

# 2025 ACSM Worldwide Fitness Trends: Future Directions of the Health and Fitness Industry

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## Apply It!

- Identify predictions for the top 20 fitness trends in the United States and across the globe for 2025.
- Utilize data informed decision making to promote physical activity in the commercial, clinical, corporate, and community fitness sectors.
- Evaluate trend themes across regions to support consumer health and fitness.

**Key words:** Trends, Fitness Industry, Wellness, Survey, Digital Technology

## INTRODUCTION

The health and fitness industry continues to grow despite the uncertainty that followed the COVID-19 pandemic. Increased active memberships, participation in personal and small group training, and rates of older adults utilizing health clubs indicate that the market continues to rebound (1). Further, the demand for qualified exercise professionals such as credentialed personal trainers, clinical exercise physiologists, and athletic trainers is anticipated to grow 10% to 14% by 2032 (2). Therefore, it is important that industry stakeholders (*i.e.*, owners/operators, practitioners, and researchers) have reliable evidence on which to base business decisions and professional development opportunities. ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends has been a highly anticipated list predicting the most important trends, with the potential to guide the future of the fitness industry, since 2006 (3). The annual survey results offer health and fitness professionals the knowledge of emerging trends and innovative modalities to better serve consumers.

The survey introduces a systematic way to predict future health and fitness trends by collecting data from professionals across key facets of the broader industry. For example, the 2021 survey predicted online training (no. 1) and wearable technology (no. 2) in response



# 2025 TRENDS SURVEY

to the pandemic-related temporary closures of fitness facilities (4). In 2022, home exercise gyms (no. 2) rose to the top of the list as consumers embraced an alternative to health clubs (5). Home exercise gyms fell to the no. 13 trend in 2023 as consumers returned to in-person programming. In 2023, while the no. 1 trend remained wearable technology, other top trends reflected a shift away from virtual programming and a return to the basics of exercise modalities for health such as strength training with free weights (no. 2), body weight training (no. 3), fitness programs for older adults (no. 4), and functional fitness training (no. 5) (6).

Trends are added and removed each year to reflect both the dynamic nature of the fitness industry and the availability of literature to support their applicability. Trends can appear for several years (*e.g.*, wearable technology) or drop off the list after only 1 year. New to this year's survey are influencer/ambassador-led fitness programs (no. 12), hot and cold therapies (no. 20), and exercise in cancer treatment (no. 29). The health and fitness industry should utilize the trends survey to support business decisions, investments, product innovation, and professional development. This annual article evaluates the predicted trends and respondent

**Figure 1.** The Seven Trend Categories Used in the Development of ACSM's 2025 Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends.

## 2025 Trend Categories

### Exercise Setting

Includes seven trends that describe the places where fitness and health activities can occur.

### Fitness Business Model

Includes five trends that describe organizational frameworks to serve clientele.

### Special Populations

Includes five trends that describe exercise considerations for vulnerable populations.

### Training Modalities

Includes 11 trends that describe the various delivery methods for exercise stimuli.

### Digital Technology

Includes four trends that describe the use of technology to track or enhance performance.

### Programming

Includes 10 trends that describe specialty services or group-based activities offered to clients.

### Recovery-based Therapies

Includes three trends that describe methods for exercise recovery to promote health.

## Sidebar 1. Definitions of Trends vs Fads

- Trend — a general development or change in a situation or in the way that people are behaving (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>).
- Fad — a fashion that is taken up with great enthusiasm for a brief period; a craze (<http://dictionary.reference.com>).

demographics to help readers determine how they may impact their unique business model.

## TRENDS SURVEY

For the 2025 survey, there were 45 possible trends across seven categories (Figure 1). Trend categories were previously incorporated to enhance the contextual understanding for participants and increase survey validity (7). As in previous surveys of trends, respondents were provided the dictionary definition and asked to distinguish between a “trend” and a “fad” in the fitness industry (see Sidebar 1). Additionally, a brief description of each trend was provided to improve interpretation. The online survey was disseminated via the Qualtrics<sup>SM</sup> platform from April 2 to June 2, 2024. Participant incentives were made available to 10 randomly selected respondents (see page 25). Incentives included fitness-related books and study materials published by Wolters Kluwer



**2025 Fitness Trends: Australia**

<b>Team:</b> Chris Alexander (since 2021)
<b>Sample Size:</b> 632
<b>Data Collection Period:</b> 4 weeks
<b>Most Valuable Trend (#1):</b> Fitness Programs for Older Adults
<b>Demographic information:</b> <a href="http://links.lww.com/FIT/A356">http://links.lww.com/FIT/A356</a>

TABLE 1: Participant Demographics

	Total Respondents (%)
<b>Experience (years)</b>	
0 to 1	6.3
1 to 3	14.2
4 to 6	13.7
7 to 9	11.3
10 to 20	28.2
21+	26.3
<b>Education level</b>	
Some high school	0.3
High school diploma	5.9
Bachelor's degree	33.8
Master's degree	37.1
Doctoral or terminal degree	23.0
<b>Work setting</b>	
Private practice/own business	18.2
Online fitness/coaching business	7.4
Commercial fitness center	4.6
Community-based facility or program (like YMCA or JCC)	7.1
Campus recreation/wellness center	18.3
College or university (teaching or research faculty)	15.7
Hospital/medical fitness center	24.2
Not listed	4.5
<b>Certification(s)<sup>a</sup></b>	
ACSM (e.g., exercise physiologist or personal trainer)	64.3
Another accredited credentialing organization	51.7
Not currently certified	16.8
No response	3.0
<b>ACSM certification(s)<sup>a,b</sup></b>	
Group exercise instructor	7.3
Personal trainer	34.7
Exercise physiologist	44.2
Clinical exercise physiologist	21.3
<b>Work status</b>	
Full time	64.7
Part time	35.3

<sup>a</sup>*N* = 2,083.

