned their own business. Figure 5 specifies the broad range of certifications held by the survey respondents (23% reported not having a certification). When asked if they worked full-time or part-time (Figure 6), 64% indicated full-time and 28% part-time (less than 20 hours/week).

SURVEY RESULTS

The top 20 fitness trends for 2023 are described in this report. For a comparison of the top 10 trends from the past 17 years' surveys (1–16), please see the comprehensive comparison table available online (available at <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A288>). The 2023 survey results (Table 2) reveal potential trends as defined in the survey. It is not unusual for potential trends to drop out of the top 20, and later to be labeled as a fad. New to the top 20 trends for 2023 include the #4 trend, fitness programs for older adults, the #5 trend, functional fitness training, and #9, employing certified fitness professionals. Online live and on-demand exercise classes was #26 for 2020, #1 for 2021, but has fallen to #21 for 2023. Dropping from #2 for 2022 to #13 for 2023 is home exercise gyms. Continuing out of the top 20 from 2022 include worksite health promotion and workplace well-being (#18 for 2020, #27 for 2021, #28 for 2022, and now #30), children and exercise (#20 for 2020, #28 for 2021, #29 for 2022, and #31 for 2023), and outcomes measures (#20 for 2021, #22 for 2022, and #29 for 2023).

1. Wearable Technology. Wearable technology includes fitness trackers, smart watches, heart rate monitors, and GPS tracking devices and includes fitness and activity trackers that can monitor heart rate, calories, sitting time, sleep, and much more. Wearable technology has been the #1 trend after it was introduced on the survey in 2016, except for 2018 (#3) and 2021 (#2). These devices are used as a step counter and heart rate monitor, and can track body temperature, calories, sitting time, sleep time, and much more. Initially, there was a question of wearable

technology accuracy, but these issues have seemed to be resolved. New innovations include blood pressure, oxygen saturation, body temperature, respiratory rate, and electrocardiogram.

2. Strength Training With Free Weights. Focusing on proper movement and lifting technique, this activity incorporates the use of barbells, dumbbells, and/or kettlebells to improve or maintain muscular fitness by manipulating repetitions, sets, tempo, load, and exercise selection to reach specific muscular fitness goals. Surveys conducted before 2021 included a category described as “strength training”. That description was determined to be too broad; therefore, strength training was redefined in 2020 in favor of the more specific strength training with free weights. Included in this category are free weights, barbells, kettlebells, dumbbells, and medicine ball classes. Training with free weights debuted at #4 for 2020 and dropped to #8 for 2021, then #4 for 2022.

3. Body Weight Training. A combination of multiplane body weight and neuromotor movements with body weight as the primary resistance defines this trend. Body weight training uses minimal equipment and space, making it an inexpensive and functional way to exercise. Body weight training appeared for the first time on the trends survey in 2013 (at #3) and was #2 for 2017, #4 for 2018, and #5 for 2019 before dropping to #7 for 2020 and then rebounding to #3 for 2021, then to #8 for

