

NOW TRENDING:

Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2014

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- the difference between a fad and a trend
- worldwide trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical (including medical fitness), and community health fitness industry
- expert opinions about identified fitness trends for 2014

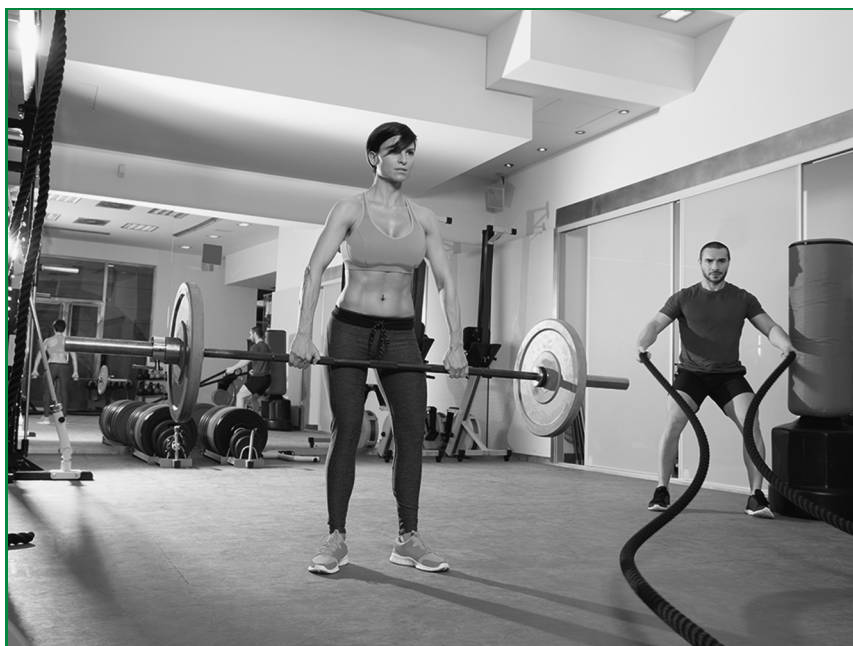
Key words:

Commercial, Clinical, Corporate, Community, Expert Opinions, Future Programs

INTRODUCTION

This annual survey is now in its eighth consecutive year and, this year, with some very surprising results. High-Intensity Interval Training took over the no. 1 spot held by Educated, Certified, and Experienced Fitness Professionals, which held that position since 2008 and now appears at no. 3 behind Body Weight Training. The 2014 ACSM Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends continues to support some

previous trends and also reinforced the deletion of four trends that had appeared to be strong for several years but now have dropped off the list. Zumba, which first appeared in the top 10 (no. 9) in 2012, fell to no. 13 in 2013 and dropped off the list of top 20 this year (no. 28 in 2014). Pilates, Spinning, Stability Ball, and Balance Training again failed to appear on the list of top 20 trends in the health and fitness industry, which supports the theory that these were fads and not trends. Some of the survey respondents still argue that the persistent sluggish economy has influenced the results of this survey and that focused training programs that require expensive equipment or technical instruction are not supported because of the increased cost. Still others argue that Zumba, Spinning, and Pilates have run their useful course. The results of this annual survey may help the health and fitness industry make some very important investment decisions for future growth and development. Important business decisions should be based on emerging trends and not the latest exercise



innovation peddled by late-night television infomercials or the hottest celebrity endorsing a product.

Respondents were first asked to make the important distinction between a “fad” and a “trend.” A “trend” has been described as “a general development or change in a situation or in the way that people are behaving” (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>). Using this definition, it would be highly predictable, then, to see the same trends appearing for multiple years in a “trends survey.” The definition of trend includes the phrase “general development,” as opposed to “fad,” which is described as “a fashion that is taken up with great enthusiasm for a brief period” (<http://dictionary.reference.com>). During the last 8 years, the editors of *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*[®] have developed and widely disseminated this electronic survey to thousands of professionals worldwide to determine trends in the health and fitness industry. The survey in this issue of the *Journal* will help guide health fitness programming efforts for 2014. The first survey (1), conducted in 2006 (for predictions in 2007), developed a systematic way to predict health and fitness trends, and surveys have been done annually since that time (2–7).

These annual surveys of health fitness trends in the commercial (typically for-profit), clinical (including medical fitness), community (not-for-profit), and corporate divisions of the industry continue to confirm some previous trends. Some of the trends first identified for 2007 have moved up and stayed at the top of the list since the first survey was published, whereas other new trends appear to be emerging for 2014, and still others have dropped out of the top 20. Future surveys will confirm these new trends or they will fall short of making an enduring impact on the health fitness industry and drop out of the survey, as did Zumba this year. Dropping out of the survey may indicate that what was once perceived to be a trend in the industry was actually a fad (note that Stability Ball, Spinning, and Pilates have yet to reemerge as a trend). One developing trend (Body Weight Training) from last year's survey was affirmed this year, and High-Intensity Interval Training appears at the top of the list for the first time. Future surveys will either confirm or reject these as emerging trends.