<sup>a</sup>Percentages do not equal 100 as participants could select more than one.

<sup>b</sup>*n* = 1,339.

TABLE 2: Respondent's Primary Professions

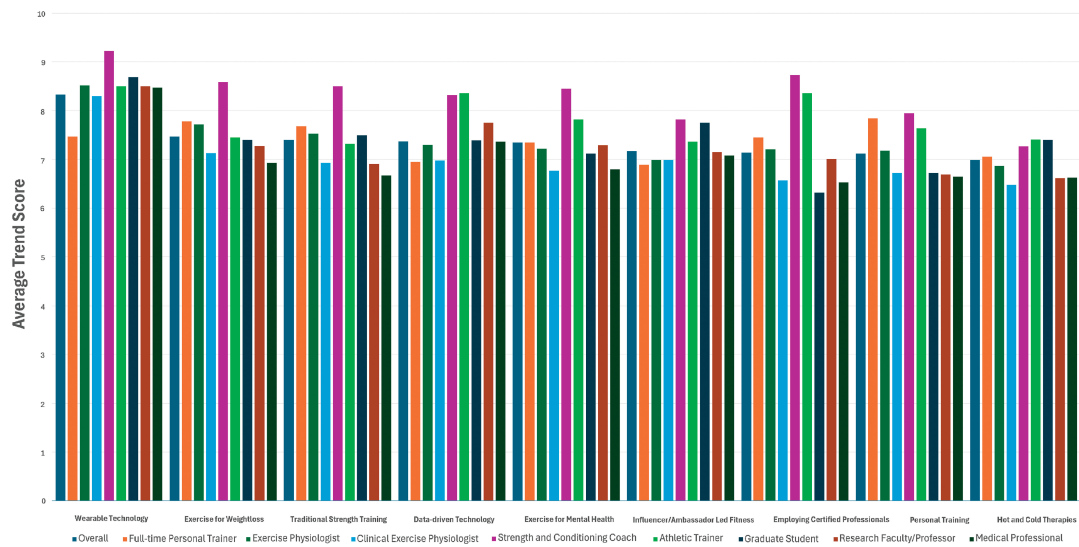
	Total Respondents (%)
Personal trainer (part-time)	7.4
Personal trainer (full-time)	10.9
Group exercise Instructor	3.0
Exercise physiologist	12.5
Clinical exercise physiologist	8.7
Program manager/facility operator	8.0
Strength and conditioning coach	1.1
Owner	2.7
Health/wellness coach	6.3
Athletic trainer	1.1
Undergraduate student	3.7
Graduate student	8.6
Educator/lecturer	6.9
Research faculty/professor	11.3
Medical professional	6.4
Registered dietitian	1.3

TABLE 3: ACSM Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2025

Rank	Change	Trend	Trend Category
1	–	Wearable technology	Digital technology
2	↑	Mobile exercise apps	Digital technology
3	–	Fitness programs for older adults	Special populations
4	–	Exercise for weight loss	Programming
5	↑	Traditional strength training	Training modalities
6	↑	High-intensity interval training	Training modalities
7	↑	Data-driven training technology	Digital technology
8	–	Exercise for mental health	Programming
9	↑	Functional fitness training	Training modalities
10	↑	Health/wellness coaching	Programming
11	↓	Youth athletic development	Special populations
12	▪	Influencer/ambassador-led fitness programs	Fitness business model
13	↓	Outdoor fitness activities	Programming
14	↑	On-demand exercise classes	Digital technology
15	↓	Employing certified exercise professionals	Fitness business model
16	↓	Personal training	Programming
17	↓	Exercise is Medicine	Programming
18	↑	Body weight training	Training modalities
19	↓	Lifestyle medicine	Programming
20	▪	Hot and cold therapies	Recovery-based therapies

–, no change in rank; ↑, increase in rank; ↓, decrease in rank; ▪, new trend for 2025.

Figure 2. Selected Trends Ranked by Profession.



Health/Lippincott Williams and Wilkins and a \$100 Mastercard gift card.

Trend items were measured using a 10-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (not a trend) to 10 (definitely a trend). Qualitative data were collected via open-ended comment boxes made available to participants. An individual unique link was emailed to ACSM certified professionals, ACSM alliance members, ACSM professional members, *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*<sup>®</sup> (HFJ) associate editors, and HFJ editorial board members ( $N = 30,394$ ). A total of 1,745 participants completed the survey resulting in a 7% response rate. Social media platforms, including the HFJ's Facebook page and the ACSM Instagram, obtained 471 responses. A generic link was made available to all registered attendees of the 2024 ACSM Annual Meeting in Boston, MA, which solicited 861 responses. After duplicates and incomplete

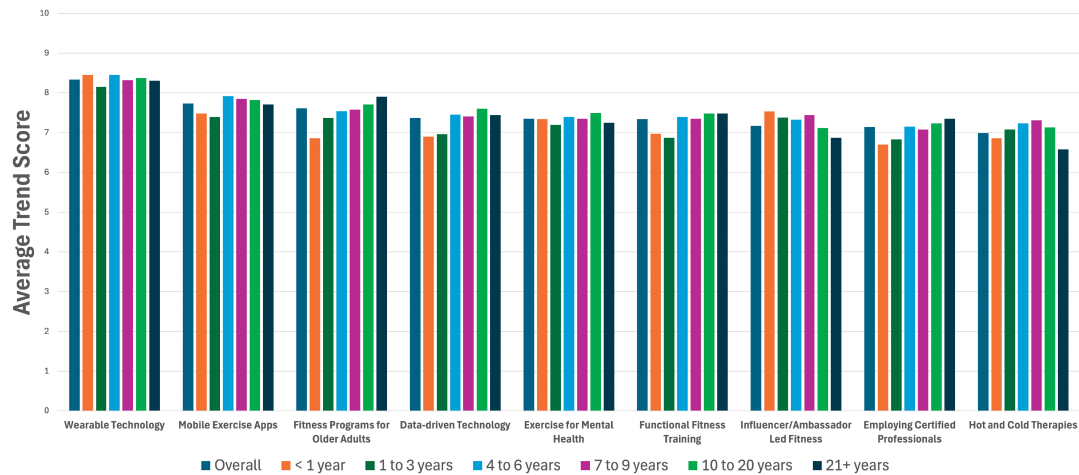
data lines were removed, a final sample size of 2,083 was used to determine the 2025 ACSM Top 20 Trends.