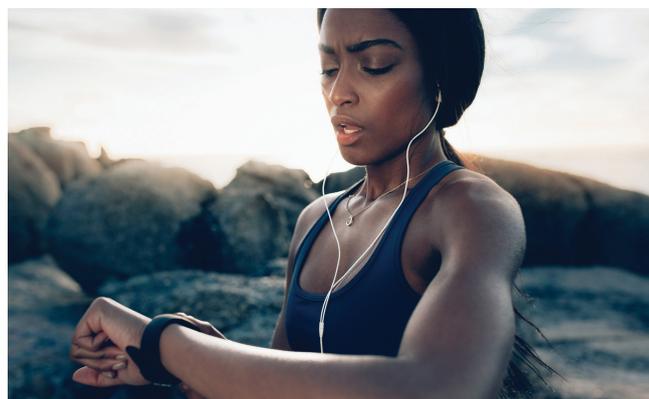
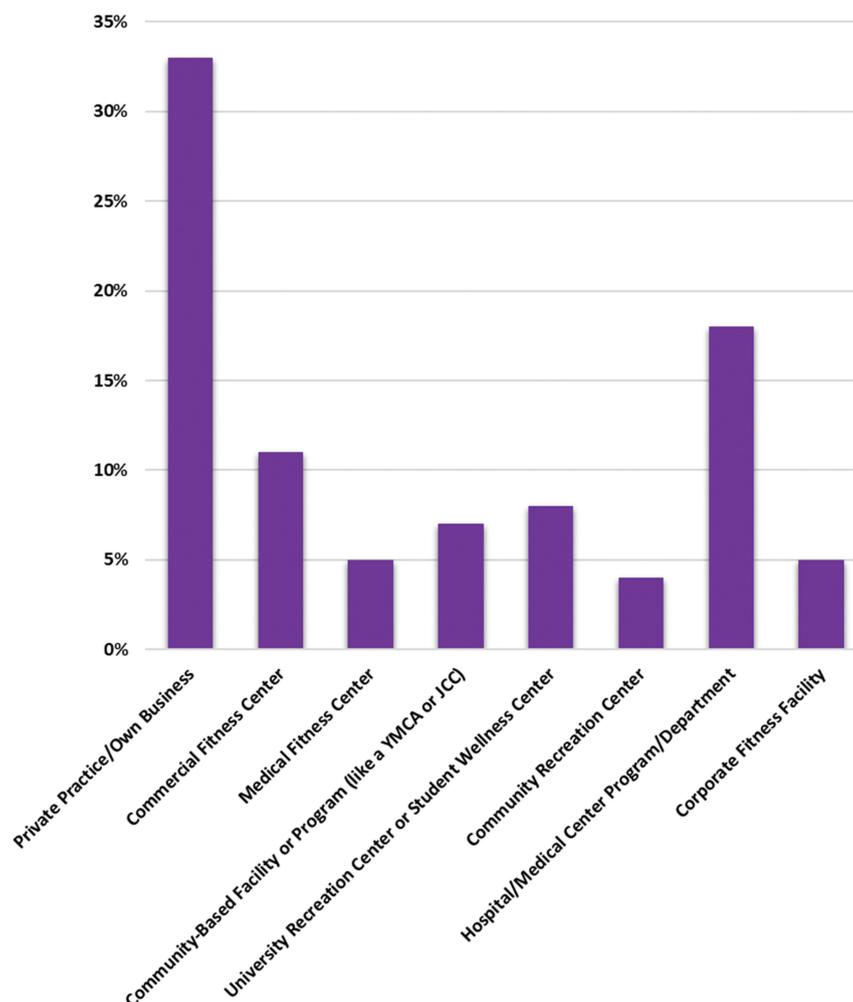


Figure 4. Where do you work?



2022. Although body weight training has been around a long time, it did not appear as a survey trend option before 2013 because it only became popular (as a defined trend) in gyms around the world within the last decade.