As in the past, the ACSM survey makes no attempt to evaluate equipment, gym apparatus, tools, or other exercise machines that may materialize at clubs or recreation centers or appear during late-night television infomercials, often seen during the winter holidays or the week before and a few weeks into the New Year. The survey has been designed to confirm, reconfirm, or to introduce new trends (not fads) that have a perceived impact on the industry according to the international respondents. By using this survey construct, some of the trends identified in earlier surveys would naturally appear for several years (as is the case for many of the top 10 trends). The market impact potential of a piece of new equipment, exercise device, or program is not evaluated by this annual survey. The type of

information provided by this survey is left to the readers to determine if it fits into their business model and how to best use the information. It is as important for the health and fitness industry to pay close attention to not only those trends appearing for the first time (e.g., High-Intensity Interval Training) but also for those that do not appear this year or have been replaced on the list by other trends (e.g., Zumba and other dance workouts).

The health and fitness industry should consider applying this information to its own unique settings. The potential benefits to commercial health clubs (those that are for-profit) is the establishment (or maybe the justification) of new markets, which could result in a potential for increased and sustainable revenue. Community-based programs (typically not-for-profit) could use the results to continue 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 patients.

THE SURVEY

There were 38 possible trends in the 2014 survey. The top 25 trends from previous years were included in the survey, as were some potentially emerging trends identified by the staff and editors of *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*[®]. To establish equity, the editors represent all four sectors of the health fitness industry (corporate, clinical, community, commercial), as well as academia. In the survey, potential trends were first identified, and then short explanations were written 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 less than 15 minutes. As an incentive to complete the survey, the editors made available several ACSM books published by Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins and Human Kinetics and a \$100 American Express gift card. These incentives helped increase participation in the survey.

As in all of the previous ACSM surveys, the 38 potential items were 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 the respondent to add comments. At the conclusion of the survey, space was left for the respondent to add comments or potential fitness trends left off the list to be considered for future surveys. The next step was to send the survey electronically to a defined list of health and fitness professionals. Using Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com), the online survey was sent to 28,924 health fitness professionals. This list included all *currently* certified ACSM Certified Personal Trainers[®], ACSM Group Exercise InstructorsSM, ACSM Health Fitness SpecialistsSM, ACSM Clinical Exercise SpecialistsSM, ACSM Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologists[®], ACSM Health/Fitness Directors[®], ACSM Program DirectorsSM, ACSM

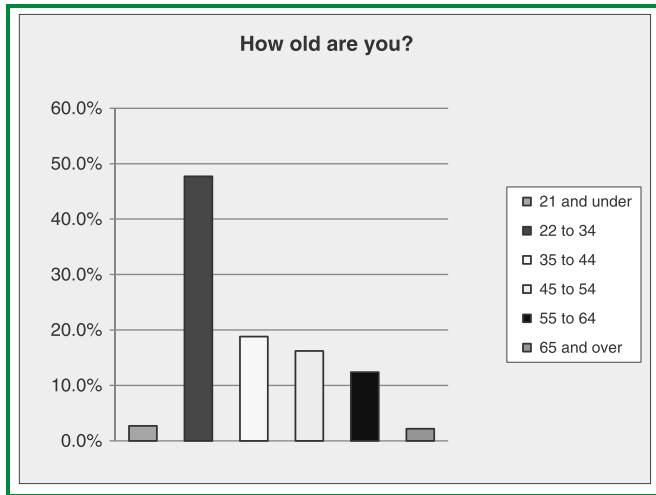


Figure 1. Age (in years) of survey respondents.

Alliance members, *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*® non-member subscribers, *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*® Editorial Board, and *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*® associate editors. In addition, it was posted on *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*® Web site, a tweet was placed on Twitter, and it was posted on Facebook.

After the 3-week window of opportunity had been completed, 3,815 responses were received, which represents an excellent return rate of 13%. Responses were received from just about every continent. Some specific countries included Australia, Austria, Barbados, Brazil, Columbia, Costa Rica, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jamaica, Lebanon, Mauritius, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, Portugal, South Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka,

Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United States, and the United Kingdom. Demographics of the survey respondents included 65% female across a wide variability in ages (Figure 1) and 34% having more than 10 years of experience in the industry (Figure 2). Almost 30% of the survey respondents earned more than \$50,000 annually, which included 4.7% who earned more than \$100,000 a year (Figure 3). Respondents were asked to identify their occupations (Table 1), and 24.5% indicated that they were full-time or part-time personal trainers.

SURVEY RESULTS

The first step in the 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 2014 are described in this report. After rank ordering the responses, we asked four internationally recognized experts representing all sectors in the health and fitness industry to comment 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 7 years' surveys (1–7), please see the comprehensive comparison table online (available at <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A1>). The same top trends identified in 2008–2012 appeared as top trends for 2013, just in a different order, with Educated, Certified, and Experienced Fitness Professionals maintaining the no. 1 spot; Fitness Programs for Older Adults dropping to no. 6; and Strength Training remaining at no. 2. Introduced in 2013 for the first time was Body Weight Training, which landed at no. 2 in this year's survey. The 2014 survey (Table 2) seems to reinforce the findings of previous years, which was expected when tracking trends and not fads. Dropping out of the top 20 trends for 2014 were Zumba and Reaching New Markets.