Participant demographics are shown in Table 1. Survey participants were 60% women with a mean age of 41.6 years (range, 18 to 72 years). The majority held at least one current ACSM certification (8). Nearly 55% report at least 10 years of professional industry experience, a significant increase from the previous year (7). Respondents represent a variety of professions, including full-time personal trainer (11%), exercise physiologist (12.5%), and research faculty (11.3%) (Table 2).

ACSM TRENDS SURVEY RESULTS

With wearable technology (no. 1), mobile exercise apps (no. 2), and data-driven training technology (no. 7) peaking in the top 10 trends, this year's survey results point to digital technologies

Figure 3. Selected Trends Ranked by Experience (yrs.).







making a significant impact on the fitness industry. The appropriate and intentional use of smartphone devices may be useful for exercise professionals as they aim to increase daily physical activity behaviors (9). Additionally, the increased reliance on telehealth systems gives further significance to the integration of technology in health care for prescribing, monitoring, and measuring health and fitness behaviors (10). Interestingly, worksite health promotion (no. 2 trend in 2024) does not appear in the top 20 for this year. Amid the changing landscape of hybrid and remote work schedules, employers are challenged to leverage alternative solutions for supporting the wellness of workers. This could mean utilizing digital technologies to promote health and wellness programming for employees. Table 3 displays the top 20 fitness trends for 2025 described in this report. For the past 19 years, the ACSM trends survey has been used to provide an evidence base to guide decision making for health and fitness professionals (see Supplemental Table 1 for a cumulative list of trends <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A355>), for a comparison of the top 10 trends since 2007). The priorities for certain trends represent unique business niches, and thus the trends survey highlights some of the notable differences in the ranking of top trends between professions (see Figure 2) and years of experience (see Figure 3) where applicable.



## Data-driven training technology increases the safety of exercise for special populations such as those with cardiometabolic disease and certain types of cancer.

- 1. Wearable technology.** Wearable technology continues as the no. 1 trend in the 2025 survey, nearly consistent with previous survey results since 2016 (no. 3 for 2018 and no. 2 for 2021). The field of wearable technology is constantly advancing and allows real-time self-monitoring and feedback from devices such as fitness trackers, smartwatches, heart rate monitors, and GPS tracking devices. These devices can provide information such as physical activity (*i.e.*, steps, active minutes), health markers (*i.e.*, heart rate, ECG, glucose), sedentary behaviors, sleep, and even stress (*i.e.*, heart rate variability). Wearable activity trackers can support healthy lifestyle behavior change through goal setting, personalized coaching, or connecting with apps to provide actionable insights. Despite the positive benefits of using technology to facilitate behavior change, more work is needed to



improve concerns of validity, reliability, and data privacy. Exercise professionals should leverage wearable technology to provide support and guidance to their clients, while acknowledging their potential limitations within certain settings (*e.g.*, health care) and among special populations (*e.g.*, older adults) (11,12). Wearable technology was the top-ranked trend among all exercise professionals in this year's survey, except for full-time personal trainers. Respondents working as full-time personal trainers ranked wearable technology significantly lower than exercise physiologists, strength and conditioning coaches, and those working in academia (*e.g.*, graduate students and research faculty). It is beyond the scope of this paper to speculate what variables may influence the use of wearable technology with personal training clientele. Still, using technology could serve as a more effective way of tracking progress and increasing communication to improve and maintain adherence.

**2. Mobile exercise applications (apps).** Mobile exercise apps continue to move up the list (no. 7 in 2024 and no. 20 in 2023) and seem to be a more important trend among exercise professionals with more experience (see Figure 3). In 2023, there were 850 million fitness app downloads by nearly 370 million users (13). The upward trajectory of mobile exercise apps could be fueled by their complimentary nature with wearable technology (the no. 1 trend). Mobile exercise apps can allow flexible, adaptable, accessible, and customizable fitness programming. Novice exercisers can benefit from the use of a quality mobile exercise app especially when used in conjunction with, or as an extension of, a qualified exercise professional. Like wearable technology, some caution is warranted when using free mobile apps related to fitness and exercise as they may lack clear theoretical or physiological foundations (14). There are validated scoring tools that have been developed to help evaluate quality and safety with respect to the ACSM exercise prescription guidelines (15). Exercise professionals can leverage mobile exercise apps to provide evidence-based exercise prescription, rooted in ACSM's guidelines.

**3. Fitness programs for older adults.** The development of fitness programs for older adults holds its place as the no. 3 trend. Regular physical activity for this population remains a critical strategy for maintaining overall health, preventing chronic diseases, improving quality of life, and promoting independent living. Adults aged 60 years and older are also less likely to engage in the recommended amounts of physical activity for health (16), making them an important demographic for high-quality, evidence-based programming. Sarcopenia, the age-related loss of muscle mass, function, and strength production, affects a large proportion of older adults increasing the risk of frailty and/or falls



(17). An international collaboration of experts developed the first global definition of sarcopenia, which is an important step toward identifying and guiding global efforts for treatment (18). It is likely that as older adults begin to make up a larger proportion of the total U.S. population, this trend of programming for these individuals will be an important area of professional development for exercise professionals. Notably, this trend tended to be ranked higher among professionals with more experience. Those with 10+ years of experience rated it higher than those with less than 1 year of experience, which may reflect that professionals with more experience are more likely to work with the aging population in health clubs or clinical settings. However, all exercise professionals should be proactive in consulting resources such as the Senior Fitness Test (SFT), which assesses key components of functional movement (19).

