

The Top Fitness Trends of 2019

1. Wearable Technology

Topping the list is wearable technology like fitness trackers, pedometers and heart rate monitors. The market for these products is booming and shows no signs of slowing down; in fact, sales hit more than \$4 billion in 2017.

But if you're buying wearable technology to lose weight, you might want to hold off. A recent study found that overweight participants in a randomized clinical trial who wore a wearable device actually lost less weight than another group who followed the same food and fitness plan without a fitness tracker. (1) This might be because people overeat after seeing exactly how much they exercised or moved that day or the exact opposite — someone who didn't break a sweat one day might have gotten discouraged.

But that doesn't mean technology isn't useful for reaching your health goals. While I wouldn't recommend wearing wireless devices beyond a short workout due to the exposure to electromagnetic radiation, using your smartphone to track your workouts or how much your eating can help you gauge patterns. (And quickly pivot from unhealthy ones.) If you're a data geek, you can mine through days, weeks or even months of info to notice patterns in your habits.

One caveat: long-term use of wireless networks may have adverse effects on your health and increase the risk of things like oxidative stress, headaches and a decrease in cognition, while exposure to lights and technology right before bedtime can disrupt sleep patterns and decrease quality sleep. (2) Use your judgment on how much you rely on the devices and remove them — or at least put them into airplane mode — when it's time to rest.

2. Group Training

Do you usually workout solo? 2019 could be the year to try group training.

Group training makes trying a new exercise, like spinning or boot camp, more fun. Having an experienced instructor can help keep you motivated and push you to go that extra bit. And bringing along a friend or making new ones in class has an effect, too. A little friendly competition can increase motivation to work harder, like in this exercise bike study. (3)

Participants either exercised alone, exercised with a partner or exercised with a partner and were told that test results were based on who was weakest. While the solo riders were on the bike for 10.6 minutes, the ones with a partner stayed on for 19.8 minutes. And the ones who were told their performance relied on their partner? They stayed on for double the amount of time, or 21.9 minutes. So grab a friend and get to class.

3. High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT)

Most of us are short on time these days, so it's no wonder that high-intensity interval training, or HIIT, is one of the major exercise trends of the coming year.

Instead of spending a long time exercising at a moderate pace, with HIIT, you'll engage in short bursts of exercise at maximum or near-maximum heart rate. That means you'll burn more calories in 20 to 30 minutes than you would in a longer session. The benefits of HIIT are extensive—it's one of my favorite ways to workout—but one of the most interesting findings is how it helps build endurance, too.

One study shows that after just two months of HIIT, participants could bike twice as long as they could before the study—and maintain the same pace. (4) If you're ready to try it out, these HIIT workouts I've designed are a good place to start.

4. Fitness Classes for Older Adults

ACSM notes that as “Baby Boomers age into retirement, many health and fitness professionals are taking the time to create age-appropriate fitness programs to keep older adults healthy and active.”

5. Bodyweight Training

Yep, the secret is out. Bodyweight training is one of next year’s top exercise trends, and for good reason. You don’t need fancy equipment, an expensive membership or very much room for these workouts, so bodyweight exercises sure are appealing and effective.

Bodyweight training helps increase lean muscle mass in individuals, especially when combined with aerobic activity. (5) Bodyweight training is also a great way to ease into strength training, particularly if you’re new to the gym. You can modify the exercises to your level as well—just look at these 32 push-up variations.

6. Employ Certified Fitness Professionals

Working with a fitness professional, like a personal trainer, can be a great way to get tailored guidance and accountability to reach your fitness goals. In fact, working with a trainer on a one-to-one basis can actually change an individual’s attitude toward fitness, helping to increase their physical activity. (6)

Because there are so many personal trainers out there, it’s critical to find someone who is certified in their area of expertise and understands your goals and motivations. Here’s a handy list of 10 things to consider before choosing a personal trainer. (ACSM recommends hiring health/fitness professionals certified through programs accredited by the NCCA.)

7. Yoga

Nama-say hey to another of 2019’s fitness trends. Yoga certainly isn’t new, but it’s just as popular as ever. And it should be because the benefits of yoga are vast. It helps to decrease anxiety and stress, improves sleep quality, allows blood to flow through the body better, helps digestion and so much more.

In fact, practicing yoga changes your brain. It increases the “chill-out” neurotransmitter in your brain, a chemical that’s in low supply for people who suffer from depression and anxiety. It also helps counteract chronic pain.

Ready to unroll your mat? This beginner's guide to yoga can help you find a style that suits you best.

8. Personal Training

This trend isn't the same as number four, educated and experienced fitness professionals. Instead, this exercise trend references the amount of college students studying kinesiology, an indication that they're planning on going into health fields.

But you don't have to be a college student to take on your own health "personal training." Increasing health literacy is critical to preventing health problems and managing those that might arise. Being on this site is an awesome first step. Continuing to learn more about healthy food, treating ailments through natural remedies and improving your physical fitness through exercise is key to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

9. Functional Fitness Training

Closely related to strength training, functional training also focuses on improving balance so you can move and feel better in your daily life. ACSM notes that functional fitness and special fitness programs for older adults are closely related. Thankfully, balance improves quickly when you commit to working it into your fitness routine.

And what you choose to do for fitness One study found that when participants thought of an exercise as pleasant, they had increased aerobic capacity and improved their physical health. (7) And another discovered that incorporating laughter into physical activity programs for older adults improved their mental health, aerobic endurance and confidence in their ability to exercise. (8)

10. Exercise is Medicine

My personal motto — and the one of this site— is that food is medicine. Well, it might be time to add to that, because exercise is medicine, too. This is one of the upcoming trends I'm most excited about.

The benefits of exercise go so much farther than how you look physically. From boosting happiness levels to reducing your risk of heart disease, exercising can help. Tossing and turning at night? Find yourself forgetting where you've placed your keys? That's right, exercise is the answer. In fact, doctors are going so far as to prescribe exercise to patients in an effort to get them moving. (9)