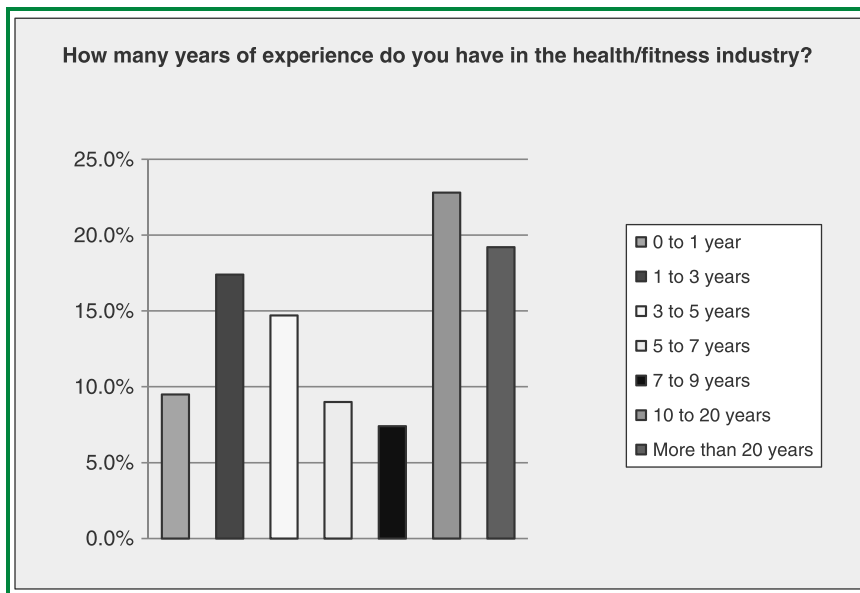


Figure 2. Years of experience reported by the survey respondents.

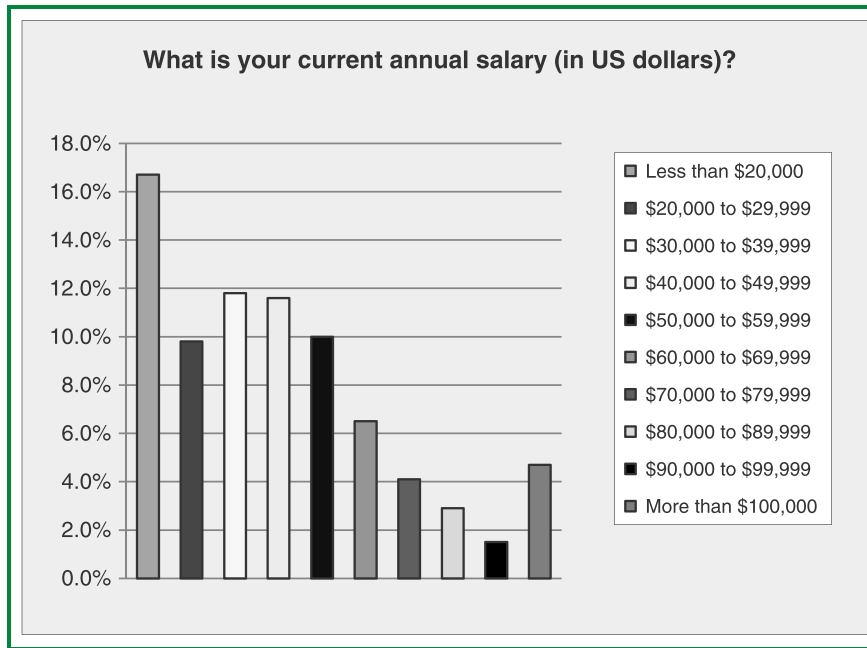


Figure 3. Annual salary of survey respondents.

High-Intensity Interval Training (no. 1) and Sport-Specific Training (no. 18) made the top 20 list in 2014.

1. High-Intensity Interval Training

Typically involves short bursts of high-intensity bouts of exercise followed by a short period of rest or recovery; these exercise programs usually take less than 30 minutes to perform. While being offered as a possible trend in previous surveys but

not making the top 20, High-Intensity Interval Training was no. 1 in the survey for 2014 despite the warnings of many survey respondents about the potential dangers. Most of the comments were “clients love this because of the short time,” but many others warned “Very, very popular. However, high injury rates. We need more highly trained professionals working this area.” Still others working with clinical populations said “I work with a high risk clinical population. A lot of my patients have heard about these programs and think this would be a way to get more fit at a faster rate. We do a lot of work explaining why it isn’t appropriate for them.” Despite the warnings by health and fitness professionals of increased injury rates using high-intensity interval training, this form of exercise has become popular in gyms all over the world.

2. Body Weight Training

Appearing for the first time in the trends survey last year (at no. 3) is Body Weight Training. Body Weight Training did not appear as an option before 2013 because it only became popular (as a defined trend) in gyms around the world during the last couple of years; this is not to say that Body Weight Training had not been used previously. People have been using their own body weight for centuries as a form of resistance training. New packaging by commercial clubs as an exercise program has now made it popular in all kinds of gyms. Body Weight Training uses minimal equipment, which makes it an inexpensive way to exercise effectively. Most people think of body weight training as being limited to push-ups and pull-ups, but it can be much more than that. As the no. 3 position suggested last year, Body Weight Training may be a trend to watch for the future.