**4. Exercise for weight loss.** Exercise for weight loss remains consistent as the no. 4 trend. Global rates of obesity have doubled among adults, with approximately one in eight adults categorized as having obesity. Further, obesity rates among children and adolescents have nearly quadrupled in the past 30 years (20). While the benefits of exercise are positive regardless of weight status, regular exercise should be included as a part of a multicomponent strategy for the long-term maintenance of weight loss. Exercise, specifically strength training, is the main driver of maintaining lean muscle mass while in a caloric deficit and/or on obesity medications. In addition to maximizing opportunities for movement throughout the day (*i.e.*, reducing sedentary behavior), exercise programming for those with obesity — or those who are in a caloric deficit — should focus on a combination of aerobic and resistance training at moderate to vigorous intensity (21). The rise in anti-obesity medications means that exercise professionals should be knowledgeable of the impact of these pharmaceuticals on exercise behavior. For example, common side effects of these drugs vary and may include



gastrointestinal issues and fatigue. Therefore, clients may be reluctant to engage in large amounts of high-intensity exercise. It is suggested that exercise professionals establish clear communication with clientele to understand previous experiences with exercise. Targeting enjoyability and feasibility as important exercise programming outcomes can increase self-efficacy and reduce stigma associated with obesity (21). Interestingly, strength and conditioning coaches tended to rate this trend higher by a full-scale point compared to other professions. Strength and conditioning coaches are often a part of a multidisciplinary sport performance team responsible for ensuring that athletes meet weight and body composition requirements especially in weight class-restricted sports such as Olympic weightlifting, boxing, and wrestling.

**5. Traditional strength training.** After falling to no. 17 in the 2024 survey, traditional strength training moves back up the trends list to no. 5. Traditional strength training, a key tenet of ACSM's exercise guidelines, incorporates equipment such as barbells, dumbbells, and kettlebells focusing on proper movement and lifting technique to improve or maintain muscular fitness. The 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults complete at least 2 days per week of strength training, across all major muscle groups (22). Despite this recommendation, many adults do not achieve sufficient strength training. Thus, exercise professionals can help clients achieve the recommended volume of strength training through progressive programming that manipulates repetition schemes, sets, tempo, load, and/or exercise selection.

**6. High-intensity interval training (HIIT).** Rising to no. 6 on the trends list, HIIT has been a consistent top 10 trend since 2018. Its stability is likely due to its effectiveness as a training modality across demographics and among varying health statuses (*e.g.*, cardiometabolic disease and cancer) (23). HIIT involves repeated short bouts of near maximal, high-intensity ( $>85\%$   $HR_{max}$ ) aerobic efforts followed by active or passive rest periods ( $<65\%$   $HR_{max}$ ) that allow sufficient recovery to repeat the same working effort. HIIT is time efficient and requires minimal equipment making it feasible for a range of settings. Exercise professionals should administer appropriate prescreening with clients, carefully monitor intensity and form for safety, and may consider the use of digital technology (*e.g.*, wearable devices) to do so.

**7. Data-driven training technology.** Data-driven training technology was added in 2024 and appears as the no. 7 trend for 2025. Data-driven training technology can help clients understand the physiological responses to an exercise stimulus in real-time. This type of training allows individualized coaching and instruc-



tion, even in a group setting where there may be various fitness levels. Exercise professionals also may leverage biofeedback (*i.e.*, sleep, and heart rate variability) as critical components of training and recovery. Using real-time data to tailor daily exercise sessions, exercise professionals can more readily adjust training variables in response to acute conditions, which increases the safety of exercise for special populations such as those with cardiometabolic conditions. This trend of data-driven training seems to be more popular among strength and conditioning coaches and athletic trainers (Figure 2). Additionally, professionals with more years of experience seemed to recognize data-driven training as an important trend, which indicates a potential area of additional education for exercise professionals newer to the field.

**8. Exercise for mental health.** Exercise for mental health remains the no. 8 trend after being added in 2024. This trend focuses on exercise programming designed to improve aspects of mental health, like reducing feelings of anxiety, stress, and depression. While specific exercise guidelines for mental health benefits have not been established, exercise professionals should aim to help clients accumulate physical activity doses that meet ACSM guidelines. Additionally, it is important to incorporate client preferences for activities and acknowledge individual barriers that may influence participation (24). Notably, clinical professionals (*i.e.*, physiologists and medical professionals) ranked this trend significantly lower than other professionals. These differences could be influenced by the isolated treatment of physical and psychological conditions in clinical health care settings. For those looking for additional resources, the first mental well-being certification for fitness professionals is available through the J.W. Brick Mental Health Foundation (<https://www.mentalwellbeingassociation.org/fitness>).

**9. Functional fitness training.** This training modality typically encompasses strength training to improve

balance, coordination, functional movement, and endurance that reflect activities of daily living. Functional fitness training has appeared in various positions on the trends list since 2007, but most recently fell to no. 14 in 2024. Its steadiness among the top 20 trends is supported by the linear increase in its ranking with years of experience (Figure 3). This trend is particularly critical for exercise professionals working with older adult and clinical populations to establish exercise behaviors that support improved quality of life across the lifespan.

**10. Health/wellness coaching.** This trend has moved up to the no. 10 spot for 2025. Health and wellness coaches utilize principles of behavioral science to promote health and lifestyle medicine programs. ACSM's partnership with WellCoaches® provides exercise professionals with access to evidence-based coaching tools to facilitate growth and promote change among exercising individuals. Wellness resources offered through this partnership include building client connections, coaching skills of deep empathy, and motivational interviewing. For more information about health and wellness coaching, please visit: <https://www.acsm.org/certification/professional-resources/wellcoaches>.

