



Global Fitness Trends

By Yen-Chu Hou

Department of Athletic Performance

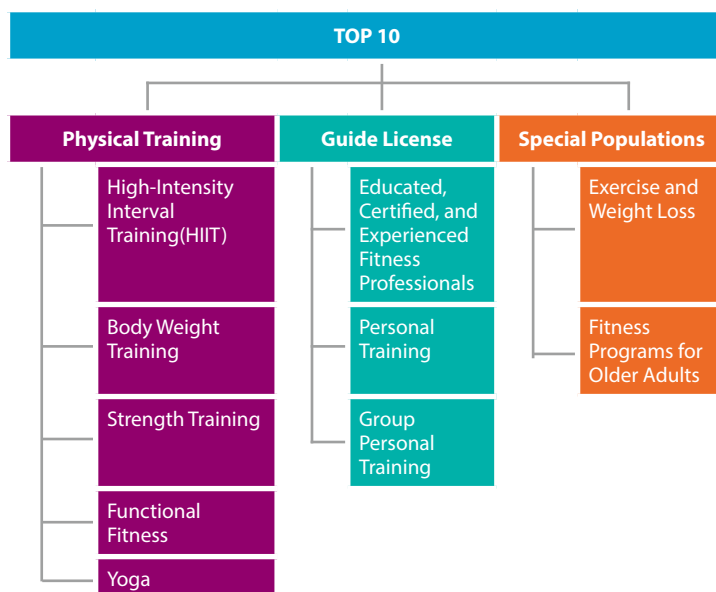
National Taiwan Normal University

American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) usually releases the next-year World-wide Survey of Fitness Trends at the end of the year. Also ACSM puts the top 20 fitness trends on ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal. This annual survey has been carried out for the consecutive eight years. Reading the experts' predictions, you may understand the sports you're doing is a trend or a fad. Further knowing the definitions of fad and trend, so-called trend refers to the kinds of fitness have been listed on the trend survey after years; as to fad, it is a popular sports activity in a short period of time and with time's passing, it is getting less and less popular or even forgot. As the result reveals the annual investigation can help health and fitness industry to make important investment strategies for the future development. Business decisions shall base on trends rather than new sports or fashionable sports products on the TV shopping channels. The future survey is going to prove whether the new fitness trends will be new trends or they will fade out from the ranking list just like the past Pilates or Stability ball and so on. The fall-out sports, though used to be recognized as trends, are proven as fads as a matter of facts.

The Latest Fitness Trends

In 2014 Fitness Survey, the top 10 trends are divided into 3 parts according to their characteristics:

a. Physical Training; b. Guide License; c. Special Populations

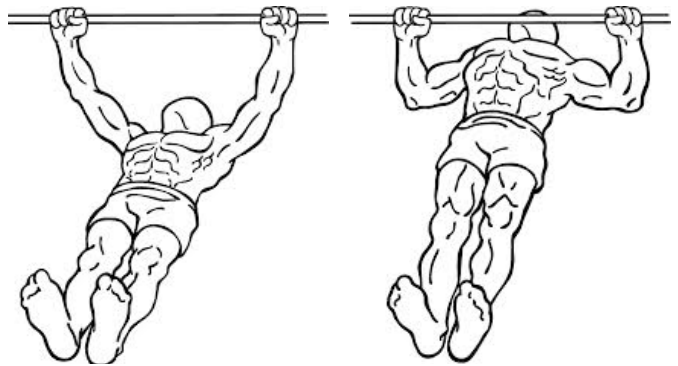


A. Physical Training: High-Intensity Interval Training, Body Weight Training, Strength Training, Functional Fitness and Yoga

The top 10 fitness trends contains 5 different types of fitness trainings. Through High-Intensity Interval Training, Body Weight Training, Strength Training, Functional Fitness and Yoga, people can improve sense of balance, coordination, flexibility, strength, acceleration power, strength endurance, cardiovascular fitness and other physical fitness. It is the mainstream to strengthen mobility in daily life. On the ranking list, High-Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) dash upward to the top. HIIT refers to do intense whole-body sports for a short period of time and then take a short break and then repeat the circle of short-time intense sports and short break. The overall sports time consuming is at least 30 minutes. Next, Body Weight Training, ranked as the 3rd in the last year for its first appearance on the list, even climbs up to the 2nd position this year. This training is to take body weight as resistance and make people to carry out physical training on the basic situations. It is a safer sport than other weight trainings like dumbbell or barbell lifting. People may do parts of body weight trainings at home, office or even some public places such as using body weight to do triceps