TABLE 1: Respondents’ Occupation

Answer Options	Response Percentage
Personal Trainer (part-time)	14.2
Personal Trainer (full-time)	10.3
Health Fitness Specialist (or equivalent)	9.8
Health/Fitness Director	6.1
Clinical Exercise Physiologist	5.9
Graduate Student	5.8
Professor	5.7
Medical Professional (M.D./D.O., R.N., Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist)	5.7
Undergraduate Student	5.4
Program Manager	4.5
Clinical Exercise Specialist (or equivalent)	3.8
Owner/Operator	3.0
Group Exercise Leader	2.7
Teacher	2.4
Other (please specify)	14.7



3. Educated, Certified, and Experienced Fitness Professionals

Falling to no. 3 this year from the no. 1 spot it held for the past 6 years, this is a trend that continues now that there are accreditations offered by national third-party accrediting



TABLE 2: Top 20 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2014*

2014

1. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)*
2. Body Weight Training
3. Educated, Certified, and Experienced Fitness Professionals
4. Strength Training
5. Exercise and Weight Loss
6. Personal Training
7. Fitness Programs for Older Adults
8. Functional Fitness
9. Group Personal Training
10. Yoga
11. Children and Exercise for the Treatment/Prevention of Obesity
12. Worksite Health Promotion
13. Core Training
14. Outdoor Activities
15. Circuit Training
16. Outcome Measurements
17. Wellness Coaching
18. Sport-Specific Training*
19. Worker Incentive Programs
20. Boot Camp

* Trends with a top 20 position new for 2014.

organizations for health and fitness and clinical exercise program professionals. There continues to be exponential growth of educational programs at community colleges, undergraduate programs, and graduate programs at colleges and universities, which have become accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs ([CAAHEP] www.caahep.org) through the Committee on Accreditation for the Exercise Sciences ([CoAES] www.coaes.org) and more certification programs accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies ([NCCA] www.credentialingexcellence.org/NCCA). The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to predict "...employment of fitness trainers and instructors is expected to grow by 24% from 2010 to 2020" (<http://www.bls.gov/ocos296.htm>, cited on July 20, 2013). As the economy begins to rebound and as the market for fitness professionals becomes even more crowded and more competitive, interest in some degree of regulation either from within the industry or from external sources (*i.e.*, government) seems to be growing. CAAHEP and NCCA are both third-party accrediting agencies — CAAHEP for academic programs and NCCA for certification programs. In 2007, CAAHEP added a Personal Fitness Trainer accreditation for certificate (1 year) and associate (2 years) degree programs. The accreditation for the academic training of the Personal

Fitness Trainer joined academic program accreditation for Exercise Science (baccalaureate) and Exercise Physiology (graduate programs in either applied exercise physiology or clinical exercise physiology). Collaboration also has started within the health and fitness industry to address the issue of standardized facility practices. Coordinated by NSF International (www.nsf.org), this collaboration (known as the NSF Joint Committee on Health Fitness Facilities Standards) brings various sectors of the industry and the public together to resolve the issues of facility standards. The NSF Standard (www.nsf.org) was approved in December 2012 with a voluntary certification program to follow in 2014.

4. Strength Training

Strength Training dropped to no. 4 in this year's survey after being at the no. 2 position for 2 years but has been a strong trend since the first year of this survey. This trend incorporates Strength Training into their exercise routines or to use it as the primary form of exercise for both men and women. Many younger clients of both community-based programs and commercial clubs train exclusively using weights. However, today, there are many other individuals (both men and women, young and old, and children) whose main focus is on using weight training to improve or maintain strength. Many contemporary health and fitness professionals incorporate some form of Strength Training into a comprehensive exercise routine for their clients and for patients with stable disease. It is not uncommon for cardiovascular and pulmonary rehabilitation or metabolic disease management programs to include weight training in the exercise programs of patients. Strength Training remains popular in all sectors of the health and fitness industry and for many different kinds of clients.

5. Exercise and Weight Loss

Commercial weight loss programs have been trying to infuse a regular exercise program into their caloric restriction diets. Most of these well-publicized diet plans incorporate exercise into the daily routine of providing prepared meals to their clients. The combination of Exercise and Weight Loss is a trend toward incorporating all weight loss programs with a sensible exercise program. Exercise and Weight Loss has been a growing trend since the survey began. In 2009, Exercise and Weight Loss ranked no. 18, moving to no. 12 in 2010, no. 7 in 2011, no. 4 in 2012, and, in 2013, the no. 5 spot. It appears as though people who are in the business of providing weight loss programs will continue to incorporate regular exercise as well as caloric restriction for weight control. The combination of exercise and diet is essential for weight loss maintenance and can improve compliance to caloric restriction diets and in particular weight loss programs.

6. Personal Training

Personal trainers are used by community-based programs, in commercial settings, in corporate wellness programs, and in

medical fitness programs. As more professional personal trainers are educated and become certified (see trend no. 3), they are increasingly more accessible in all sectors of the health and fitness industry. Personal Training has been in the top 10 of this survey for the past 8 years. Attention has recently been paid to the education (through third-party accreditation of CAAHEP) and certification (through third-party accreditation by NCCA) of personal trainers. Legislation has been introduced to license personal trainers in a number of states (California, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Georgia, and several others), none of which has yet passed. Although there have been some minor variations of personal training (*e.g.*, small groups as opposed to one-on-one), respondents to this survey believe that personal trainers will continue to be an important part of the professional staff of health and fitness centers.