**11. Youth athletic development.** This no. 11 trend emphasizes the importance of the physical and cognitive development of children and adolescents for sport participation. Several staged development models have been established to guide exercise professionals on evaluating readiness, physical literacy, and skill building (25). Most models prioritize a development-based as opposed to an age-based approach to determining levels of participation, training, and competition (25). These models emphasize quality movement skills for youth athletes (25). As this period is a significant time of physical growth, exercise professionals could partner with qualified nutrition professionals (*i.e.*, registered dietitian) to support nutrition education in the development of youth athletes. ACSM offers a Youth Fitness Specialist Certificate that is designed to help professionals better understand the unique needs of youth athletes. For more information on obtaining this certificate, please visit: <https://www.acsm.org/nyshsi/youth-fitness-specialist>.

**12. Influencer/ambassador-led fitness programs.** The rise in social media and digital technology has birthed a newly added trend. The no. 12 trend involves the utilization of health and fitness entrepreneurs and enthusiasts to provide content and promote brand awareness via online social media platforms. Influencers typically have an expanded reach across platforms such as Instagram® and TikTok® and can promote exercise to their followers. This trend was ranked higher by newer professionals and by graduate students — suggesting that this may be a rising trend with the

potential to grow. Thus, it is important to note that proper professional credentials and qualifications remain key for those communicating health and fitness information to online audiences (26).

**13. Outdoor fitness activities.** This trend was added to the annual trends survey in 2010 and became popular in 2021 as the no. 3 trend. For 2025, outdoor fitness activities appears as the no. 13 trend. Outdoor fitness activities include modalities such as walking, running, skiing, or hiking to improve physical fitness. Increasing the utilization of parks for recreational activities is an inexpensive way to promote exercise. Installing outdoor exercise equipment in parks and the establishment of “fitness zones” is another way to increase physical activity (27). The built environment (*e.g.*, safety and walkability of neighborhoods) directly influences the accessibility of outdoor fitness activities. However, this trend has the potential to encourage increased movement and community connections.

**14. On-demand exercise classes.** This digital technology trend reappears in the top 20 for the first time since 2022 and includes prerecorded instructional videos that users can access on their own time. These virtual classes can be accessed at any time and in any location, providing flexibility to their users. On-demand exercise classes may include modalities such as Yoga, cycling, strength training, or boot camp style classes.

**15. Employing certified professionals.** Despite the fall to the no. 15 spot, employing certified professionals remains an important trend for 2025. Certified professionals are trusted individuals who have demonstrated competency to safely prescribe exercise to a variety of populations. This trend was ranked higher by clinical exercise physiologists and medical professionals, suggesting that there is a need for proper certification when prescribing exercise for clinical populations. Further, this trend was ranked significantly higher by strength and conditioning coaches compared to any other profession (Figure 2). This may reflect the culture





of organizations that support the education and credentialing of sport performance professionals. Certified professionals may be found on the U.S. Registry of Exercise Professionals™ (<https://usreps.org>), and readers are encouraged to refer to the September/October 2024 issue of *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*® dedicated to the professionalization of the exercise profession. ACSM offers a wide variety of certifications. To find out more, please visit: <https://www.acsm.org/certification/get-certified>.

**16. Personal training.** As a top 10 trend since 2007, personal training appears as the no. 16 trend for 2025. Despite its decline in ranking since last year, personal training remains critical for those seeking effective exercise guidance, including fitness testing, programming, and goal setting tailored to individuals' needs. Lifestyle changes, such as increased remote work and the rise of virtual fitness solutions, have likely influenced consumer preferences. Personal trainers may benefit from integrating some hybrid modalities into their services to support clients' needs for flexibility and autonomy. Earning a nationally accredited certification, such as those from ACSM, equips exercise professionals to adapt to client needs—physical, behavioral, and cognitive—in an ever-changing fitness landscape. This adaptability ensures personal trainers can continue to provide personalized, effective training in various formats, whether in-person, online, or a combination of both.

**17. Exercise is Medicine® (EIM).** The EIM solution advocates for the integration of physical activity into standard health care practices. EIM has remained a relatively stable trend in the top 20 since it was introduced to the trends list in 2017. By promoting physical activity as a vital sign of health, EIM underscores the importance of certified exercise professionals as partners in the health care continuum. The recent Health Level Seven (HL7) integration further supports interoperability among health care providers, exercise professionals, and health information systems. HL7's goal is to modernize data exchange, making it easier to share electronic health records and integrate health data from various sources (28). Similarly, EIM aims to improve patient outcomes by encouraging physicians to refer patients to qualified exercise professionals and incorporate evidence-based exercise prescriptions. Learn more about EIM at [www.exerciseismedicine.org](http://www.exerciseismedicine.org).

**18. Body weight training.** After falling out of the top 20 in 2024 for the first time since the trend was added in 2013, body weight training rises to the no. 18 trend. This training modality is a combination of multiplanar movements like squats, lunges, and push-ups. Body weight exercises use an individual's weight as resistance to build

strength, flexibility, and balance. Since no equipment is required, the modality is accessible and effective for a wide range of individuals. This versatility makes body weight training perfect for remote fitness programs and allows it to be done anywhere — at home, in a park, or while traveling. Body weight training is ideal for exercise professionals looking for cost-effective ways to engage clients in at-home, virtual, and equipment-free workouts.