training or push-ups, etc. Strength Training has been ranked within top 10 over the past consecutive eight years. This year, it's ranked the 4th. No matter gender or personal physical conditions, people all wish to have a good figure so they put strength training into their regular exercise. At present ACSM suggests adults shall do strength training twice a week. This suggestion is also what most of fitness clubs have promoted. As to Functional Fitness, it refers to muscle training so as to improve sense of balance, coordination, strength, acceleration power, and muscle endurance; therefore people have better mobility in daily life just like a mother holding her baby, a husband helps moving things and so on. All these daily activities require a certain physical basis; otherwise, things could be difficult.

Most of functional fitness is designed for the elderly. The common households are also taken into the training courses. Regarding to Yoga, in 2014, it's coming back to the top 10. Yoga nowadays is divided into many categories like Power Yoga, Yogalates, Bikram Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga and so on. Yoga is a sport which positions a human body into specific gestures so as to achieve health and relaxation.



Pull up is a typical body weight training

B. Guide License: Educated, Certified and Experienced Fitness Professionals, Personal Training and Group Personal Training

Educated, Certified, and Experienced Fitness Professionals has ranked on the top 3 of the fitness trends over the past eight years. It indicates that not only the fitness field but also the professionalism has been paid with much attention. Nowadays, many fitness organizations and associations formalizes fitness certificate. It becomes more and more important that coaches choose different certificates. They have to go for the certificates issued by credible organizations such as NSCA and ACSM, such an internationally-recognized institutions. Only doing so, coaches with credible certificates and talents can catch up with the international levels. Personal Training is also ranked within the top 10 over the past eight years. More fitness experts take trainings and professional fitness courses. This signifies more professionals are ready to invest time and energy into the applied health industry. Besides, more and more corporates in the health industry would like to hire educated and certified private professionals as private coaches. With regards to Group Personal Training, it continues its popularity. Due to its economic reasons, customers are provided with considerable discounts and it is also time saving for coaches to teach two to four people at the same time. During the costly times, either for customers or for instructors this approach is every economical and efficient.



C. Special Population: Exercise and Weight Loss, and Fitness

Programs for Older Adults

Less eating and more movement has been the most familiar method to control weight. In addition to eating, doing sports is a significant process to lose weight. From 2009 onwards, the ranking of Exercise and Weight Loss has climbed from the 18th to 5th position. Experts suggest only regular exercise and calorie in-take control can control weight effectively. The rising Fitness Programs for Older Adults results from the facts that the global aging population from the World War II, compared with the young who don't have time doing exercise, have better financial status and leisure time after retirement; they are willing to spend time and money at the fitness center to take some sports programs. Therefore, fitness instructors or professionals take advantages of the strong and influential trend to design age-relevant health projects to help older adults maintain health and mobility.

Understand Trends and Then?

Realizing the fitness trends, fitness-related experts can develop professional knowledge and ability by taking professional courses or obtaining certificate. Then according to the economic changes, experts can decide to instruct individuals or groups; next step is to target a certain group either weight loss, or older adults, or better fitness for daily activities. Accordingly, based on the features of these groups, there shall be suitable trainings such as high-intensity interval training, body weight training, strength training, or Yoga, etc.

In ACSM's world-wide survey of fitness trends, some trends like High-Intensity Interval Training is redefined; some trends like Pilates, Spinning, Stability Ball, Pregnancy & Postnatal Classes, Water Workouts, Mixed Martial Arts, Kickboxing, Power Training Ropes, Barefoot Walking and Running, or Hula Hoop Workout fall out of top 20. Eighty percent of top 10 fitness trends regularly show up on the ranking list including Educated, Certified, and Experienced Fitness Professionals, Strength Training, Personal Training, Fitness Programs for Older Adults are on the top 10 list over the past eight years. Additionally, as to the unexpected champion, the High-Intensity Interval Training and the 2nd champion, Body Weight Training, holding the silver medal for its second-year ranking, there is still no conclusion whether they are trends or fads. It takes time to track down their development and the answers will be given in the future.

Reference

Thompson, W. R. (2013). Worldwide survey of fitness trends for 2014. ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal, 17(6), 10-20.