7. Fitness Programs for Older Adults

The concern for the health of aging adults has been consistently at the top of this survey, and this year is no different. The so-called baby boom generation has now aged into retirement, and because they may have more discretionary money than their younger counterparts, fitness clubs should capitalize on this exponentially growing market. Fitness Programs for Older Adults will remain a strong trend for 2014. Health and fitness professionals can take advantage of this growing population by providing age-appropriate and safe exercise programs. The highly active older adult (the athletic old) can be targeted by commercial and community-based organizations to participate in more rigorous exercise programs, including strength training and team sports. Even the frail elderly can improve their ability to perform activities of daily living when provided appropriate functional fitness activities. It is assumed that people who are retired not only typically have greater sums of discretionary money, but they also have a tendency to spend it more wisely and may have more time to engage in an exercise program. Health and fitness professionals should consider developing fitness programs for people of retirement age and, perhaps, fill the time during the day when most gyms are underutilized.



8. Functional Fitness

Functional Fitness is defined as using strength training to improve balance, coordination, force, power, and endurance to improve someone's ability to perform activities of daily living. Functional Fitness programs replicate actual activities someone might do as a function of their daily living. Functional Fitness first appeared on the survey in the no. 4 position in 2007 but fell to no. 8 in 2008 and no. 11 in 2009. It reappeared in the top 10 for 2010 at no. 7 and in 2011 as no. 9. In 2012, Functional Fitness was no. 10; and in 2013, it was no. 8. Some of the survey respondents said that there is a relationship between Functional Fitness and fitness programs for older adults (see trend no. 7). Many exercise programs for the older age group are often composed of Functional Fitness activities. Functional Fitness also is used in clinical programs to imitate activities done around the home.

9. Group Personal Training

Group Personal Training continues to be a popular trend in 2014. This trend lets the personal trainer continue to provide the personal service clients expect but now in a small group of two to four, offering potentially deep discounts to each member of the group. In 2007, Group Personal Training was no. 19 on the list. In 2008, it rose slightly to no. 15 but dropped again in 2009 to no. 19 and improved to no. 10 in 2010. In 2011, Group Personal Training was no. 14 on the survey and no. 8 in 2012 and no. 10 in 2013. In these continuing challenging economic times when true personal income may be decreasing (and almost certainly discretionary spending), personal trainers must be more creative in the way they package personal training sessions. Training two or three people at the same time in a small group seems to make good economic sense for both the trainer and the client.

10. Yoga

Yoga seems to be making a comeback in 2014. Yoga appeared in the top 10 in this survey in 2008, fell out of the top 20 in 2009, but seemed to be make a comeback in the 2010 (no. 14) and 2011 surveys (no. 11). In 2012, Yoga was no. 11 on the list, falling to no. 14 in 2013. Seemingly reinventing itself every year, Yoga comes in a variety of forms, including Power Yoga, Yogalates, and Bikram Yoga (the one done in hot and humid environments). Other forms of Yoga include Iyengar Yoga, Ashtanga, Vinyasa Yoga, Kripalu Yoga, Anuara Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, and Sivananda Yoga. Instructional tapes and books are abundant, as are the growing numbers of certifications for the many Yoga formats.

11. Children and Exercise for the Treatment/Prevention of Obesity

Dropping from the top 5 in every previous survey since 2007 are exercise programs aimed specifically at the problem of childhood obesity. Childhood and adolescent obesity continues to be a major health issue in most developed and developing nations and is becoming increasingly important to address

because of its association with other medical problems such as diabetes and hypertension. As public school systems continue to face the reality of cutting programs such as physical education and recess to spend more time preparing for standardized testing in a challenging economy, programs for youth have been a trend and a potential new market for commercial and community-based organizations. The health and fitness industry should recognize this chronic health issue and start new programs targeted specifically at these children. Corporate and clinical programs also may see this as an opportunity to develop specialized physical activity programs for children of their staff and clients. Commercial-based and community-based programs may find a receptive partner within public and private schools.

12. Worksite Health Promotion

Designed to improve the health of workers, this is a trend for a range of programs and services that incorporate systems to evaluate health, health care costs, and worker productivity. Some of these programs are physically housed within the company or corporation building or on their campus, whereas other programs contract with independent commercial or community-based programs. Within the context of health care reform in the United States and rising health care costs, health promotion programs may take on additional importance in the future.

13. Core Training

From 2007 to 2010, Core Training was in the top 5 of the fitness trends. Since 2010, it has been dropping to now occupy the 13th spot in 2014. Core Training stresses strength and conditioning of the stabilizing muscles of the abdomen, thorax, and back. It typically includes exercises of the hips, lower back, and abdomen, all of which provide support for the spine and thorax. 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. Core Training often uses stabilizing devices such as exercise balls, BOSU balls, wobble boards, and foam rollers. Some respondents predicted in 2013 that core training may be losing some of its popularity as new forms of exercise are developed.