**19. Lifestyle medicine.** In 2025, lifestyle medicine appears as the no. 19 trend. The increasing awareness of lifestyle medicine's effectiveness in improving long-term health outcomes, particularly in managing chronic diseases (29), has helped it maintain a position on the trends list. Lifestyle medicine practitioners are trained to focus on behavior changes such as increased physical activity, whole-food, plant forward nutrition, restorative sleep, stress reduction, avoiding risky substance use, and improved social well-being as foundational elements of health. Exercise professionals can apply lifestyle medicine principles when working with clients, especially those referred from clinical health care providers. This may involve collaborating with dietitians for nutritional advice, mental health professionals for stress management, and physicians for medical oversight in managing chronic conditions. For more information on lifestyle medicine resources, including credentials, visit [lifestylemedicine.org](http://lifestylemedicine.org).

**20. Hot and cold therapies.** While manipulating temperature for recovery is a centuries-old practice, this trend's debut as no. 20 in 2025 underscores the rising adoption of these strategies within the fitness industry. The historical use of these therapies dates back to ancient civilizations that utilized hot springs and cold baths for healing and recovery. More recently, cryotherapy, the application of cold for therapeutic purposes, has been associated with benefits such as reduced inflammation and enhanced feelings of well-being (30). Similarly, heat-based therapies, like sauna bathing, have been linked to accelerated postexercise recovery and reduced muscle soreness (31). The resurgence of these therapies in modern fitness highlights an opportunity for intersection between traditional methods and contemporary technology. Of note, clinical exercise physiologists ranked this trend lower than many other professions, clarifying that best practices and consensus for proper use of recovery modalities may be needed.

## Sidebar 2. Definition of Contributors

Contributors include our international partners who collaborated with ACSM's Trends Workgroup by collecting and providing data to support the global comparison of fitness trends.

# 2025 TRENDS SURVEY

Exercise professionals should leverage wearable technology to provide support and guidance to their clients, while acknowledging their potential limitations within certain settings (e.g., health care) and among special populations (e.g., older adults).

## GLOBAL TRENDS COMPARISON

Since 2021, other countries and regions employ ACSM's fitness trends survey to gather data, thereby providing a global perspective (32–34). Recently, several international cross-sectional studies have been published, utilizing ACSM methodology to identify the most prevalent health and fitness trends (35–39). In the present survey, eight regions contributed distinctive data that facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the future of the health and fitness industry. International contributors (see Sidebar 2) from Australia (<http://links.lww.com/FIT/A356>), Brazil (<http://links.lww.com/FIT/A357>), Mexico (<http://links.lww.com/FIT/A358>), Portugal (<http://links.lww.com/FIT/A359>), Spain (<http://links.lww.com/FIT/A360>), and the United States return to collaborate on this



**2025 Fitness Trends: Mexico**

**Team:** Lino Francisco Jacobo Gómez-Chávez, Paola Cortés-Almanzar, Jorge López-Haro, Adrián Ricardo Pelayo-Zavalza, and Luis Eduardo Aguirre-Rodríguez (since 2021)

**Sample Size:** 1,988

**Data Collection Period:** 6 weeks

**Most Valuable Trend (#1):** Exercise for Weight Loss

**Demographic information:** <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A358>

project. New for the 2025 edition of the global fitness trends comparison are colleagues from Iran (<http://links.lww.com/FIT/A361>) and Turkey (<http://links.lww.com/FIT/A362>). Please see the country- or region-specific graphics throughout this article for more details regarding the trends globally. Each graphic includes a link to supplemental data provided by our international contributors from each country/region. The top 10 fitness trends from each region can be found in Supplemental Table 2, <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A363>. This paper presents a narrative discussion on trends that could have a global impact.

Fitness trends across the globe support a continued shift toward the use of exercise to improve health outcomes, support active aging, and increase psychological well-being. Exercise for weight loss is a top 5 trend across the globe except for Australia (no. 7 trend). This mirrors the results of the 2024 trends survey. While obesity is a global and complex issue, the placement of this trend indicates that exercise is viewed as an important component of a global strategy to address obesity and related illnesses (*i.e.*, cardiovascular disease) and other comorbidities. Traditional strength training, which ranked in the top five trends in most regions, combined with functional fitness training programs (among the top 10 trends in all regions) led by credentialed exercise professionals seems to be a popular model for promoting healthy physical activity for overweight and obesity.



**2025 Fitness Trends: Iran**

**Team:** Saeid Fathollahi and Farnaz Dinizadeh (beginning 2025)

**Sample Size:** 406

**Data Collection Period:** 6 weeks

**Most Valuable Trend (#1):** Exercise for Weight Loss

**Demographic information:** <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A361>





A graphic for Portugal's 2025 fitness trends. It features a red background with a white map of Portugal. In the top left corner is the Portuguese flag. The central image shows a man in a grey shirt assisting a woman in a black leotard with a handstand on a blue mat outdoors near a pool. The ACSM logo is in the bottom left. A purple box at the bottom contains the following text:

**2025 Fitness Trends: Portugal**

**Team:** Susana Franco, Rita Santos-Rocha, Fátima Ramalho, Vera Simões, Isabel Vieira, and Liliana Ramos (since 2023)

**Sample Size:** 554

**Data Collection Period:** 7 weeks

**Most Valuable Trend (#1):** Personal Training

**Demographic information:** <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A359>

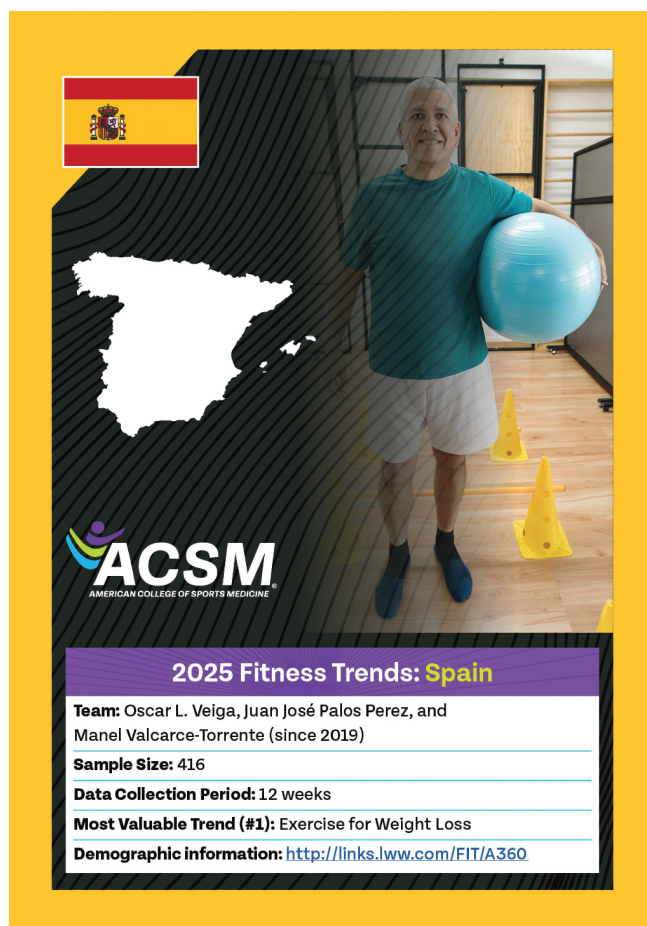
## Fitness trends across the globe support a continued shift toward the use of exercise to improve health outcomes, support active aging, and increase psychological well-being.

Fitness programs for older adults ranked in the top 10 for Australia, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, and the United States and exercise professionals in these regions seem to understand the need for older adults to increase their fitness. Additionally, exercise for mental health appears to be an emerging trend globally as it is ranked in the top 10 in five of the eight regions represented. The trend appears as an important trend in Mexico (no. 6) and Portugal (no. 8) for the first time. There is a notable focus on exercise for mental health and lifestyle medicine, reflecting a holistic approach to fitness. This trend underscores the recognition of physical activity's role in managing stress, anxiety, and chronic health conditions, and the integration of wellness coaching to support overall well-being. Taken together, there seems to be a global shift toward holistic health and fitness programming. For example, the Australian active health and fitness sector and the Brazilian fitness industry is adapting to meet diverse

community needs through focused trends: recognizing the growing aging population with tailored fitness programs, emphasizing exercise for mental health benefits, and embracing the importance of traditional strength training components.

Personal training remains a top trend across many regions, indicating a continued preference for customized fitness plans and one-on-one coaching. Personal training services are a lucrative business model in places like Portugal. Many fitness businesses operate as personal training studios nationwide. These studios primarily offer popular exercise modalities, including Pilates (no. 4 trend in Portugal), small group training (no. 7 trend in Portugal), and functional fitness training (no. 10 trend in Portugal). It should be noted that employing certified exercise professionals only appears as a top 10 trend in Portugal and Australia. This trend fell to no. 15 in the United States for 2025. The fitness industry and the exercise professionals leading personal training sessions may have different credentialing expectations, but this is an area that warrants attention considering that exercise facilities will be serving more special populations.

The integration of advanced technology by exercise professionals continues to vary in other regions. Wearable technology (no. 1 trend in the United States) only appears among the top 10 trends in Australia (no. 6), Brazil (no. 10), and Turkey (no. 8) and mobile exercise apps (no. 2 trend in the United States) only



A graphic for Spain's 2025 fitness trends. It features a yellow background with a white map of Spain. In the top left corner is the Spanish flag. The central image shows a man in a teal shirt and white shorts holding a large blue exercise ball in a gym setting. The ACSM logo is in the bottom left. A purple box at the bottom contains the following text:

**2025 Fitness Trends: Spain**

**Team:** Oscar L. Veiga, Juan José Palos Perez, and Manel Valcarce-Torrente (since 2019)

**Sample Size:** 416

**Data Collection Period:** 12 weeks

**Most Valuable Trend (#1):** Exercise for Weight Loss

**Demographic information:** <http://links.lww.com/FIT/A360>

## 2025 TRENDS SURVEY

### Sidebar 3. Insights from the ACSM Employer Advisory Council

New for this issue, the top 20 trends were shared with the ACSM Employer Advisory Council for insight on the application of these trends across sectors of the fitness industry. This commentary is a new addition to the 2025 Trends Issue.

characteristics (*e.g.*, demographics of survey respondents in these regions) may explain this occurrence. Global trends are responsive to both local, national, and international changes in the fitness industry.

### LIMITATIONS

The annual trends survey is a valid and reliable tool for predicting future fitness trends according to exercise professionals across the globe. However, it is not without limitations. First, the low response rate among invited respondents is noteworthy. Despite the incentive to participate and multiple reminder emails, the survey completion rate remains lower than the 20% response rate typical in survey-based research. Further, most recruitment efforts targeted ACSM certified professionals, which may limit the perspectives of those credentialed through other organizations. After determining the top 20 trends,

appears as a top 10 trend in Spain (no. 8). Although digital technology represents a large financial market, the trends may not have the same influence among professionals working in the fitness industry as they do consumers. Wearable technology devices have advanced beyond tracking fitness metrics (*e.g.*, caloric expenditure and daily steps). Devices also are capable of health monitoring (*e.g.*, tracking and receiving notification of disease exposures), entertainment and gaming (*e.g.*, watching videos and virtual traveling), and fashion pieces (*e.g.*, stylish bands and smart jewelry). Consumer rankings may offer a different (global) perspective of the importance of digital technology to improved health and fitness. Wearable technologies also may present an economical barrier for some regions. For example, technology-oriented fitness trends do not seem to hold much appeal, perhaps due to the prevailing financial constraints in Iran. In light of these observations, there is a clear and pressing need for low-cost and budget gyms that offer traditional strength training facilities and programs.