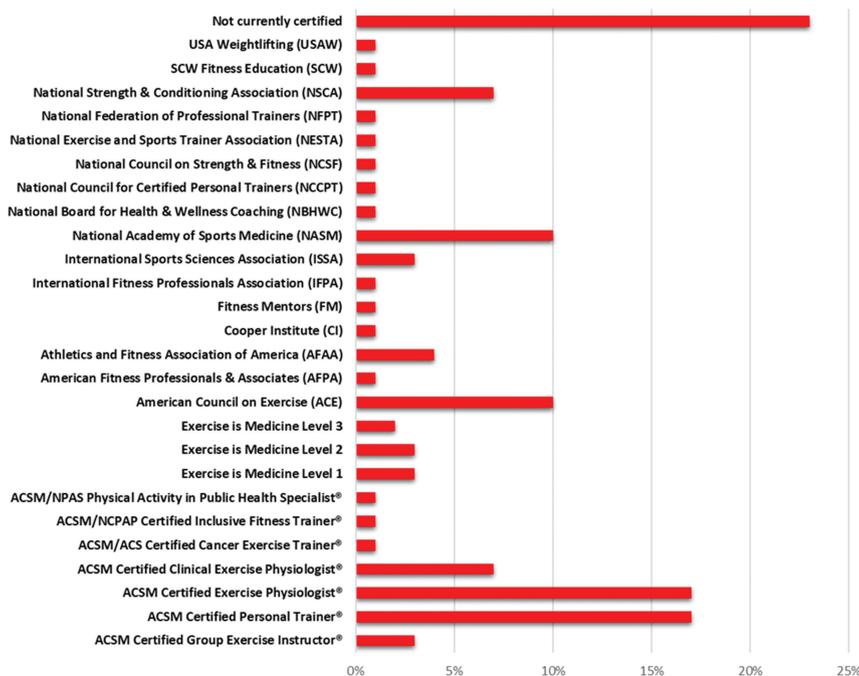
4. Fitness Programs for Older Adults. This is a trend that emphasizes and caters to the fitness needs of the baby boomer and older generations. People are living longer, working longer, and desiring to remain healthy and physically active throughout their life span. This trend is making a return after being in the top 10 in 2007 (the #2 trend) and dropping to #11 for 2017. In 2018, fitness programs for older adults was the #9 trend, #4 for 2019, #8 for 2020, #9 for 2021, and #11 in 2022. The baby boomers (and older generations) in general have more discretionary money than their younger counterparts do, and fitness clubs may be able to capitalize on this growing market. Changing the atmosphere (including lights and type of music) of gyms to be more older generation friendly during the traditional slow times of the day is the type of trend that seems to be catching on in commercial clubs.

5. Functional Fitness Training. Training to improve balance, coordination, functional strength, and endurance to improve activities of daily living. Exercise programs reflect actual activities someone might do during the day. Functional fitness first appeared



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Figure 5. Certifications held by survey respondents.



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 as #9. In 2012, functional fitness was the #10 trend and ranked as high as #8 for 2014 but fell to #14 for 2021 and for 2022. This trend typically focuses on using strength training to improve essential balance, coordination, muscular strength, and endurance to improve activities of daily living typically for older adults but also in clinical populations.

6. Outdoor Activities. This trend allows for health and fitness professionals to offer more outdoor activities such as group walks, rides, or organized hiking. Activities can be short events, day-long events, or planned multiday excursions along with ECO challenges like stand-up paddleboards, kayaking, mountain biking, and backcountry hiking. Perhaps because of the COVID-19 restrictions, more outdoor activities have recently become popular. For 2021, outdoor activities ranked #4 and for 2022, it was #3. Participants meet in a local park, hiking area, or on a bike trail typically with a designated leader. This trend for health and fitness professionals to offer outdoor activities for their clients began in 2010. In that year, outdoor activities ranked #25 in the annual survey and in 2011, it ranked #27.

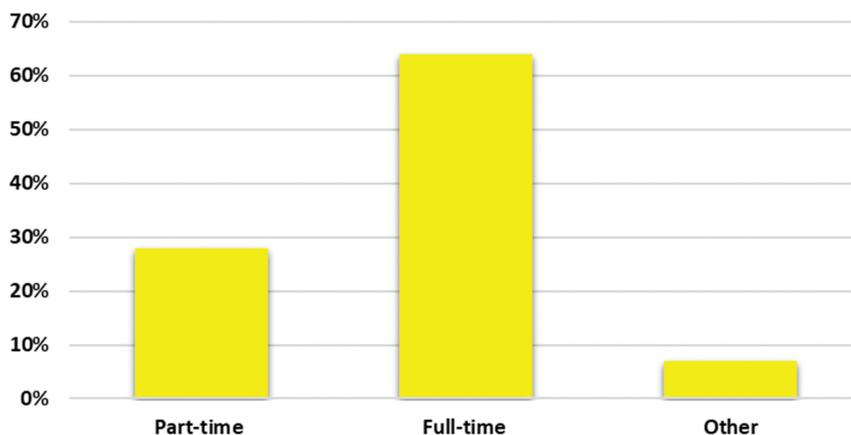
7. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT). These exercise programs typically involve repeated bouts of high-intensity exercise (>80% heart rate max), combined with periods of rest. High-intensity interval training can be applied to a variety of exercise activities. Although a part of the survey as a possible trend before 2013 but not making the top 20, HIIT was #1 in the survey for 2014 and 2018 and remained in the top five each year between

2014 and 2021 (#5); however, for 2022, HIIT dropped out of the top five for the first time, to #7, and remains at #7 for 2023. There are a variety of HIIT formats including dumbbells, barbells, sprinting, cycling, bodyweight, and stair-climbing.