14. Outdoor Activities

This is a trend for health and fitness professionals to offer more Outdoor Activities to their clients. Outdoor Activities often include hiking, canoeing, kayaking, and games or sports. Outdoor Activities also can include high adventure programs such as overnight camping trips. In 2010, Outdoor Activities ranked no. 25 in the annual survey, and in 2011, it ranked no. 27. In 2012, Outdoor Activities ranked no. 14, and in 2013, Outdoor Activities ranked no. 13. Outdoor Activities can be done with family, with friends, with a group, or by yourself.

15. Circuit Training

Circuit Training appeared in 2013 (no. 18) for the first time in the top 20 trends and now occupies the no. 15 position. Circuit Training is a group of 6 to 10 exercises that are completed one after another and in a predetermined sequence. Each exercise is performed for a specified number of repetitions or for a set period before having a quick rest and moving on to the next exercise. Some respondents pointed out that Circuit Training is similar to high-intensity interval training but at a naturally lower intensity.

16. Outcome Measurements

This trend did not appear in the top 20 for the past few years but reappeared in 2013 at no. 17. A trend that addresses accountability, these are efforts to define and track outcomes to prove a selected program actually works. 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 has aided in data collection to support these efforts. Accountability to owners and operators of health and fitness facilities provide important metrics to determine if new programs are cost-effective and if old programs are actually working.

17. Wellness Coaching

Falling from no. 13 in 2010 but remaining in the top 20 trends for 2011, 2012, and 2013 is Wellness Coaching. Wellness Coaching integrates behavioral change science into health promotion, disease prevention, and rehabilitation programs. Wellness Coaching often uses a one-on-one approach, similar to a personal trainer, with the coach providing support, guidance, and encouragement. The wellness coach focuses on the client's values, needs, vision, and goals. According to this trends survey (and results from past surveys), it appears as though Wellness Coaching and its principled techniques of behavior change are being adopted by personal trainers and other health and fitness professionals.

18. Sport-Specific Training

Falling from a top 10 spot (no. 8) in 2010, Sport-Specific Training dropped to no. 16 for 2011 and no. 17 for 2012 and dropped out of the top 20 in 2013. This trend incorporates sport-specific training for sports such as baseball and tennis, designed especially for young athletes. For example, a high school athlete might join a commercial or community-based fitness organization to help develop skills during the off-season and to increase strength and endurance specific to that sport. Breaking into the top 10 for the first time in the survey in 2009 (no. 9), Sport-Specific Training jumped from no. 13 in 2008 after falling from no. 11 in 2007. This is an interesting trend for the health and fitness industry to watch over the next few years

because of the fall to no. 17 for 2012 from its relative popularity in 2010 and then rebounding a bit in 2014. Sport-Specific Training could possibly attract a new market to commercial and community clubs as well as offer a different kind of service that could lead to increased revenues.

19. Worker Incentive Programs

Appearing for the first time in the survey top 20 in 2011, Worker Incentive Programs stayed in the top 20 for 2012 and 2013. This is a trend that creates incentive programs to stimulate positive healthy behavior change as part of employer-based health promotion programming and health care benefits. This trend represents a resurgence of corporate health promotion programs as a result of rising health care costs experienced by both small and large companies and corporations. Worker Incentive Programs are associated with the trend to provide worksite health promotion programs in an attempt to reduce health care costs. For more information about worksite health promotion programs, visit <http://www.acsm-iawhp.org>, the International Association for Worksite Health Promotion, an affiliate society of the American College of Sports Medicine.

20. Boot Camp

After first appearing in the 2008 survey at no. 26, Boot Camp was no. 23 in 2009, no. 16 in 2010, no. 8 in 2011, but fell to no. 13 in 2012, and no. 16 for 2013. Boot Camp is a high-intensity structured activity patterned after military-style training. Boot Camp includes cardiovascular, strength, endurance, and flexibility drills and usually involves both indoor and outdoor exercises typically led by an enthusiastic instructor. Boot Camps also can combine sports-type drills and calisthenics. Because of its climb in the survey rankings from 2008 to 2011, with a decrease in the trend analysis the past 2 years, it will be interesting to see if Boot Camp programs continue as a trend in the fitness industry.

WHAT'S OUT FOR 2014?

Dropping out of the top 20 for 2014 is Zumba. Zumba combines Latin rhythms with interval-type exercise and resistance training and first appeared on the list of potential trends in 2010 and ranked no. 31 of 37 potential trends; in 2011, it was ranked no. 24 out of a possible 31 choices. In 2012, it jumped into the top 10 (no. 9) and then fell to no. 12 in 2013. It appears as though the popularity of Zumba, which was growing, with a rapid escalation between 2010 and 2013, can now be called a fad and not a trend. Falling out of the top 20 fitness trends last year was Spinning (indoor cycling), Sport-Specific Training, and Physician Referrals. Spinning was no. 16 in the survey for 2012, dropped out of the top 20 in 2012, and stayed out of the top 20 in 2014. Falling from a top 10 spot (no. 8) in 2010, Sport-Specific Training dropped to no. 16 for 2011

Now Trending

and no. 17 for 2012. Breaking into the top 10 for the first time in the survey in 2009 (no. 9), Sport-Specific Training jumped from no. 13 in 2008 after falling from no. 11 in 2007. After falling to no. 17 for 2012 from its relative popularity in 2010, Sport-Specific Training made the top 20 in 2014, appearing at no. 18. Jumping from no. 17 in 2010 and rounding out the top 10 for 2011 was Physician Referrals. In the 2012 survey, Physician Referrals fell to no. 20 and was out of the top 20 trends in 2013. For 2014, Physician Referrals remain out of the top 20. It is always interesting to see what fell out of the top 20 list on this survey for the next year and what seems to be supported by this year's survey.