It should be noted that some regions report greater shifts in trends from year to year. However, Spain and Mexico, which have reported region-specific trends since 2019 and 2021, respectively, tend to reflect relatively stable trends each year. A more stable fitness sector in these areas may contribute to less dramatic shifts in the top trends. It also is plausible that sampling





members of the ACSM Employer Advisory Council (EAC) were asked for their perspectives on the results (40). Their expert commentary is included in a separate article, which adds employer insights on this issue (see Sidebar 3). For future trends surveys, additional effort should be made to 1) increase the response rate and 2) recruit a broader network of exercise professionals.

This paper offers the reader a global narrative of trends across several regions of the world. Some caution is warranted as not all regions execute the exact ACSM methodology and may modify the trends list to best reflect the fitness industry in those regions. Other changes to the survey are necessitated (e.g., language translation) to ensure the survey is valid for that region. Therefore, trends may rank different due to added or altered language. Still, the regional perspective offered remains an important element of this manuscript. The evaluation of trend categories for a broader comparison will best support decision making efforts on a global level.

## SUMMARY

ACSM trends for 2025 indicate that the fitness industry is making a shift to better integrate advanced technology to support exercise programming. Using digital technologies to monitor and provide feedback for both in-person and remote services will make a greater impact on clients. It seems that the business of wearable technology and mobile exercise apps will support this trend through increased safety and privacy efforts. Exercise professionals can utilize this technology to increase individualization while managing the workload that historically comes with personal training and small group training.

Simultaneously, the global trends report suggests that regular exercise is an important adjunctive therapy in weight loss, mental health, and active aging programs. Certified and qualified exercise professionals can add value to both clinical and commercial settings in support of these priorities. Although no one can predict future industry needs with complete certainty, the ACSM survey offers readers a reliable tool to track trends for business and programming decisions.

## Acknowledgments

The Trends Workgroup is immensely grateful for the collaboration of our international contributors and the data provided to support the global comparison of the fitness trends. Please see the top of page 11 for a full list of contributors.

The authors acknowledge the Employer Advisory Council (EAC) for their unique perspective on the applicability of the 2025 trends to the fitness industry. This insight will help to bolster the utilization of the annual trends survey. The EAC is led by CCRB Chair Lauren Korzan, M.A., ACSM-EP, ACSM-GEI, EIM, and ACSM's Vice President of Certification and Credentialing Francis Neric, M.S., MBA.

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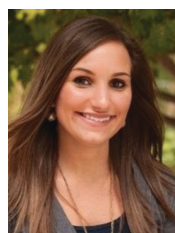


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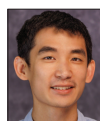


**Rachelle Reed, M.S., Ph.D., ACSM-EP**, holds a B.A., M.S., and Ph.D. in exercise physiology, completed postdoctoral training in exercise psychology, and also is an ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist. Rachelle chairs the ACSM CCRB Continuing Professional Education Committee and also serves as the employer representative for ACSM's Trends Workgroup. Currently the head of scientific research and science communication at Therabody®, she works as an industry scientist, bridging the gap between wellness and research spaces.

## Congrats 2025 Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends Prize Winners



The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) randomly selected prize winners from all who participated in the 19th annual Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends. Here's what the winners said.



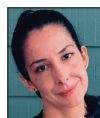
"I am delighted to be selected as a recipient of this prize. I look forward to continuing to support ACSM and its endeavors to advance the field of sports medicine."  
**Binh Nguyen, Gainesville, FL**  
Winner of \$100 gift card



"I appreciate being selected as a winner from a survey, conducted by a world-renown organization, that has been instrumental in tracking worldwide fitness trends over time."  
**Katie M. Heinrich, Manhattan, KS**  
Winner of ACSM/NCHPAD Resources for the Inclusive Fitness Trainer



"Grateful to be selected for a textbook, and continued connection to ACSM's fantastic resources."  
**\*Daniel Veith, Rochester, MN**  
Winner of ACSM's Clinical Exercise Physiologist, 2nd edition



"I'm always happy to have more resources to upgrade my knowledge and help people. Thanks for the support ACSM."  
**Oriana Carrasco, Portland, OR**  
Winner of ACSM's Clinical Exercise Physiologist, 2nd edition



"I am thrilled and honored to have been selected as a winner in the annual Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends. ACSM has been an invaluable resource throughout my academic journey. Thanks ACSM for this opportunity and for your invaluable work in the health and fitness field."  
**Jordan Hunt, Salem, NH**  
Winner of ACSM's Clinical Exercise Physiologist, 2nd edition



"ACSM, thanks so much for this wonderful prize. Education is at the core of my work and my training methodology. I'm so happy to improve my knowledge, thanks to your gift."  
**Claudia Godi, Brooklyn, NY**  
Winner of ACSM's Exercise Testing and Prescription, 2nd edition



"I'm not one who typically wins prize drawings, so this is super exciting! I always complete the yearly trends survey, prize or not, because I find the results extremely useful to me in my profession. Understanding trends in the field helps me morph my messaging to my clients and guide them with the best possible information."  
**Vinny Black, Chapel Hill, TN**  
Winner of ACSM's Nutrition for the Exercise



"I am honored to be selected as a winner. ACSM has helped me not only prepare for my career as an exercise physiologist but continues to provide me with up-to-date guidelines and resources. I am thankful for the ACSM community."  
**Kate Flickinger, Sewickley, PA**  
Winner of ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 11th edition



"I am happy to discover the results of this drawing. I have been a member of ACSM for 30 years and believe this organization has elevated my career through its fantastic resources."  
**Andrew L. Shim, Omaha, NE**  
Winner of ACSM's Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription, 11th edition



"I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to ACSM's Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends and am excited to have been selected as a winner of an ACSM book. I look forward to receiving it to continue my learning as a certified exercise physiologist and stay up to date with trends and findings in the field."  
**Lauren Schiller, Denver, CO**  
Winner of ACSM's Resources for the Personal Trainer, 6th edition

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