8. Exercise for Weight Loss. This trend incorporates weight loss programs with an exercise program. The coupling of physical activity and exercise training with diets and cooking classes may prove to have additional benefits. Perhaps because of the quarantine imposed by COVID-19 and resulting perceived (or real) weight gain, exercise for weight loss made a comeback in 2022 (#5). Most diet programs recommend including some form of an exercise program into the daily routine of caloric restriction, adding the caloric expenditure of physical activity into the equation. Exercise for weight loss programs has been a top 20 trend since the survey began. In 2009, exercise for weight loss ranked as low as #18 before regaining popularity through 2015. Starting in 2016, this trend began to move down the list to a low of #16 for 2021.

9. Employing Certified Fitness Professionals. Emphasis is placed on the importance of hiring certified health and fitness professionals who have completed educational programs and fully accredited health/fitness certifications. This trend debuted at #6 in 2019 then dropped to #10 for 2020 and was at #13 for both 2021 and 2022. The importance of hiring certified health and fitness professionals through educational programs and accredited certification programs has remained a steady trend. More certification programs have become accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies, allowing employers easy access to certification

Figure 6. Current work status.



validation through the United States Registry of Exercise Professionals and the International Confederation of Registers for Exercise Professionals. Some national certification organizations like ACSM are requiring graduation from a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Organizations accredited program to qualify.

10. Personal Training. Personal training includes goal setting, fitness assessment, and exercise programming with a trainer in one-on-one settings. Personal trainers provide exercise technique instruction, monitor improvement, and progress workouts with each client encounter and based on the client's progress. One-on-one training continues to be a strong trend as the profession of personal training becomes more accessible online, in health clubs, in the home, and in work sites. Personal training includes fitness testing and goal setting with the trainer collaborating one-on-one with a client to prescribe workouts specific to his or her individual needs and goals. Since this survey was first published in 2006 (1), personal training has been a top 10 trend as high as #3 in 2008 and 2009, now dropping to #10 for 2023.

11. Core Training. This trend is training that emphasizes conditioning of the stabilizing muscles of the trunk, abdomen, and back. Core training uses stability balls, half-ball balance trainers, wobble boards, foam rollers, body weight, and free weights. Core training was in the top 10 fitness trends from 2007 to 2010, where it held the #5 spot. Dropping slightly to #6 for 2011, #7 for 2017, and #9 for 2013, it has now gained renewed popularity. Core training was #21 for 2022 but has not been in the top 20 since 2018 when it was #19. Exercising the core muscles improves overall stability of the trunk and transfers that to the extremities, enabling the individual to meet the demands of activities of daily living and for the performance of various sports that require strength, speed, and agility.

12. Circuit Training. Circuit training is typically a group of approximately 10 exercises that are completed in succession and in a predetermined sequence. Each exercise is performed for a specified number of repetitions or for a set duration before

a brief rest and moving onto the next exercise. Circuit training appeared in 2013 (#18) for the first time in the top 20 trends and in 2015 occupied the #14 position, up from #15 in 2014.

TABLE 2:
Top 20 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2023

Rank	Trend
1	Wearable technology
2	Strength training with free weights
3	Body weight training
4	Fitness programs for older adults
5	Functional fitness training
6	Outdoor activities
7	High-intensity interval training (HIIT)
8	Exercise for weight loss
9	Employing certified fitness professionals
10	Personal training
11	Core training
12	Circuit training
13	Home exercise gyms
14	Group exercise training
15	Exercise is Medicine
16	Lifestyle medicine
17	Yoga
18	Licensure for fitness professionals
19	Health/well-being coaching
20	Mobile exercise apps

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In 2016, it was trend #18 and #19 in 2017. Circuit training was not in the top 20 fitness trends for 2021 or 2022 but was #17 for both 2018 and 2020.