SUMMARY

As in all of the previous ACSM worldwide surveys, some new trends were identified (*e.g.*, High-Intensity Interval Training) while others were once again supported (*e.g.*, Educated and Certified Health Fitness Professionals) and still others failed to make the top 20 trends (Pilates, Spinning, Stability Ball, Pregnancy/Postnatal Classes, Water Workouts, Mixed Martial Arts Kickboxing, Power Training Ropes, Unmonitored Fitness Facilities, Barefoot Walking and Running, and Hula Hoop Workout). Trends have been defined as a general development that takes some time and then stays for a period (usually described as a behavior change), whereas a fad comes and goes. In the top 10 fitness trends for 2014, 8 have been on the list in previous years. Appearing for the first time is High-Intensity Interval Training. Falling out of the top 20 was Zumba (in 2013, it was no. 12 on the list). It will be very interesting to watch two trends (High-Intensity Interval Training and Body Weight Training) during the next year to see if these are truly trends or fads. Pilates, spinning, balance training, and use of the stability ball continue to exist in the health and fitness industry but with not as much popularity according to the ACSM trends survey.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERTS COMMENT ON 2014 TRENDS



Leah E. Robinson, Ph.D., associate professor and director of the Pediatric Movement and Physical Activity Laboratory, School of Kinesiology, Auburn University, Auburn, AL. With the popularity of CrossFit, it is no surprise that High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) made its first appearance on the 2014 Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends in the no. 1 position. HIIT is everywhere! CrossFit centers are popping up in every city, fitness centers are offering a wide range of HIIT classes, HIIT fitness videos are flooding the market, and, every other weekend, there is a CrossFit Challenge on ESPN. So, it will be interesting to see if HIIT is a fad or a trend that will be around for years to come. Regardless, HIIT is creating a craze that is motivating individuals of all ages and fitness levels to engage in exercise training to promote physical

fitness and conditioning. Fitness training for older adults and functional fitness is a trend that is well expected because of the growing proportion of baby boomers. There is a need for the aging population to engage in activities of daily living across its life span while improving its functional ability (*e.g.*, balance, coordination, endurance) to reduce the risk of falls and to promote mobility and wellness. It concerns me that Children and Exercise for the Treatment/Prevention of Obesity has dropped from 4th (2013) to 11th (2014). Childhood obesity is at alarming rates, and it is caused by a combination of genetic, environmental, and cultural influences. Childhood obesity contributes to health complications and could shorten a child's life expectancy by 5 years. Although no one entity is responsible for the current childhood obesity epidemic, does this decline in rank strengthen the need for the fitness industry to make an assertive effort to address the health, fitness, and wellness needs of young and school-aged children to the same degree as adults?



Luis Fernando Aragon Vargas, Ph.D., FACSM, professor, Human Movement Sciences Graduate Program, and editor-in-chief, *Pensar en Movimiento* (Thinking in/about Motion, www.pensarenmovimiento.ucr.ac.cr), University of Costa Rica, Turrialba, Costa Rica.

As a university professor who has worked closely with the fitness industry for more than 20 years, I have seen countless fads come and go (and come back again!). The idea of identifying trends is very appealing, but I have to ask myself, who or what is driving those trends? I would certainly hope we are. A small number of scientists have been publishing sound research on the physiological and health benefits of High-Intensity Interval Training (this year's no. 1 trend); upcoming publications should provide empirical evidence to support or contradict current perceptions of the associated injury rates and health risks. Educated, Certified, and Experienced Fitness Professionals (no. 3) should stay within the top trends, as an increasingly well-educated population demands more and more from the fitness professionals we are responsible to train and keep up-to-date. We must seize the no. 5 trend (Exercise and Weight Loss) to continue driving the message of exercise as an indispensable element of any weight loss program because of its well-documented benefits on health even in the absence of weight loss. Conversely, even though there is good evidence for the concern about children and obesity (trend no. 11), it is my opinion that any exercise program intended to address this problem belongs in the schools and perhaps community programs, as the logistics for other options such as special programs in fitness facilities are too complicated and reach but a few. In these and other trends, I see opportunities to be proactive rather than reactive.



Clinton A. Brawner, Ph.D., ACSM-RCEP, FACSM, clinical exercise physiologist, Henry Ford Hospital, Detroit, MI.

The ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends continues to provide an important view of the fitness industry that may serve

as a guide to future business opportunities and help fitness professionals anticipate client expectations. Although related, anticipating fitness trends and improving public health through exercise are separate issues. Considering that only 25% of adults in the United States regularly meet current recommendations for physical activity, improving public health through diverse fitness programming and the interactions fitness professionals have with their clients should be a priority. Although programs like Zumba and Boot Camp may help some individuals stay engaged in regular exercise, additional attention is needed to increase the level of physical activity among *all* individuals, especially those who are less likely to walk in the fitness professional's front door. This highlights the importance of the *Exercise is Medicine*[®] initiative (*i.e.*, Physician Referrals), which might have been interpreted by some as a fad since it first appeared in 2010 at no. 17, reached a high in 2011 at no. 10, and was below no. 20 in 2013 and 2014. It also emphasizes the importance of continuing to embrace other so-called trends, like programs for children and older adults, Worker Incentive Programs, Wellness Coaching, Outcome Measures, and integrating mobile technologies (my addition). Initiatives like these extend beyond the ups and downs of fitness trends by expanding how the fitness industry should adapt to the public's need for opportunities and strategies to improve health through exercise. Regardless of how they rank as a trend, they should be considered guideline-based practices.



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In educating and training exercise science students, we continually emphasize the importance and value of

accredited programs and professional certification for fitness professionals, which ranked no. 3. The no. 1 trend was HIIT. Our younger students participate in HIIT and enjoy it, whereas students older than 30 years have tried HIIT but tend to lose interest. Interestingly, our medical director shared with us the high injury rate with adults participating in HIIT, saying many inactive adults use HIIT as a weekend workout with improper form that leads to injuries. Strength Training and Body Weight Training remain in the top 5, which is encouraging, as healthy individuals and those with chronic disease experience benefits from strength training. The literature details the benefits from

youth to older adults, emphasizing the addition of strength training to assist in losing weight for youth and maintaining independence into older adulthood. Strength training tends to be done along with a cardiovascular component. Those who prefer group exercise or a change from this routine are enjoying suspension training. Based on one's abilities, individuals can perform a moderate or challenging workout. Group programs have the advantage of a support system and encouragement along with qualified instructors to ensure proper technique. As boomers age and discover that their bodies can't take the jarring and pounding of high-impact exercise, they are turning to yoga. As Walt Thompson mentions, there are many kinds of yoga that range from relaxation, breathing, and flexibility to conditioning to hot yoga, allowing for stress reduction to improved strength and power. There is a form of yoga for various age groups and abilities.

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CONDENSED VERSION AND BOTTOM LINE

The 2014 worldwide survey of fitness trends is now in its eighth year. It helps the health and fitness industry make critical programming and business decisions. The results are applicable to all four sectors of the health and fitness industry (commercial for-profit clubs, clinical or medical fitness programs, corporate wellness programs, and community not-for-profit fitness programs). Although no one can accurately predict the future of any industry, this survey helps track trends in the field that can assist owners, operators, program directors, and personal trainers with making important business decisions.

ACSM CONGRATULATES THE WINNERS OF THE 2014 WORLDWIDE HEALTH & FITNESS TRENDS SURVEY



The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) randomly selected 10 winners from the 3,815 participants of the 8th annual 2014 Worldwide Health & Fitness Trends survey. Quotes and photos of the winners follow.



"Thanks so much for the prize!"

Zoey Kerns, Portland, OR
Winner of \$100 American Express gift card.



"The knowledge that is presented by ACSM's journals is extensive and highly informative. The information that I get from ACSM is the most accurate and trusted in the industry. Receiving this prize from the most respected organization in health, fitness, and sports medicine will greatly enhance my knowledge and allow me to impart that information to my clients."

Victor Ranilla, Travelers Rest, SC
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Charlotte Brown, Milton, MA
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"As a certified Cancer Exercise Trainer, I value the information that ACSM provides. It is so important for me to be a part of ACSM. Thank you so much!"

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"ACSM is a great organization and I am very happy that I will be adding *ACSM's Sports Medicine: A Comprehensive Review* to my collection of resource material. Thank you!"

James Treuthart, Webster, NY
Winner of ACSM's Sports Medicine: A Comprehensive Review



"I was very excited about being selected as a winner from the survey. *ACSM's Resources for the Health Fitness Specialist* will be very helpful and useful as I further my career in the fitness industry."

Ashley Temcheshen, Philadelphia, PA
Winner of ACSM's Resources for the Health Fitness Specialist



"For my career I wanted a certification that not only showed my knowledge and abilities, but also one that showed how hard I work and that was a step above the others. This has been the ACSM Certified Health Fitness Specialist. This has truly been a large part of my success in my career, and I thank ACSM for their standards and professionalism and encourage them to continue to improve in all venues. I also appreciate the opportunities such as these to give a response about my feelings toward the organization/certifications, and for the opportunity to win great beneficial prizes. So overall, I say thanks!"

Ryan Warner Grist, Bryant, AR
Winner of ACSM's Resources for the Health Fitness Specialist



"I'm excited to receive the resource manual because it will be beneficial to our organization. Thanks to ACSM for always being the GOLD standard for the fitness industry."

Crystal Russell, Birmingham, AL
Winner of ACSM's Resource Manual for Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 7th Edition



"ACSM's trends survey was interesting and informative. I completed it because I believe that health and fitness professionals should participate and keep themselves "in the know," and that by doing so we can influence the future of our field. Receiving a prize was a bonus!"

Kimberly Bloker, Addison, TX
Winner of ACSM's Sports Medicine: A Comprehensive Review