13. Home Exercise Gyms. Home exercise gyms can use equipment such as resistance bands, free weights, cardio equipment, or many other fitness options. They can be solo or family events and self-guided or following along with online classes. This trend was a popular alternative to going to a gym during COVID-19 quarantine. Home gyms can use minimal equipment or expensive treadmills and bikes. This is the second year home exercise gyms have appeared as a fitness trend but dropped from #2 for 2022 to #13 for 2023. As the world emerges from the isolation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, home gym manufacturers will need to make major adjustments, including lowering the price of equipment, to convince consumers that home gyms are a better option.

14. Group Training. Group exercise training involves instructors teaching and leading individuals through in-person group classes (defined as more than five participants). These types of classes are designed for different fitness levels using a variety of equipment to teach many forms of exercise, from cardio-based and indoor cycling to dance-based and step classes. It was only in 2017 that group exercise training made the top 20, appearing at #6 followed by #2 in 2018 and 2019 and falling slightly to #3 for 2020. Group training fell dramatically to #17 in 2021 and #20 for 2022. The dramatic drop in the 2021 and 2022 trends survey may be the result of gyms closing or imposed mandates to limit social gatherings.

15. Exercise is Medicine. Exercise is Medicine (EIM) is a global health initiative that encourages physicians and other health care providers to include physical activity assessment and treatment as a standard of care when designing a treatment plan. Exercise is Medicine recommends physicians refer patients to evidence-based exercise programs and qualified health and fitness professionals. In addition, EIM recognizes health and fitness professionals as part of the health care team in their local communities. Exercise is Medicine was the #7 trend in 2017, #12 for 2018, #10 for 2019, and jumping to #6 for 2020 and #7 for 2021 before falling to #12 for 2022. A new EIM credential is now available after completion of an online course for anyone with a minimum bachelor's degree in Exercise Science, Exercise Physiology, or Kinesiology.

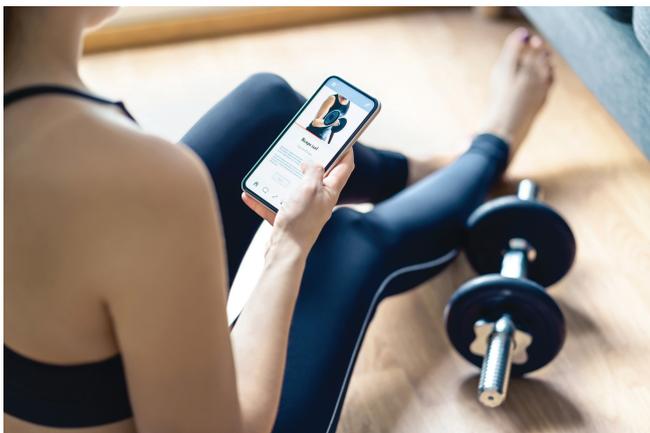
16. Lifestyle Medicine. Lifestyle medicine promotes healthy behaviors as the foundation to medical care, disease prevention, and health promotion. Examples of target patient behaviors include, but are not limited to, eliminating tobacco use, improving diet, increasing physical activity, moderating alcohol consumption and stress, and enhancing social connectedness. Lifestyle medicine is the evidence-based practice of assisting individuals and their families to adopt and sustain healthy behaviors that affect health and quality of life. The survey category of lifestyle medicine appeared for the first time at #16 in 2020, #18 for 2021, and was the #19 trend in 2022 before rebounding to #16 for 2023.

17. Yoga. Yoga can be performed individually, in groups, and with or without a live instructor through forms such as power, hot, or restorative yoga. From the novice to the expert, instructional videos, books, and yoga certifications provide advanced techniques and practices for students at all levels. Traditional yoga includes Hatha, Vinyasa, Ashtanga, Bikram, and Iyengar, but it has taken on a variety of more recent versions and is now available as on-demand videos and books. Yoga first appeared in the top 10 on this survey in 2008, fell out of the top 20 in 2009, but made a great comeback in the 2010 (#14) and 2011 surveys (#11). Yoga has ranked as high as #7 but has been in the top 20 since 2010.

18. Licensure for Fitness Professionals. Some professions in the United States and around the world are regulated by licensure. This trend supports licensure of fitness professionals such as personal trainers, exercise physiologists, and clinical exercise physiologists. For example, people cannot call themselves a medical doctor or nurse without holding the appropriate state government license, and in many places, the same holds true for a physical therapist or dietitian. This is a trend in the fitness industry to pursue regulation of fitness professionals. Licensure for fitness professionals first appeared as a fitness trend in 2018 when it ranked #16, then #18 in 2019, and #15 for 2020 before settling in at #19 for 2021, and #18 for 2022.

19. Health/Well-Being Coaching. This trend uses one-on-one, and at times a small-group approach, with the coach providing support, goal setting, guidance, and encouragement. The health/well-being coach focuses on the client's values, needs, vision, and short- and long-term goals using behavior change techniques that guide intervention strategies. Previous surveys included wellness coaching, but for the 2019 survey, the term "health" was added, which better describes this trend. Wellness coaching has been in the top 20 trends since 2010 and was listed as #17 in 2014, #13 in 2015 and 2016, #15 in 2017, #18 in 2018, #11 in 2019, #9 in 2020, #11 for 2021, and #10 for 2022. This is a trend that integrates





behavioral science into health promotion and lifestyle medicine programs.

20. Mobile Exercise Apps. Compatible on most mobile devices, these apps can include audio and visual prompts to start moving when sedentary or when to start and stop exercise. There are a variety of companies and brands that produce these apps including FitOn[®], Adidas Training[®], Map My Fitness[®], Sworkit[®], Daily Workout Fitness Trainer[®], Aaptiv[®], 8fit[®], Fitify[®], Asana Rebel[®], Jefit[®], Pacer[®], MyFitnessPal[®], Seven[®], Gymshark[®], Fitplan[®], and Nike Training Club[®]. These apps can track progress through time as well as hundreds of other functionalities and are available for mobile devices such as iOS and Android devices. Mobile exercise apps ranked #20 in the 2019 survey, #25 in 2020, #12 in 2021, and #16 for 2022.

WHAT'S OUT FOR 2023?

Dropping out of the top 20 for 2023 were online live and on-demand exercise classes (from #9 to #21) and online personal training (from #17 to #26). New survey entries for 2023 were balance and stabilization training (#23), stretch-based training (#36), plyometric training (#38), virtual reality exercise training (#41), and medicine ball training (#42). Because of their lack of support in the industry in 2022, left off the 2023 survey were low-cost and budget gyms (#31), mind-body movement (#36), boutique fitness studios (#38), boot camp-style programs (#39), post-COVID recovery programs (#40), and blood flow restriction training (#43). Those trends receiving the least support in the 2023 survey include resistance band training, worker incentive programs, long-term youth development, stretch-based training, Pilates, plyometric training, dance-based workouts, aquatic exercise, virtual reality exercise training, and medicine ball training. Postpublication commentary on these results is always interesting, with one group or another arguing that their interest is a popular trend. Readers of this survey must understand that regional popularity does not always translate as an international trend.

SUMMARY

Online training went from the #26 trend in 2020 to the #1 trend for 2021, likely because of a shift in the fitness market from clubs to homes because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it then dropped to the #9 spot for 2022 and #21 for 2023 as the world returns to prepandemic social interactions and exercise activities. Wearable technology has again taken the #1 spot in the global rankings, the same as 2019 and 2020. High-intensity interval training, the #1 trend in 2014 and 2018, has dropped slightly since, yet remains a consistently popular trend at #7 for both 2022 and 2023. Group exercise training made a significant return in 2017 as the #6 trend and was the #2 trend for both 2018 and 2019, #3 for 2020, fell to #17 in 2021, #20 for 2022, and now #14, possibly because of the rebounding effects of crowd avoidance caused by COVID-19. Popular low-cost exercise program delivery of strength training with free weights (#2), body weight training (#3), core training (#11), and circuit training (#12) seem to indicate that health clubs are emphasizing the basics. Fitness programming aimed at older adults had regained some popularity after falling out of the top 10 trends in 2017, appeared as #9 in 2018, #4 for 2019, #8 for 2020, #9 for 2021, #11 for 2022, and now #4 for 2023. Functional fitness training, which is popular among older adults, ranked #14 in 2022 and is now #5 for 2023. The COVID-19–related pivots seen in 2021 and 2022 including online live and on-demand exercise classes and online personal training have fallen out of the top 20 fitness trends for 2023.

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Walter R. Thompson, Ph.D., FACSME, is a recently retired associate dean for Graduate Studies and Research in the College of Education & Human Development at Georgia State University and a regents' professor emeritus in the Department of Kinesiology and Health, the Department of Nutrition, the Department of Physical Therapy, and the School of Public Health. He also is the executive director emeritus of After-School All-Stars Atlanta, a comprehensive after-school program for at-risk middle school-aged children. He is a former president of ACSM.

BRIDGING THE GAP

ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends is now in its 17th consecutive year, with this being perhaps one of the more critical years because of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery, the return to some form of normalcy within the industry, and shifting health club business models. The survey was designed to help and support the health and fitness industry when making critical programming and business decisions to capture additional business into the future, and maybe even to stay in business after these turbulent years. The results of this survey are relevant to all four sectors of the health and fitness industry (commercial for-profit clubs, clinical or medical fitness programs, 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 assist owners, operators, program directors, and health and fitness professionals with making their important business and program decisions.

Congrats 2023 Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends Prize Winners



The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) randomly selected prize winners from all who participated in the 17th annual Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends. Here's what the winners said.



"I'm amazed to have been selected as the grand prize winner. ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends helps identify opportunities where health and fitness professionals can make real differences in people's lives."
Teresa Merrick, Bellevue, NE
Winner of \$100 gift card



"Being a recipient of this prize is incredible because as research continues to be done, our field expands with new data, and new information that shapes the way we work. Thank you so much ACSM for this prize!"
Pablo A. Herrera-Fuentes, Beaverton, OR
Winner of ACSM's Clinical Exercise Physiologist



"Thank you for the book!"
Jin Lenhart, Georgetown, TX
Winner of ACSM's Career and Business Guide



"Thank you to ACSM for allowing me to continue my education as a clinical exercise physiologist by providing this resource!"
Ross Clements, Fort Collins, CO
Winner of ACSM's Clinical Exercise Physiologist



"I am honored to be a prize recipient of ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends 2023. I am grateful to be able to contribute to the knowledge of fitness trends as a clinician and researcher. Thank you, ACSM for the opportunity to contribute and for the book."
Michelle Walaszek, Downers Grove, IL
Winner of ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 11th edition



"Thank you so much!"
Valerie Shah, Lebanon, OH
Winner of ACSM's Foundations of Strength Training and Conditioning, 2nd edition



"ACSM was the foundation of my kinesiology studies when I was in college and have been with them ever since. It's an honor to be a part of such an astute organization that continues to invest in their professionals."
Zach Harper, Mount Sterling, IL
Winner of ACSM's Body Composition Assessment



"Winning this prize isn't a gift but an opportunity to gain further insight to aid the general population in living healthier and longer lives."
Stephen Chromey, Stroudsburg, PA
Winner of ACSM's Resources for the Exercise Physiologist, 3rd edition



"How wonderful! Thanks, ACSM."
Lisa Cavoto, LaVergne, TN
Winner of ACSM's Foundations of Strength Training and Conditioning, 2nd edition



"I'm very excited to be chosen to receive an ACSM book! As a professor of Exercise Science for the past 15 years, I use ACSM resources with my classes constantly. Their quality is unmatched."
Denel Bingel, Bridgewater, NJ
Winner of ACSM's Certification Review, 6th edition